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## CHRONOLOGY OF THE BEMBA (N.E. ZAMBIA)<sup>1</sup>

BY ANDREW ROBERTS

### I. DYNASTIC UNIT: CHITIMUKULU

CHITIMUKULU is the title of the paramount chieftainship of the Bemba people in north-eastern Zambia. The traditions of the dynasty, along with those of chieftainships among the Bisa and other tribes in the area, trace an origin in the west, among the Luba and Lunda states in Katanga. The nature of this connexion, in respect of both time and place, is still far from clear (see section 6). In the eighteenth century the Bemba chiefs seem to have occupied only a small part of what is now Bemba country. But in the last century the hitherto rather loose association of small chiefdoms was brought more closely under the control of a few powerful chiefs. These men extended the area under Bemba rule at the expense of the Bisa, Lungu, Tabwa and Mambwe, and created a large number of subordinate chieftainships. In the later nineteenth century Bemba raids fed the Swahili trade in slaves and ivory, through which the Bemba obtained guns and cloth.

The Bemba political system has never been 'centralized' in the sense of having a territory-wide organization directly subordinate to a single institution or office. Yet it would be misleading to say that the paramountcy of Chitimukulu has been primarily ritual in character, for it has always counted for much more than other 'ritual chieftainships', such as those of the Lala or southern Lunda. The Chitimukulu title is the apex of a ladder (or ladders) of succession to chiefly titles based on claims of genealogical proximity. Most of the important Bemba chieftainships, such as Mwamba, Nkula, Chikwanda, Shimumbi, are confined to members of the royal clan, so that their holders are more or less closely related to Chitimukulu. (The other important titles, such as Makasa or Mporokoso, are held by sons of royal chiefs.) In terms of ritual, history, genealogy and geography, Chitimukulu is central to Bemba society, and the title provides the only reference point in tradition for estimates of the antiquity of Bemba chieftainship. There are other Bemba titles which claim equal or greater antiquity, but their holders can remember only a few of their predecessors. By contrast, many names of past Chitimukulus are remembered, and several of these are firmly connected with events related in narrative traditions.

<sup>1</sup> I recorded historical traditions in north-eastern Zambia in 1964-5, on a Carnegie Fellowship from the University of Wisconsin and as an affiliate of the then Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. Most of the material presented in this paper is abstracted from Andrew Roberts, 'A political history of the Bemba, to 1900' (Ph.D., Wisconsin, 1966), a revised version of which is to be published by the Cambridge University Press.

## 2. SOURCES OF TRADITIONAL EVIDENCE

(a) *General*

The Bemba were the first people in Central Africa to be studied by a professional anthropologist: Dr A. I. Richards worked among them in 1930-4. Her numerous published studies are primarily economic and sociological, but one paper considers Bemba chiefly genealogy in the context of social mnemonics and 'charters' for political rights.<sup>2</sup> Brelsford has charted the pattern of chiefly succession over the past century or so.<sup>3</sup> He spent several years as an official in Bemba country and obtained much first-hand information: on the whole, his account was borne out by my own enquiries. There is a preliminary study of early Bemba history by Miss Ann Tweedie, who made some historical enquiries in Bembaland in 1963.<sup>4</sup>

(b) *Genealogies*

There is only one published genealogy purporting to represent the Chitimukulu dynasty *ab initio*: this is given by Tanguy.<sup>5</sup> In the absence of any support, oral or literary, it cannot be regarded as more than a schematic approximation. (It leaves out most of the Chitimukulus named on pages 20-1 of Tanguy's own narrative.) See section 8, below.

(c) *Lists of Chitimukulus*

The earliest written record of the dynasty was made in 1898 by Robert Young, an official in the British South Africa Company administration: this record is preserved in the Chinsali District Notebook.<sup>6</sup> Young was a man of limited education, but he showed a more active interest in Bemba history than most of his more polished successors. He does not name his informants and it is not clear where he obtained his information. The history is dated at Mirongo, which was the station he had just opened on the eastern border of Bemba country, but he had already been to ancient parts of Bemba country on both sides of the Chambeshi river. His list of seventeen Chitimukulus (to 1896) is shorter than most, and probably reflects the fact that he had been little more than a year in Bemba country; besides, he doubtless picked up his information without searching for specially qualified informants.

Young's history has never been published, but it became the source,

<sup>2</sup> A. I. Richards, 'Social mechanisms for the transfer of political rights in some African tribes', *J. Roy. Anthropol. Inst.* xc, ii (1960), 175-90.

<sup>3</sup> W. V. Brelsford, *The Succession of Bemba Chiefs* (Lusaka, 1944: references here to the second edition of 1948).

<sup>4</sup> Ann Tweedie, 'Towards a history of the Bemba', in E. T. Stokes and R. Brown (eds.), *The Zambesian Past* (Manchester, 1966), 197-220.

<sup>5</sup> F. Tanguy, *Imilandu ya Babemba* (London, 1948: references here to the second edition of 1963).

<sup>6</sup> R. A. Young, 'Awemba history as I have heard it', Chinsali District Notebook, 1, 232-9 (National Archives of Zambia (NAZ)).

direct or indirect, for several published king-lists and histories of the Bemba. Robertson, a missionary who had worked only briefly among the Bemba, near their north-western border, published in 1904 a short history which explicitly acknowledges a debt to Young.<sup>7</sup> Pirie, who seems to have had still less first-hand knowledge of the Bemba, also repeats Young's list, except for omitting one name and running two others together.<sup>8</sup> Gouldsbury and Sheane, two early officials, say that their informant, chief Shimumbi I, 'gave a list of the eighteen kings of the Chitimukulu dynasty, which tallies with that compiled by Mr R. A. Young in the Mirongo district notebook'.<sup>9</sup> It is most unlikely that Young met Shimumbi, whose territory lies on the south-western marches of Bemba country; this report thus seems to add weight to Young's testimony. Verhulpen gives a list which, except in spelling and the omission of one name towards the end, repeats that of Young. Verhulpen's source was probably Robertson (whom he acknowledges) or Pirie (whom he does not).<sup>10</sup>

In 1902 Cookson, an official at Kasama, recorded a list made by Fr. Guillemé, one of the first White Fathers in Bemba country.<sup>11</sup> This gives 18 names up to 1896, but only ten of these occur in Young's list. In about 1910 another official, E. B. H. Goodall, obtained a list of 13 names, of which one is not mentioned by Young but is mentioned by other sources.<sup>12</sup> Coxhead was also an official; his account gives eight names; two are not in Young's list, and one of these is quoted as a praise-name by one of my informants.<sup>13</sup> In 1924, Lloyd, an official at Kasama, took down 29 names before an 'Assembly of the Bemba' (probably a meeting of royal councillors) at Chitimukulu's.<sup>14</sup> Four of these names are cited by no other source. Seven are not given by Young but are given by other sources.

It becomes more certain that Young's list is incomplete if one considers the lists given by later sources: the White Fathers Labrecque and Tanguy; the Rev. P. B. Mushindo; and my own informants. Labrecque, who collected his information before about 1930, published an account of early Bemba history in 1933,<sup>15</sup> but the full text of his history of the Bemba only appeared in 1968.<sup>16</sup> This latter article lists 29 Chitimukulus before 1896.

<sup>7</sup> W. G. Robertson, *An Introductory Handbook to the Language of the Bemba People* (London, 1904). The historical section of this was reprinted in W. G. Robertson, 'Kasembe and the Bemba nation', *J. Afr. Soc.*, III (1903-4), 183-93.

<sup>8</sup> G. Pirie, 'North-Eastern Rhodesia: its peoples and products: part 1', *J. Afr. Soc.* v (1905-6), 130-47.

<sup>9</sup> C. Gouldsbury and H. Sheane, *The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1911), 31.

<sup>10</sup> E. Verhulpen, *Baluba et Balubaisés* (Antwerp, 1936).

<sup>11</sup> Fr. Guillemé, 'List of Bemba kings' (trans P. Cookson), Kasama District Notebook, (NAZ).

<sup>12</sup> E. B. H. Goodall, 'Genealogy of Bemba chiefs' (NAZ/KSZ 4/1).

<sup>13</sup> J. C. C. Coxhead, *The Native Tribes of North-Eastern Rhodesia*. Occasional paper of the Royal Anthropological Institute (London, 1914).

<sup>14</sup> Lloyd, 'List of the Chitimukulus...', Kasama District Notebook, (NAZ), I, 413-4.

<sup>15</sup> E. Labrecque, 'La tribu des Babemba: I: Les origines des Babemba', *Anthropos*, xxviii (1933), 633-48.

<sup>16</sup> E. Labrecque, 'Les origines des Babemba de la Rhodésie due Nord (Zambia)', *Annali del Pontificio Museo Missionario Etnologico* xxxii (1968), 249-329. This omits a few names given in the earlier article.

Table 1. *Lists of Chitimukulus: a comparison*

	Chileshye Mukulu	Chikunga	Tangany	Labrecque 1968	Labrecque 1933	Guillemé	Mushindo	Young	Lloyd	Goodall	Coxhead
CHITI muluba	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	1
NKOLE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		2
CHILUFYA ca mata yabili	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				
MULENGA POKILI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
KANABESA	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	
CHIBAMBA MANSI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
CHISOKA ca bakata, nshiwile	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		3	✓	✓	4	✓
CHISHISA	✓			✓	✓				✓		
KAPAMPA mubanshi	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		
KASANSU	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		
KAYULA milyango	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
CHIBENGELÉ ukupile fyulu	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
CHIFUNDA ca busoshi	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		
LWIPA cacila mabyalwe	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓		
MUTALE wa munkobwe	✓			✓	✓	5	✓	6	✓	✓	
SALALA bana bonke	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
KABEMBA na bantu	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
CHIMANGA						✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
CHIMPOLONGE	✓			7	7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
KAFULA					✓						
KALILUNGA mutwalo				✓							
CHIMFWEMBE							✓				
KASONDE							✓		✓		
CHIMFUNGWA									✓	8	
MUNUKA											
wankalwe									✓		
chipinula									✓		
CHISONA									✓		
NDUBWILA				✓	9				✓		
NTAMBA LUKUTA (10)				✓	✓						
CHIPASHA wa makani (11)		✓	✓	✓	✓						
SEKWILA							✓				
CHIMBA nsoka								✓		12	
KAPOLYO mukulu							✓				
KATONGO ncilamalilo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
MUKUUKA wa malekano	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
CHILIAMAFWA	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
SUSULA CHINCHINTA	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CHILESHYE cepela	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
BWEMBYA	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
CHITAPANKWA (d. 1883)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SAMPA kapalakashya (d. 1896)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 1 (*cont.*)

1 Called Chilesbye.	7 Given as praise for Katongo.
2 Named, but not as Chitimukulu.	8 Given as praise for Chiliamaftwa.
3 Called Nshiwile.	9 Given as praise for Chishisa.
4 Given as praise for Kayula.	10 A common praise-name.
5 Mutalewa Chisoka.	11 Name of early Ituna Chief.
6 Mutalewa Nimbo.	12 Given as praise for Chisoka.

Praises are quoted after the names of Chitimukulus with whom they are generally associated.

*Ifyabukaya* (White Fathers, 1932, 35-9) repeats the names given by Labrecque, but omits Kafula, Chibengele and Ntamba Lukuta.

Labrecque's work clearly underlies the first comprehensive history of the Bemba in the vernacular, a school reader, *Ifyabukaya*.<sup>17</sup> A later vernacular history, by Fr Tanguy, lists 23 names, all given by Labrecque.<sup>18</sup> The Rev. P. B. Mushindo, a Bemba minister whose brother is a royal councillor, collected traditions in the 1930's. He lists 28 names: two of these are not mentioned by any other source, and in any case Mushindo's history is clearly independent of Young and Labrecque.<sup>19</sup>

In the course of my own field researches into Bemba history, in 1964-5, I found only two informants who could give me a king-list that compared in length with those of Labrecque, Young or Mushindo. Joseph Muma, a catechist who is also a royal councillor with the title Chikunga, listed 23 names: those given by Tanguy. Tanguy's history acknowledges the help of Joseph Muma, but the latter in turn has fairly certainly been much influenced by the White Fathers' histories. Chilesbye Mukulu is a headman of the royal clan who lives in the Bemba heartland and belongs to a lineage which used to be eligible for the royal succession. He was one of my most helpful informants. He gives a list of 26 names, all of which were given by more than one other source. He does not, however, appear to have been influenced by the White Fathers' histories. Chilesbye Mukulu is illiterate and was working in the mines long before these histories were read in the schools, so that I am fairly sure that his version at least represents the tradition of his own title and lineage.

<sup>17</sup> White Fathers, *Ifyabukaya: Fourth Bemba Reader* (Chilubula, n.d. [1932]). There is a Xerox copy of this rare work in the Department of Africa at the S.O.A.S.

<sup>18</sup> Tanguy, *Imilandu*, 20-21, 4.

<sup>19</sup> P. B. Mushindo, *A Short History of the Bemba* (Lusaka: in press). I am most grateful to Mr Mushindo for enabling me to consult his history in typescript.

(d) *Dates*

The published secondary sources for Bemba history give a number of dates which either are demonstrably wrong or else are unsupported by any evidence. Robertson's dates seem to be conjectures based on the erroneous assumption that the Bemba did not settle in their present country until around 1800. (Bemba and Luapula traditions make it clear enough that the Bemba chiefs have been in the area since at least 1700: see below, section 6(e).) Robertson's date of 1853 for the expulsion of 5 Susula Chinchinta seems to be the basis for Brelsford's date of 'about 1850' for this event.<sup>20</sup> Brelsford's dates for the next three Chitimukulus (4 Chilesbye died 1861; 3 Bwembya expelled 1866; 2 Chitapankwa died 1887) are evidently derived, along with his dates for the Mwamba title, from *Ifyabukaya*, where it is also said that Chilesbye was born in 1783 and succeeded in 1810.<sup>21</sup> These dates are mostly repeated by Tanguy in *Imilandu ya Babemba*. None of them are documented, and in fact they are no more than guesses—more or less intelligent.<sup>22</sup>

This is perhaps the place to comment on Verhulpen's *Baluba et Balubaisés*. This was a pioneering attempt to collate sources for precolonial Central African history, and it has itself been used as an authority for the history of the Bemba and other peoples. I should therefore say that I consider Verhulpen misinformed and misleading on Bemba history. His chronology for Chitimukulu (Annexe II) is of no value. He gives three dates for which he claims the authority of a written source: the only correct one is that for the death of 'Mutali' (sc. Mutale Chitapankwa), namely 1883. Verhulpen correctly says that 'Mwamba' died in 1898, but this chief was not Chitimukulu. The date 1868 for the death of 'Chireshia' (sc. 4 Chilesbye) is obviously wrong, as we know that Chitapankwa was Chitimukulu between 1867 and 1883 (see section 4(a) below). Verhulpen's dates for Chilesbye's predecessors are simply reckoned by allotting each one a reign of sixteen years; this seems to be a quite arbitrary estimate. (The list is derived from Young: see section 2(c) above.)

No more can reliance be placed on Verhulpen's speculations on the 'origin' of the Bemba, and the possible connexion between the dynasty of Chitimukulu and those of the Luba and Lunda of Katanga. This point must be stressed, because later writers have generally accepted Verhulpen's

<sup>20</sup> Brelsford, *Succession*, 5.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 5-6; White Fathers, *Ifyabukaya*, 39-40, 43. The date of 1887 for the death of Chitapankwa has been widely repeated since; it is thus perhaps worth noting that the correct date, 1883 (cf. section 4(a) below) was given in another White Fathers compilation: H. Pineau, *Evêque-Roi des Brigands* (Montreal, 1939; 2nd ed. 1944), 125.

<sup>22</sup> The date 1856 for the first conflict between Bemba and Ngoni, which is cited in such recent works as L. H. Gann, *A History of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1964), 20, may be traced back to Robertson, *Introductory Handbook*, xx, by way of E. H. Lane Poole, *Native Tribes of the Eastern Province of Northern Rhodesia* (Lusaka; 3rd ed., 1949), 9, and Gouldsbury and Sheane, *Great Plateau*, 29. There is no good authority for it: 'about 1850' is as precise as the evidence permits (cf. Roberts, 'Political history of the Bemba', 209).

claim that a link may be traced between Bemba history and the origins of the Lunda dynasty of Mwata Yamvo, in the marriage between the Lunda princess Lweji and the Luba hunter Chibinda Ilunga.<sup>23</sup> Several attempts have been made to date this event with the aid of Portuguese records,<sup>24</sup> but as yet a solution to this problem cannot be of much use to Bemba chronology. Verhulpen considers that the Bemba were part of a great eastward movement of Lunda from Mwata Yamvo's. This hypothesis he bases on the assumption that the first Chitimukulu (i.e. 'Chiti' in the genealogies) is to be identified with one 'Kazembe Mushidi', who was sent out by Mwata Yamvo along with 'Kazembe Mu Nkinde' (identified by Verhulpen with the first Kazembe of the eastern Lunda). Verhulpen does not give any reasons for this identification of Chitimukulu I beyond saying that it is based on a comparison of Mwata Yamvo's traditions with those 'du pays des Babemba'.<sup>25</sup> Kazembe Mushidi is mentioned in none of the accounts of Bemba history (Young, Robertson, Labrecque, etc.). As for the accounts of Lunda history, the name is not mentioned by Pogge or Carvalho.<sup>26</sup> Duysters does mention a Kazembe Mushidi, who went south across the upper Zambezi and sent tribute to Mwata Yamvo until the latter was defeated by the Chokwe.<sup>27</sup> The only other reference to Kazembe Mushidi comes from the traditions of the eastern Lunda, who say that one Mushidi was sent with Nshinde (probably Verhulpen's 'Kazembe Mu Nkinde') and Kanongesha to rule the Kaonde and Luvala in north-western Zambia.<sup>28</sup> This bears out Duysters's story, but neither source supports Verhulpen's identification of Chitimukulu I with Kazembe Mushidi.<sup>29</sup>

I comment in section 6 below on the remaining possibilities of linking Bemba and Luba-Lunda history.

<sup>23</sup> E.g. J. Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, 88; also Tweedie, 'Towards a history', 203.

<sup>24</sup> See D. B. Birmingham, 'The date and significance of the Mbangala invasion of Angola', *J. Afr. Hist.* vi, no. 2 (1965), 143-52; and the reply by J. Vansina, 'More on the invasions of Kongo and Angola by the Jaga and the Lunda' (ibid. vii, no 3 (1966), 421-9.

<sup>25</sup> Verhulpen, *Baluba*, 152-3.

<sup>26</sup> P. Pogge, *Im Reiche des Mwata Jamvo* (Berlin, 1880), 225-6; H. Dias de Carvalho, *Ethnographia a historia tradicional dos Povos da Lunda* (Lisbon, 1890), 91, 527, 541.

<sup>27</sup> L. Duysters, 'Histoire des Aluunda', *Problèmes de l'Afrique Centrale*, xx (1958), 86. The manuscript version of this paper was used by Verhulpen.

<sup>28</sup> I. G. Cunison (ed. and trans.), *Historical Traditions of the Eastern Lunda*, Central Bantu Historical Texts, 11 (Lusaka, 1962), 29. This may well be the 'Mushili' mentioned in Lozi traditions as the name of a chief somewhere around the Zambezi-Congo watershed (cf. Vansina, *Kingdoms*, 177 and 288, n. 11).

<sup>29</sup> I should perhaps add that Verhulpen uses 'Bemba' very freely to refer, not only to the people now known by that name, but also to the Lunda of Kazembe (*Baluba*, 149, 378, 392), and to the Kasanga, Tumbwe and Tabwa west of Lake Tanganyika (ibid. 47, 66, 69, 108, 126). He considers that these people represent northward migrations by the Bemba of Chitimukulu, though again he cites no evidence for this view (ibid. 84, 118, 375).



## 3. NUMBER OF RULERS

It will be evident from section 2 that one cannot say precisely how many Chitimukulus there were before 1896, but a comparison of all sources, published and unpublished, suggests that an estimate of 25 is not excessive (see Table 1). It is possible that some of these names belong to one rather than a number of individuals; Bemba chiefs are often known by three or four personal names (including patronymics) apart from their praise-names. But this possibility is not very great, since most of the names were given as those of different individuals by several independent sources. For some, their individuality is attested by praise-names which are associated with one personal name rather than another, and the later names have their identity well established through narrative traditions of events concerning them. The relics which are supposed to be preserved for each chief might seem to be a good testimony, but almost certainly several have either decayed or been lost as a result of moving the site of the royal capital. In any case, the remaining relics are guarded in great secrecy, and no one, to my knowledge, has made any exact record of their number and character. The precise number of Chitimukulus would of course be easier to assess if each name had its place in a fixed order, but in fact there is no such order, except at the beginning and end of the lists, where the names are related to narrative traditions and are given a genealogical context.<sup>30</sup> Thomas notes that the Bisa say that the Bemba 'often quote as chiefs the names of claimants';<sup>31</sup> this may account for names which occur in only one list, but it need not invalidate names given by several independent sources.

## 4. CHRONOLOGICAL DATA FROM DOCUMENTS

(a) *Certain*

There is very little documentary data bearing on the chronology of Bemba chieftainships. The following dates are firm enough. In 1867 Livingstone visited 2 Chitapankwa, who was then Chitimukulu.<sup>32</sup> In 1883, Chitapankwa was visited by the French traveller Giraud, who heard soon after his departure that Chitimukulu had died.<sup>33</sup> Chitapankwa's successor, according to all sources, was 1 Sampa Kapalakashya: news of his death reached a White Fathers station not far from the Bemba capital on 20 May 1896.<sup>34</sup> Sampa's successor, Makumba, died in 1911.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Richards, 'Social mechanisms', 182.

<sup>31</sup> F. M. Thomas, *Historical Notes on the Bisa Tribe of Northern Rhodesia* (Lusaka, 1958), 4.

<sup>32</sup> D. Livingstone (ed. H. Waller), *The Last Journals of David Livingstone*, 1 (London, 1874), 184-95.

<sup>33</sup> V. Giraud, *Les Lacs de l'Afrique Equatoriale* (Paris, 1890), 271, 377.

<sup>34</sup> White Fathers' Kayambi journal, 20 May 1896, White Fathers' archives, Rome, 184 (p. 299); cf. *British Central Africa Gazette*, 15 August 1896.

<sup>35</sup> Brelsford, *Succession*, 9; Tanguy, *Imilandu*, 77.

*(b) Hypothetical*

A little more light is shed by comparing literary references to other chieftainships with Bemba traditions. This at least provides some basis for assigning provisional dates back to the late eighteenth century. 6 Chilia-mafwa, according to Bemba traditions, was contemporary with Mubanga Kashampupo, a chief in Ituna, where later chiefs held the title Mwamba. (Two genealogies collected by me show the two men as brothers.) Inferences from the traditions of Kazembe's Lunda confirm Bemba genealogy in placing Mubanga at the end of the eighteenth century. Fr. Pinto recorded that in 1799 8 Kazembe III moved his capital to Mofwe.<sup>36</sup> Kazembe's tradition indicates that this happened not long after the Bemba chief Mwamba, elsewhere referred to as Mubanga, blocked the roads into Bembaland against Kazembe.<sup>37</sup> Thus it appears that Mubanga was ruling in Ituna before 1799, and that Chilia-mafwa was Chitimukulu at about the same time.

Dates for Chilia-mafwa's successors may be inferred from a comparison of Bemba traditions with Gamitto's account of the Portuguese expedition to Kazembe in 1831-2. Gamitto mentions a Bemba chief, Simukamba, who had recently conquered Bisa country to the south of the Bemba.<sup>38</sup> This chief can clearly be identified with Chikwanda I Nkumbula Shilukamba, who was sent to this area by 4 Chilesbye,<sup>39</sup> and whose place in Bemba genealogy accords with such a date. Hence we may infer that Chilesbye's reign began before 1830. We can, indeed, be rather more precise. The predecessor of 4 Chilesbye was 5 Susula Chinchinta, who appears from traditions to have ruled only a few years before being expelled. Traditions connect this event with fighting against the Bisa. Gamitto says that the war he witnessed between Bemba and Bisa had begun in 1826. He also says that the region was suffering from a plague of locusts,<sup>40</sup> and there are traditions that Chilesbye's people were afflicted with locusts after they had driven away Chinchinta.<sup>41</sup> Thus it is fairly certain that 4 Chilesbye succeeded in 1826 or 1827. It is not clear just when Chilesbye died, but he is known to have had a long reign.<sup>42</sup> His successor, 3 Bwembya, was halfwitted and was soon removed by 2 Chitapankwa, whom we know was Chitimukulu by 1867. Taking into account the relative chronology suggested by a study of Bemba traditions, we may conjecture that Chilesbye died some time around 1860.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>36</sup> F. J. M. de Lacerda Almeida, *Travessia da Africa* (Lisbon, 1936), 326.

<sup>37</sup> Cunison (ed.), *Historical Traditions*, 49, 53.

<sup>38</sup> A. C. P. Gamitto (trans. I. G. Cunison), *King Kazembe* (Lisbon, 1960), I, 168-9; II, 148.

<sup>39</sup> Mushindo, *Short History*, section 48; Labrecque, 'Origines', 296; Thomas, *Historical Notes*, 40.

<sup>40</sup> Gamitto, *King Kazembe*, II, 161; I, 175.

<sup>41</sup> Chinsali District Notebook (NAZ), I, 253; Labrecque, 'Origines', 274.

<sup>42</sup> Mushindo, *Short History*, section 56; White Fathers, *Ifyabukaya*, 39.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Roberts, 'Political History of the Bemba', chap. 4.

## 5. ECLIPSES

Bemba traditions do not seem to refer to any eclipses. However, it is now at least possible to say when the paths of eclipses traversed Bemba country between Lat.  $9^{\circ}$ – $12^{\circ}$  S. and Long.  $30^{\circ}$ – $32^{\circ}$  E. For the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the dates of such total eclipses are as follows: 11 May 1619, 5 December 1676, 4 August 1701, 25 August 1840. The eclipses of 1619 and 1701 traversed the north-eastern corner of the area defined above; they may well not have been visible from Bemba country (which was anyhow less extensive at that time than it is now). The eclipse of 1676 occurred early in the rainy season, shortly after sunrise, and may well not have produced any remarkable effect. The eclipse of 1840 occurred early in the hot season, very soon after sunrise: it must have made some impression, but it would obviously not have been nearly as memorable as one in the middle of the day. An annular eclipse traversed southern and western Bembaland in 1879, during the rainy season; this probably occasioned little or no alarm.<sup>44</sup> At all events, future research in the area should make a point of seeking identification in traditions of these eclipses.

## 6. TIE-UPS WITH OTHER DYNASTIES

(a) *Bisa*

There are some points in common between Bemba traditions and those of the Bisa chieftainship of Kopa, formerly Mwansabamba. These traditions have not yet been satisfactorily recorded, but there is a somewhat disjointed account of them by F. M. Thomas, formerly an official in Bisa country.<sup>45</sup> These, like Bemba traditions, trace chiefly descent back to an ancestor called 'Mukulumpe'. So also do other Bisa traditions: those of Kabanda, Mungulube and Matipa.<sup>46</sup> It may be that this element is simply borrowed from the Bemba. It is noteworthy that none of these Bisa groups appear to have any stories telling how their own chiefs came east from the Congo: their origin is simply explained in terms of fission from the Bemba. It is thus reasonable to suppose that the dynasty of Chitimukulu is at least coeval with those of the Bisa, and possibly older. But the only evidence for the age of these Bisa dynasties is that inherent in their king-lists and genealogies. Thomas presents a comprehensive genealogy for Kopa/Mwansabamba: 'this comprises ten names before about 1890, spanning seven generations. At Matipa's, 13 names are remembered for the period before 1897.'<sup>47</sup> I did not obtain a comprehensive genealogy for Matipa, but my informant indicated a span of at least seven, and perhaps nine, genera-

<sup>44</sup> R. Gray, 'Eclipse maps', *J. Afr. Hist.* vi (1965), 258, 260; R. Gray, 'Annular Eclipse Maps', *ibid.*, ix (1968), 157. Annular eclipses also traversed the area here defined on 4 December 1611 and 2 December 1850.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas, *Historical Notes*.

<sup>46</sup> Fieldnote, 1964–5.

<sup>47</sup> My informant substantially corroborated the list given in the Lumigu District Notebook (NAZ), II, 161.

tions. Thus we can at least say that Bisa traditions confirm the suspicion that the Bemba genealogy, which gives seven dynastic Chitimukulu generations, is foreshortened (see section 8).

(b) *Chewa*

The Bemba legend of migration relates that Chitimukulu I was killed somewhere near the Luangwa valley by a chief called Mwase. This is probably the Chewa chief Mwase, who came from Kasungu near Lake Malawi to the lower Rukusi valley near the Luangwa.<sup>48</sup> But we do not know when this migration took place. The chiefdom of this Mwase was broken up in the later nineteenth century. Dr H. W. Langworthy has recently studied oral traditions in the area, but they do not seem to offer any chronological underpinning for the Bemba story. They do bear out the Bemba story, but it is possible that the Chewa have in fact simply taken the story from the Bemba.

(c) *Mambwe*

Labrecque reports a tradition (presumably Bemba) that the founder of the Mambwe chieftainship of Nsokolo was a chief of Luban origin, who came from the Congo with the Bemba chiefs, but ran away to the Mambwe after a quarrel. This is partly borne out by the Mambwe tradition that Changala, founder of the royal clan, was a 'Mulua' (sc. Muluba) from 'Kola'.<sup>49</sup> The genealogy of Nsokolo traces six dynastic generations between 1900 and Changala, which corresponds well enough with other indications of the age of the Chitimukulu dynasty (see Table 2, list 2). But there is no compelling reason to assume that Changala was in fact contemporaneous with the first Bemba chiefs: it is clear enough that chiefs and other people moved east into Zambia from the Congo over a considerable period of time—perhaps between 1500 and 1800; and the Bemba story about the origin of Nsokolo may very well be simply an aetiological *cliché*, like the Bemba story of coming from the Congo with Kazembe—or indeed their story about the foundation of Nkonde chieftainship.<sup>50</sup>

(d) *Fipa*

It may be worth noting here that the Bemba say that they fought with the Fipa soon after their arrival in Bembaland. Labrecque and my informant Chikunga say the Fipa chief at this time was called Pilula.<sup>51</sup> But according to Fipa traditions, 'Pilula' is part of a praise-name, *pilula uFipa*, for Suumba Kasumba, a chief who lived in the late nineteenth century.<sup>52</sup> There is a Bemba tradition that 2 Chitapankwa aided this 'Pilula'<sup>53</sup> and

<sup>48</sup> Lane-Poole, *Native Tribes*, 28.

<sup>49</sup> Labrecque, 'La tribu des Babemba', 644, n. 4; W. Watson, *Tribal Cohesion in a Money Economy* (Manchester, 1958), 13.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, 89.

<sup>51</sup> Labrecque, 'La tribu des Babemba', 645.

<sup>52</sup> R. G. Willis, 'The Fipa', in Andrew Roberts (ed.), *Tanzania before 1900* (Nairobi, 1968), 90-2.

<sup>53</sup> Mushindo, 'Short history', 68.

it is fairly clear that the Bemba have taken this name as a title representing Fipa chiefs or war-leaders in general. The genealogy of the Twaachi dynasty, to which Suumba Kasuumba belongs, indicates that it was founded around the end of the eighteenth century, probably long after the first Fipa war mentioned by the Bemba (see Table 2, list 2). These Twaachi were of East African, perhaps Tutsi, origin, whereas the chieftainship which preceded them was of Congolese (Luba) origin. The Fipa people themselves, being patrilineal cattle-keepers, are culturally 'East African'. But it is doubtful whether 'East African' elements in Bemba ritual—such as the burial of chiefs, wrapped in cowskins, in special groves—may be ascribed to the influence of the Twaachi Fipa; the picture may be more complicated than Vansina was able to indicate.<sup>54</sup>

#### (e) *Shila*

The Bemba say that they came east from the Congo with Kazembe, but the story of Kazembe's arrival on the Luapula does not mention the Bemba. The length of the Bemba king-list strongly suggests that the Bemba chiefs did in fact cross the Luapula some time before the Lunda; besides, Bemba chieftainship is much less clearly Lunda in character than that of Kazembe and almost certainly has a different origin. A tradition from the Shila peoples on the lower Luapula helps to confirm that the Bemba chiefs settled on the plateau sometime before the Lunda reached the Luapula. The Shila chief Nkuba claims that his ancestor was originally Bemba, and a member of the royal clan, but he quarrelled with Chitimukulu and came to live on the Luapula.<sup>55</sup> This tradition—if it is not just another aetiological explanation—indicates that the Bemba were in their present country well before the Shila settled on the Luapula, and this must have been some time before 1740, the approximate date of the Lunda conquest.<sup>56</sup> Nkuba Nsenshi, who was killed by the invading Lunda shortly after the accession of Kazembe III Ilunga (c. 1760), was the fourth recorded holder of the title.<sup>57</sup> One may thus propose a *terminus ante quem* of c. 1700 for the settlement of the Bemba royals in Bembaland.

#### (f) *Luba and Western Lunda*

It does not, however, seem possible to establish a *terminus post quem* for Chitimukulu. The oral traditions of the Bemba, as well as features of their language and social organization, point to an affinity with the Luba and Lunda of Katanga. Unfortunately, the historical traditions of these peoples have been very incompletely recorded, and what information is available throws no real light on Bemba chronology. We have already noted that

<sup>54</sup> Willis, 'The Fipa', 84–5; Vansina, *Kingdoms*, 89.

<sup>55</sup> I. G. Cunnison, *The Luapula Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (Manchester, 1959), 37. Cf. D. Crawford, *Back to the Long Grass* (London, n.d. [? 1924]), 128–9, 254.

<sup>56</sup> Lacerda, *Travessia*, 290–1.

<sup>57</sup> I. G. Cunnison, 'The Reigns of the Kazembes', *N. Rhod. J.* III, no. 3 (1956), 131–8; Cunnison, *Historical Traditions*, 56; Cunnison, *Luapula Peoples*, 40.

Verhulpen provides no sound guidance on this subject. The Bemba stories of migration do not mention any personal names which can be identified in Luba or Lunda tradition: the chief whom they left is simply called 'Mukulumpe', and *mukulumpe* is the Kiluba word for an elder or notable.<sup>58</sup> More revealing is the fact that Mukulumpe's country is sometimes called 'Kola'; Koola is the name of the heartland of Mwata Yamvo.<sup>59</sup> There appear to be no references in Luba or Lunda traditions to the departure of the Bemba chiefs. Vansina claims that Struyf provides such a reference, but the passage in question refers only to one KaBemba, who went east to the Luapula and introduced manioc; 'KaBemba y devint le grand chef Lunda'.<sup>60</sup> This is clearly Kazembe, whose Lunda have adopted Bemba speech and some Bemba customs. I recorded one Bemba tradition that the ancestors of Chitimukulu went from Mwata Yamvo's to Luba country; this provides some support for Roland's suggestion that the Bemba migration originated in the Luba chieftdom of Kalundwe.<sup>61</sup> But speculation is really not profitable as long as we lack adequate records of Lunda and Luba traditions.

## 7. MODE OF SUCCESSION

### (a) *The rule*

Descent among the Bemba is matrilineal and adelphic. One may state the 'theory of succession' thus: the sons of a royal woman (whose brothers were potential chiefs) are eligible for succession, and may succeed each other; but they may well have to contend with the sons of each of their sisters. There is a conflict between horizontal succession, within a generation, and vertical succession, from one generation to another. The ensuing complexities, as they have affected actual cases of succession, are discussed at length by Brelsford: he argued that the colonial administration should limit the horizontal element by considering the claims only of the sons of the two eldest daughters of any given royal woman<sup>61a</sup>. Brelsford tried to elicit rules of succession for the guidance of the administration, but there are no very hard and fast rules, as he himself recognized. Even if there were agreement on what constituted genealogical seniority, it would still have to contend with factors such as personal ability and (in the old days) force of arms.

### (b) *Observance of the rule*

It is thus not easy to point to instances where the rule of succession 'failed': rather, the theory of succession was manipulated. This is true, for example, of the accession of 4 Chileshe, whereby succession to the paramountcy was switched from one shallow lineage to another within the royal clan.

<sup>58</sup> E. Avermaet, *Dictionnaire Kiluba-Français* (Tervuren, 1954), 304-5.

<sup>59</sup> Y. Struyf, 'Kahemba...', *Zaire*, 11, no. 4 (1948), 360.

<sup>60</sup> Vansina, *Kingdoms*, 276, n. 29; Struyf, 359.

<sup>61</sup> H. Roland, 'Résumé de l'histoire ancienne de Katanga', *Problèmes sociaux congolais*, no. 61 (1963), 17; for further details see Roberts, 'Political history', chap. 2.

<sup>61a</sup> Brelsford, *Succession*, 18, 20.

Chileshye was probably 5 Susula Chinchinta's MZDS. This is a more distant relationship than any between subsequent Chitimukulus, but in exploiting it Chileshye was stretching the rule rather than actually breaking it: he was asserting the primacy of horizontal (adelphic) succession in his grandmother's generation over vertical succession. This was irregular, but not 'illegal'.

(c) *Factors affecting length of reign*

The length of reign of a Chitimukulu is obviously affected by the fact that succession is adelphic. This makes for the succession of a series of many men of relatively advanced years; reign lengths are thus likely to be fairly short. The only reasonably sound way of reaching an estimate for the average reign lengths of Chitimukulus in the past is to determine the average of those reigns for which dates are available. Of course, conditions have changed since the nineteenth century: there have been no succession wars. But the system of succession has not been affected by colonial rule. The period between 1883 and 1965 (when Chitimukulu Musungu died) comprises six reigns (seven if a man who died just before his installation is included). This gives an average of  $82 \div 6 = 13.66$ .

## 8. NUMBER OF GENERATIONS

The Bemba royals and their councillors do not maintain a genealogy, however telescoped, which links remembered Chitimukulus in a single pattern of descent. Richards speaks of the Bemba's 'reverent, sometimes almost passionate interest in the question of descent'; she also says of the more recent chiefs that they are able to claim descent from the first Chitimukulu.<sup>62</sup> They make the claim; they are bound to; but they do not feel obliged to provide a supporting genealogy. To quote Richards again, 'The first ancestors are remembered very accurately and their sacred relics are kept. The ensuing vagueness in the chain seems to be of no account.' More recently, Richards has noted explicitly that 'it would be difficult to speak of a real line of descent'.<sup>63</sup>

The genealogies published by Richards and Brelsford are derived from a genealogy compiled in 1910 by E. B. H. Goodall, who served as an official in Bemba country.<sup>64</sup> This table is, as far as it goes, comprehensive, but it only goes back two dynastic generations before 1900, to the mother of 4 Chileshye. Few elderly Bemba can now reckon back chiefly generations farther than Chileshye. This may be because Chileshye switched the line of succession into a new lineage, which is still dominant, so that there is a lack of interest in earlier chiefs. One might suppose that it was important to show a relationship between 4 Chileshye and 5 Susula Chinchinta in

<sup>62</sup> A. I. Richards, 'Mother Right among the Central Bantu', in E. E. Evans-Pritchard *et al.* (eds.), *Essays presented to C. G. Seligman* (London, 1934), 269; A. I. Richards, 'The Bemba...', in M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard (eds.), *African Political Systems* (London, 1940), 100.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*; Richards, 'Social mechanisms', 182.

<sup>64</sup> Richards, 'The Bemba...', 102; Brelsford, *Succession*, 49; and cf. note 12 above.

order to legitimize the lineage of the former. But this is not now a live issue: for political purposes, it is enough to be able to trace one's descent over the past two generations. As Richards has noted, this is partly due to the doctrine of positional succession, by which the personal identities of title-holders are subsumed in the title itself.<sup>65</sup> It may also be due to the homogeneity of Bemba society: there is not the keen balancing of claims among different lineages, for whom genealogies serve as social charters, which characterizes, for example, the Luapula peoples in Kazembe's kingdom.<sup>66</sup>

In the course of my own enquiries, I found one royal councillor, Chikunga, who traced the descent of Chitimukulu through four dynastic generations (i.e. intervals between generations of chiefs) before 1900. Another informant, Chilesbye Mukulu (the royal headman mentioned in section 2(c)) also went back four dynastic generations and at least hazarded answers to questions about the genealogy of chiefs earlier than 7 Mukuuka. On the basis of his answers I constructed a genealogy which places Chitimukulu I at seven dynastic generations before 1900. This happens to agree with the genealogy given by Tanguy,<sup>67</sup> but we have noted that Tanguy leaves many names out of his table and Chilesbye Mukulu placed 13 names in the generation before 7 Mukuuka, so his table is clearly telescoped. All we can say from this evidence is that there were probably eight or more dynastic generations between Chitimukulu I and 1900. One reason for this vagueness about Bemba royal genealogy may well be that in fact the patterns of succession were very confused before 7 Mukuuka. There is fairly good evidence that before his reign several more or less distantly related branches of the royal clan competed for the paramountcy, and as a result the relationship of successive Chitimukulus to one another were frequently rather remote.

We may, however, note that there have been ten Chitimukulus in the past five generations of Bemba chiefs (up to and including that of Musungu, d. 1965). If we thus assume an average of two Chitimukulus per generation and apply this to the probable number of Chitimukulus before 1900 (see section 3) we get  $25 \div 2 = 12\frac{1}{2}$  generations of chiefs, or  $11\frac{1}{2}$  dynastic generations. But in the earlier period of Bemba history, when there are said to have been many succession wars, the average number of Chitimukulus per generation was probably rather more than two. An estimate on this basis would probably be nearer the mark with a figure of nine or ten generations.

#### 9. LENGTH OF GENERATION

Since descent is matrilineal, royal generations are to be reckoned between females. Royal women, like other Bemba women, will probably be between 15 and 20 when they bear their first children. (Unfortunately I do not have definite evidence to support this assumption.) If these women reproduce

<sup>65</sup> Richards, 'Social mechanisms', 182.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Cunnison, *Luapula Peoples*, 230-41.

<sup>67</sup> Tanguy, *Imilandu*, 44.



themselves at an interval of 15–20 years, this will also be the interval between the generations of their sons, who are potential chiefs. This interval is in reality likely to be increased by high infant (and adult) mortality, and by the practice of adelphic succession among females as well as males. Succession may be diverted from the sons of an elder sister to the sons of a younger sister who might have been born when her mother was much older than 20. And it must be noted that for the only three royal generations for which dates are available the average interval appears to be 30·5. There is no date for the accession of 2 Chitapankwa (the first Chitimukulu in his generation), but his brother 1 Sampa succeeded in 1883 and Musungu, the second Chitimukulu in his generation, succeeded in 1945. Interestingly, this surprisingly high figure of 30·5 cannot be explained by adelphic succession, since there have been only seven Chitimukulus within these three generations. Thus it seems advisable to apply to the Bemba the familiar 30-year interval between generations, while recognizing that there is probably a bias in the system of succession tending to minimize the interval.

#### CONCLUSIONS

It is apparently impossible to provide more than the very roughest estimate of the age of the Chitimukulu dynasty. If we take the number of rulers before 1900 as 25 (see section 3) and the average reign-length as 13·6 (see section 7(c)), this gives a total span of 340 years, indicating that Chitimukulu I died in about 1560. But this reign-length may well be too long, and there is nothing definite about the number of rulers. We have noted that there is no adequate basis for calculating from genealogies the number of dynastic generations, but it is fairly clear that there were at least eight before 1900 (see section 8). On the basis of 30 years per dynastic generation (see section 9) this gives a total period of 240 years and a starting date of 1660. Using the king-list (see section 8), we might infer about ten dynastic generations, or a total of 300 years: i.e. a starting date of 1600. Comparison with other traditions suggests a *terminus ante quem* of 1700. No *terminus post quem* is available, but from what we know of Luba and Lunda history it still seems reasonable to place the emergence of the Bemba dynasty some time in the earlier seventeenth century. At least this does not conflict with the meagre chronological inferences that can be made from Bemba traditions.

Table 2. *Comparative lists of dynasties in N.E. Zambia (List 1)*

Died	Bemba		Bisa		Chishinga Mushyota	Mukulu Chungu	Tabwa Nsama	Lungu		Died
	Chitimukulu	Other Bemba	Mwansabamba	Matipa				Mukupu Kaoma	Tafuna	
										1630
										1660
										1690
										1720
										1750
										1780
										1810
										1840
										1870
										1900



NOTE ON TABLE 2: COMPARATIVE LISTS OF DYNASTIES IN  
N.E. ZAMBIA AND S.W. TANZANIA

These represent lists of chiefs grouped by generations as shown in the genealogies cited below. The generations are reckoned back from 1900: i.e. the most recent one shows one or more chiefs who died in or about that year. Dates of death are shown where possible: sources for these are also cited below. The dynasties shown on List 1 are all matrilineal and adelphic. I have assigned 30 years per generation for reasons indicated in section 9 above. List 2 compares the Bemba list with some neighbouring patrilineal dynasties. I have estimated dynastic generations for the Mambwe and Fipa at 30 years; but see note 11 below. For the Lunda dynasty of Kazembe I have estimated 40 years per dynastic generation, on the basis of the known date for the death of 8 Kazembe III Lukwesa.

Sources of genealogies and dates:

- 1 Bemba (Chitimukulu). Chilesbye Mukulu, 25 July 1964, 18 Sept. 1964; Chikunga, 11 Sept. 1964. Dates obtained as shown in section 4. See also Giraud, *Lacs*, 256, 272; Luena District Book (NAZ), 1, 62.
- 2 Bisa (Mwansabamba). Thomas, *Historical Notes*, 11-12 and appendix 1.
- 3 Bisa (Matipa). Munsoma (Matipa's), 30 June 1965. Dates from Giraud, *Lacs*, 284; Luwingu District Notebook (NAZ), 11, 161.
- 4 Chishinga (Mushyota). Chief Mushyota, 26 June 1965. Date from Kawambwa District Notebook (NAZ), 11, 182.
- 5 Mukulu (Chungu). E. Labrecque (ed.), *History of the Bena Ng'oma (Ba Chungu wa Mukulu)* (London, 1949), 73-4. Date from *ibid.* 71, but cf. Luwingu District Notebook (NAZ), 11, 163.
- 6 Tabwa (Nsama). Informants at Nsama's, 21-23 June 1965; checked with table dated 1906 in Mporokoso District Notebook (NAZ), 1, 260-1. (This genealogy has been published in Andrew Roberts, 'The history of Abdullah ibn Suliman', *African Social Research*, 4 (December 1967), 264.) Dates from Burton, *Lake Regions*, 11, 151; Livingstone, *Last Journals*, 11, 253; A. Sharpe, 'A journey from the Shire River to Lake Mweru and the Upper Luapula', *Geog. J.* 1 (1893), 528.
- 7 Lungu (Mukupu Kaoma). Table made by present Mukupu Kaoma, assisted by elders, in 1964.
- 8 Lungu (Tafuna). Notes by J. Gibson Hall (c. 1910) in National Museum, Zambia (G 69/5/7).
- 9 Lunda (Kazembe). Cunnison, *Luapula Peoples*, 162. Dates from Cunnison, 'Reigns', and A. D. Roberts, 'Tippu Tip, Livingstone and the Chronology of Kazembe', *Azania*, 11 (1967), 115-31.
- 10 Mambwe (Nsokolo). Aaron Sichivula and Zombe Nsokolo: Nsokolo's, 13 June 1965. Cf. Watson, *Tribal Cohesion*, 144; and *ibid.* 171, for date.
- 11 Fipa (Twaachi chiefs). Table dated 1939 in Sumbawanga District Book (National Archives of Tanzania). (The earlier section differs slightly from lists published by R. G. Willis, but the number of generations is not affected.) Dates from R. G. Willis, 'The Fipa', in Roberts (ed.), *Tanzania before*

1900, 91-3. It should be noted that my alignment of Fipa chronology with those of other dynasties is only intended as a very rough guide. Dr Willis, in a paper presented to the Conference on African Chronology and Genealogy, indicates an average interval between generations of 28 years; he also dates the division of the Twaachi state to about 1820.

- 12 Fipa (Milansi). R. G. Willis, 'Traditional history and social structure in Ufipa', *Africa*, xxxiv, no. 4 (1964), 343.

#### SUMMARY

The main reference point for the chronology of the Bemba is their paramount chieftainship, Chitimukulu. A comparison of written records of traditions with the results of fieldwork in 1964-5 shows that it is impossible to determine the antiquity of this title with any precision, or to demonstrate any very clear connection with Luba or western Lunda history. There is however a strong probability that the Chitimukuluship was created some time in the seventeenth century, and it is certainly older than the eastern Lunda kingdom of Kazembe. There is no continuous genealogy of Chitimukulus before the end of the eighteenth century, but from this period it is possible to construct an approximate chronology of their reigns on the basis both of genealogy and of comparison between Bemba, Lunda and Portuguese sources. The first firm dates are supplied by Livingstone, in 1867 and 1872, and Giraud, in 1883. The chronology of Chitimukulu is compared, in two tables, with the chronology of other Bemba chieftainships and certain other chiefly dynasties in north-eastern Zambia and south-western Tanzania.