Part I

Tears of Rain

Ethnicity and history in central western Zambia

Chapter 1

The contemporary point of departure: The Nkoya-speaking people and their chiefs

1.1. The Nkoya

Among the Nkoya people of central western Zambia, ethnicization and the production of history are inseparable processes. An analysis of their history is impossible without an assessment of the formation of their ethnic identity over time, and their present-day ethnic structure and functioning can only be understood against the background of their history. If then, in the present chapter, we set out to approach this Gordian knot with the blunt knife of synchronic political ethnography, this is mainly a heuristic strategy.

At the same time, it must be admitted that one could not very well start the argument of this book by a profoundly historical statement. For nearly one and a half centuries the area where the Nkoya are now concentrated has formed the periphery of a major state, that of the Luyana and Kololo. And since the creation, almost a hundred years ago, of the colonial state, and the advent of capitalist development along the 'Line of Rail' which connects the ancient capital of Livingstone to the Copperbelt, that very Luyana state has formed a periphery of the central state. As a result, the Nkoya have only been treated, in academic writing, as an appendix, a mere footnote to history.

The same pattern can be seen with regard to precolonial documentary sources, which for other parts of South Central Africa have often been far more abundant.

One of the first published references to a region adjacent to that of the Nkoya — notably the head-waters of the Zambezi, then called the Land of Levar or Loval, from which no doubt the Luvale ethnic group takes its name — is by M. Botelho de Vasconcellos in 1799, as quoted by Sir R.F. Burton in the introduction to his famous edition of *The lands of Cazembe* (Burton 1873: 24, 25, n.).[1]

Nineteenth-century European sources on the Nkoya region are limited to a few explorers, hunters and missionaries, most of whom[2] are listed and have their itineraries marked on the 1964 *Map showing routes of the early European travellers in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland* (Director 1964).

In 1853-54 Silva Porto crossed the region from west to east, and coming from Naliele (the ancient Luyana capital on the Zambezi) allegedly reached the well-known trading capital of the ruler Kayingu on the Kafue; this makes Silva Porto a potentially unique source on nineteenth-century Nkoya history. However, only in 1942 an excerpt from his diaries was published; this work is not available outside Portugal and could not be consulted by me.[3]

Silva Porto's hopes of opening up Barotseland for Portuguese trade were partly frustrated by lack of financial support (Gann 1958: 16), yet in the 1870s there existed a substantial flow of Portuguese trade goods, which only after 1872 met with some competition from the South (Holub 1879: 166f). In the second half of the nineteenth century the easterly route from the Zambezi to Kayingu was no longer used for long-distance trade, due to Ila raids and to long-distance traders' by-passing Barotseland via a northeastern route to Kayingu. The best known missionaries, Livingstone and Coillard, therefore travelled close to the Zambezi and never came near the Nkoya heartland (cf. Livingstone 1971; Coillard 1971). The same limitation applies to the Portuguese Major Serpa Pinto, who having arrived in Lealui (the later Luyana capital) from Angola in 1878, was prevented from continuing his intended journey due east to Kayingu, and instead was confined by

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1 Prins (1980: 255, n. 31) cites an even earlier, 1795 reference to Bulozi i.e. Loziland, contained in a late nineteenth-century Portuguese publication I could not trace.

2 I.e., with the exception of a few authors I shall refer to in chapter 5.

3 Silva Porto 1942. Cf. Gann 1958: 16, where reference is made to the published diaries but likewise with the admission that Gann had not seen them. According to Smith & Dale (1920, i: 47, n. 1) Silva Porto travelled from Naliele to Kayingu. An identical itinerary for Silva Porto appears on the map opposite the title page of Burton 1873: from *Nariele* to *Cahinga*. A different itinerary however is shown on the 1964 map (Director 1964), but then under the name of J. da Silva (1853-54), claimed at the back of that map to have been a 'bondsman of *pombeiro*' with whom Silva Porto travelled through eastern Angola to arrive at Naliele together; Silva Porto's itinerary east of Naliele is not shown on the map. Obviously, further research is needed on this point.

Lubosi Lewanika I,[4] Sipopa's successor, to the southeastern route along the Zambezi (Serpa Pinto 1881).

After a successful expedition from Angola to Yakaland, Zaïre in 1877-80, the two Portuguese naval officers H. Capello and R. Ivens undertook another, more southerly expedition in 1884, which took them across eastern Angola to the Zambezi, then along an untracked route northeast along the Kabompo, to Katanga and from there back southeast through central Zambia and on to the Cape (Capello & Ivens 1881, 1886).[5] Thus they traversed the western and northern fringes of the Nkoya region, but their published account throws regrettably little light on the detailed historical issues discussed in the present book. The late nineteenth-century travelogue was a literary genre where ample introspection on the explorer's communion with the African landscape, historical retrospect, and mineralogical, botanical and zoological impressions, left room for only the most fragmentary and superficial ethnographic and political data; and the latter tended to be clad in evaluative terms. Therefore, while accidental reference to a specific ethnic group in a travelogue may yield significant information, the lack of such reference does not mean that the phenomena the travellers could have observed (considering other evidence) were not there. We are already lucky that at least Capello and Ivens's map (1886, i: opposite 333) of the relevant part of their itinerary shows, in the correct places, many hydronyms and other toponyms still in use in the Nkoya region today.[6]

To the same travelogue genre belong the works of the hunter F.C. Selous, who in 1877-78 with his companion L.M. Owen reached the Lukanga swamps from the southeast, and in 1888 returned for a trip due north to the Kafue/Mwembeshi confluence, on both occasions skirting the extreme easterly extension of Nkoya presence, on which topic however he has very little to say (Selous 1893). A few relevant observations are found in the notes of the trader G. Westbeech, who traversed Barotseland and surrounding areas intensively until his death in 1888 (cf. Tabler 1963; Sampson 1972).

A transition from the travelogue to a more professional ethnographic genre we find in the works of the Czech Emile Holub, who on an ill-fated expedition to the Kafue in 1885-86 visited the fringes of Nkoyaland. Both the narrative of his expedition (Holy 1975) and his earlier *Ethnographic sketch of the Marutse-Mambunda empire* (Holub 1879) contain some information pertinent to the Nkoya. However, the

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4 Lewanika I reigned from 1878-1884, and again from 1885-1916; cf. Mainga Mutumba 1973; Prins 1980; Clay 1968.

5 I am indebted to Mr A.S. Bell, Librarian, Rhodes House Library, Oxford, and to Mrs D. de Lame, Royal Africa Museum, Tervuren, Belgium, for tracing Capello & Ivens's obscure 1886 book and making it available to me.

6 E.g. Lukulu (*Rio Lucullo*), Namilende, Dongwe (*Rio Zongué*), Luampa (*Rio Luampoa*), Lukahu (*Rio Lukáoé*), Luena, Lukolwe (*Lucolloe*).

reliability of that information is negatively affected not only by Holub's limited exposure in both time and place (his account of Loziland is mainly based on hurried observations in Sesheke), and by the fact that he was one of the pioneers of ethnographic method, but also by his personality; as Prins (1980: 253, n. 10) points out, Coillard and Westbeech both had a low opinion of Holub's abilities and good sense. But how else could these members of established professions have regarded an anthropologist *avant la lettre*?

Against this minimal background of precolonial documentary sources, it is little wonder that the Nkoya area became a fertile ground for the study of oral history — which started already with the publication of Clay's *History of the Mankoya district* (1945), under conditions which we shall consider in chapter 2.

However, let us first present the outlines of twentieth-century Nkoya social and political organization.

The Nkoya people are primarily found in what today is Kaoma district, in the eastern part of Zambia's Western Province, the former Barotseland Protectorate which at Independence (1964) — when Northern Rhodesia became Zambia — remained incorporated in Zambia under special conditions stipulated by the Barotseland Agreement (Mulford 1967). When the boma (colonial administrative headquarters at district level) was established in 1906 (Clay 1945: 16), the district was named Mankoya — a name deriving from the word 'Nkoya', but with a plural prefix derived from the Lozi language. In 1969 President Kaunda revised the special status of Barotseland and, in an attempt to excise all ethnic connotations from toponyms in western Zambia, the district was renamed Kaoma, at the same time as Barotseland changed its name to Western Province (a name until then reserved for what then became Copperbelt Province), and Balovale became Zambezi district (cf. Caplan 1970).

In addition to those in Kaoma district, there are minorities of Nkoya-speakers and people identifying as Nkoya in all the adjacent districts and even provinces.

The Nkoya-speaking peoples number about 30,000 members. Estimates are rendered difficult by a number of factors: the frequent occurrence of bilingualism among Nkoya speakers particularly outside Kaoma district (so that perhaps a few thousand of speakers of Lozi, Kaonde, Lamba, Lenje, Totela and Subiya might also be classified as Nkoya speakers); and on the other hand the excessive claim by contemporary partisans of Nkoya ethnicity, who would insist that extensive portions of Zambia's Western, Northwestern, Central and Southern Provinces were 'originally' Nkoya. The linguistic data derived from the 1969 census (Kashoki 1978: 20) give a total of 31,000 Nkoya speakers or 0.8% of the Zambian African population.

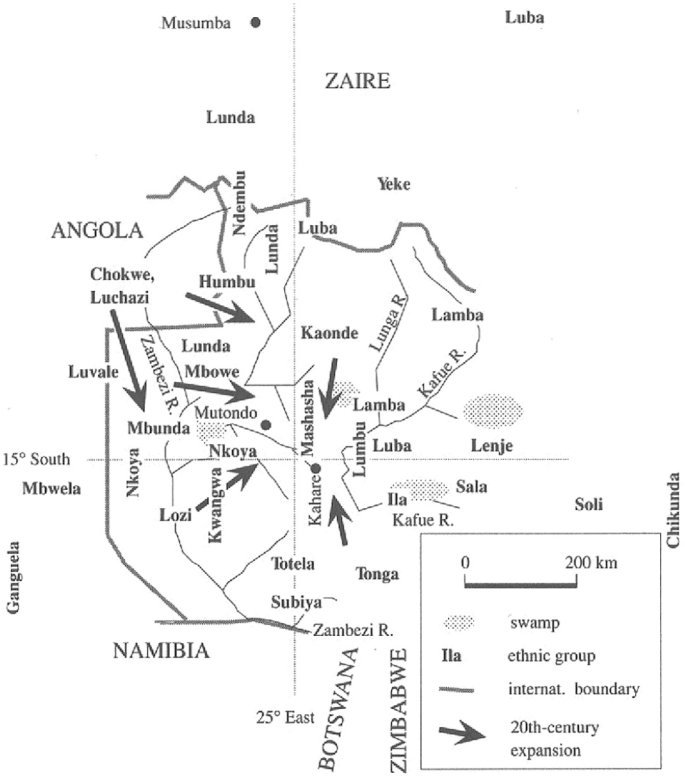

Diagram 1. Ethnic groups in twentieth-century central western Zambia

In Kaoma district the Nkoya[7] live in a rather well-watered and densely-wooded savanna area between the Kafue and the Zambezi valley, in the west fringing on the Kalahari sands, and in the east artificially bounded by the large Kafue National Park, an uninhabited area since the 1930s. The region (cf. diagram 1)[8] is characterized by its

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7 On the Nkoya, cf. Brelsford 1965; Clay 1945; Derricourt & Papstein 1977; McCulloch 1951; Brown 1984; and my own publications as listed in the bibliography.

8 This diagram is based on the author's field-notes, and on Surveyor General, n.d. [late 1960s], 'Tribal and linguistic map of Zambia', Lusaka: Surveyor General. The information in the latter map shows the situation as in the late 1920s, as is clear from the fact that exactly the same geographical distribution of ethnic and linguistic groups appears in

specific agricultural systems for subsistence crops (Schültz 1976), and until quite recently offered its population ample opportunities for hunting and fishing.

As the diagram indicates, the Nkoya are surrounded by a considerable number of other ethnic groups, outstanding among which are the Lozi to the west, the Kaonde to the north, the Ila to the east, the Tonga (and related groups such as the Subiya and the Totela) to the southeast. The linguistic boundaries are seldom sharp, bilingualism is a common occurrence especially near such boundaries, and the latter do not neatly coincide with the region's equally vague cultural boundaries.

In this fluid set-up, it is little surprising that local attempts to define Nkoya-ness in cultural terms (and such attempts were invariably the result of prompting by myself as an alien researcher) never yielded clear-cut and totally convincing indicators. Yet such self-definitions are worth looking at.

Thus, in a group discussion of at one of the Nkoya chief's capitals in 1977, the Kahare Royal Council,[9] being Nkoya was defined by the following five criteria:

'(a) mastery of the Nkoya language;

(b) being born from Nkoya parents;

(c) observing the institution of *kutembwisha kankanga*, the female puberty ritual;[10]

Richards (1939), end map entitled 'Tribal areas Northern Rhodesia', and there said to be based on a 'map prepared by the Northern Rhodesian Survey Department, 1930'. In over half a century, the geogaphic location of established ethnic groups has not undergone great changes, but the official map's suggestion of ethnically homogeneous, virtually demarcated rural areas can no longer be sustained — if ever it was more than an administrator's fiction. Lozi and Luvale have expanded further eastward, into Kaoma district, and so have large numbers of Angolan immigrants. In the extreme east of the district, the Nkeyeme Tobacco Scheme has virtually grown into a rural town of over 20,000 inhabitants, most of them non-Nkoya and hailing from all over western Zambia. These dynamics are indicated in diagram 1 by arrows. By the same token ethnic clusters have been identified not by a demarcated area but merely by a loosely placed name, as in Ohannessian & Kashoki (1978), map 8: 'Languages of Zambia' (end map). A sophisticated approach would start with the notion of rural ethnic heterogeneity and would seek to depict percentages of ethnic affiliation per area or region. However, the data for such an approach are not available to me — they may have been yielded by the national language survey on which Ohannessian & Kashoki (1978) is based; however, such a quantitative approach would not greatly add to the present, historical argument.

9 Oral source [18] 13.10.1977. Oral sources are identified in *Appendix 5*.

10 As described in van Binsbergen 1987a.

(d) practising the central expressive complex of song, music and dance known as *makwasha*;[11] and finally

(e) the specification 'Nkoya' as tribal affiliation in an individual's colonial tax document (*shitupa*) as in use during the colonial period, and on the post-colonial National Registration Card.'[12]

The point is that these criteria are either begging the question (b), or externally imposed (e), or not really distinctive: bilingualism creates borderline cases with regard to criterion (a); the dominant position of Nkoya music all over western Zambia[13] makes for a much wider distribution of the *makwasha* complex (d) than simply among the Nkoya proper; and forms of female puberty ritual (c) which only in detail differ from the Nkoya practice can be found all over central western Zambia and surrounding areas.

An attempt at even more stringent definition was made at another Nkoya chief's capital,[14] where a group of traditional councillors claimed that being Nkoya was simply dependent upon the presence of specific patterns of scarification:

(a) *in men:* facial scars as in diagram 2; incisors filed to a slightly pointed shape (this is admittedly not general and might be a Lozi

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11 Cf. Brown 1984, ch. 5: 'Makwasha, the most ancient repertoire of Nkoya royal music', pp. 151-182.

12 The latter part of this final criterion is certainly spurious: the Zambian National Registration Card specifies the bearer's chief, but not his or her tribe — in line with the general administrative aloofness (also manifest in e.g. national census questionnaires) of the Zambian bureaucracy vis-à-vis aspects of social life that could be regarded as 'tribalist'.

13 Nkoya music, played by Nkoya musicians to the accompaniment of texts in the Nkoya language, is the established court music throughout Barotseland. Brown's (1984) excellent study of Nkoya music is not confined to Kaoma district but also deals with this form of cultural domination of the Lozi by the Nkoya in the Lozi heartland, which somehow counterbalances the political domination which has worked the other way around. Below (chapters 4 and 5) we shall repeatedly come back to the role of the musical instruments — drums, xylophones and *zingongi*, 'royal bells' — as principal regalia among the Nkoya. Nkoya oral sources and *Likota lya Bankoya* trace the position of Nkoya music at Lozi courts to friendly exchanges between the Lozi ruler Mulambwa and the Nkoya *Mwene* Kayambila in the early nineteenth century. Royal orchestras are widely referred to in the literature on Barotseland (cf. Brown 1984). An extensive early description is by Holub (1879: 57, 135f), who offers perfect illustrations of the instruments, but makes no mention of the special role of the Nkoya in this connexion. Amusingly, he calls the double *zingongi*, 'of which the Lozi king Sipopa had two pairs', *Stahlhandschuhe*, 'steel mittens', which is perhaps what they look like to an explorer from a northern temperate climate (Holub 1879: 143). On African royal bells in general, cf. Vansina 1969.

14 Oral source [19] 19.10.1977.

Diagram 2. Nkoya facial scarification in males.
(the thick lines indicate scars)

custom); pierced ears; three horizontal scars on the biceps; circumcised penis (this has admittedly become very exceptional);

(b) *in women:* scars on the buttocks proving that the woman in question has gone through the female initiation rites — a criterion therefore corresponding with point (c) in the previous list.

However, never in my experience have I known a person to have been identified as Nkoya on the basis of an examination of these patterns of scarification.

In the perception both of the rural population and of the post-colonial state, being Nkoya is primarily defined not so much by these or other cultural traits but by allegiance to state-recognized traditional rulers, called 'chief' in Zambian English,[15] and *Mwene*, pl. *Myene*, in Nkoya. If the *Mwene*[16] is Nkoya, the vast majority of his subjects are counted as Nkoya — the main exception being very recent immigrants into the chief's area, who have not yet been assimilated and who retain their original ethnic affiliation.

However, before we discuss the descriptive and historical details of chieftainship among the Nkoya let us have a look at the various subgroups out of which the contemporary ethnic cluster of the Nkoya is said to consist; these subgroups are, on their turn, mainly distinguished by reference to specific chief's titles.

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15 On the ambiguous nature of this term, cf. Apthorpe 1960; and van Binsbergen 1987b.

16 In Part I of this volume I have italicized Nkoya concepts such as *Mwene* ('king', 'ruler'),*lukena* ('*Mwene's* capital'), etc. I have however refrained from doing so when the word 'Mwene' is used in combination with a specific personal name, e.g. 'Mwene Munangisha'. In Parts II and III, which present the Nkoya text of *Likota lya Bankoya* and its English translation, I have refrained from such italicization; and likewise in literal quotations, in Part I, from these and other Nkoya texts.

1.2. Nkoya subgroups and the recent process of their ethnic convergence

the proliferation of Nkoya subgroups

The Nkoya today see themselves as a people whose membership, while concentrated in Kaoma district, is dispersed: sizeable clusters are found in the Zambezi flood plain, i.e. in Mongu district (under Mwene Nyati, Mwene Njungu and Mwene Lowa); in Lukulu district; in Mumbwa district (under Mwene Kabulwebulwe); in Kabompo district; and in Kalomo district (under Mwene Momba). In Namwala district, the chiefs Kayingu and Shezongo are sometimes considered as Nkoya, along with part of their subject population which however is more often counted separately as Lumbu or Ila (cf. Rennie & Mubita 1985a, 1985b). Finally, the Nkoya claim pockets of their people as far east as Lusaka district (on the Mwembeshi river), Kabwe rural district (under headman Lilanda), and Ndola rural district.[17] In this connexion, specific mention is sometimes made of the Ngolobani group of Nkoya, at Mangula, near Lusaka; they are claimed to have remained behind after assisting, in the first decade of the twentieth century, in the building of the line of rail from the then colonial headquarters Livingstone to the then Belgian Congo.[18] However, most Nkoya residing in villages of their own (i.e. not as modern urban migrants) near the Line of Rail are considered to be descendants of elephant hunters venturing so far eastward in the nineteenth century.[19] According to one Nkoya tradition[20] even the name of Lusaka, the national capital since the 1930s, was derived from a Nkoya word: *rushaka*, a round fruit which because of its wooden peel is used for dancers' ankle rattles.

Below we shall analyse the historical emergence of the word Nkoya used as an ethnonym. As far as the internal composition of that ethnic group is concerned, people now identifying as Nkoya have a great predilection for summing up the many subgroups out of which their 'people' or 'nation' consists: not only the clans, which for centuries have ceased to be localized and whose respective members now live side by side in the various localities where Nkoya-speakers are found — but

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17 Cf. Brelsford 1965: 15f; Northern Rhodesia 1943, 1960.

18 Oral source [5].

19 Cf. van Binsbergen 1981a: 359, n. 13; Nkoya immigrants in the city of Lusaka particularly refer, for their ritual and musical requirements, to a village named Kahare in Chief Mungule's area, Kabwe rural, not far from Lusaka's Matero township.

20 Oral source [2].

particularly the localized ethnic subgroups.[21] Similar, largely converging lists crop up in many interviews and in correspondence. For instance, a fairly exhaustive list is given by Mr Katete Shincheta:[22]

‘(1) Nkoya Mbwera of Mwinilunga District
(2) Nkoya Lukolwe of Kabompo District
(3) Nkoya Lukolwe of Lukulu District
(4) Nkoya Shishanjo of Kalabo District
(5) Nkoya Lushangi [Lushange] of (...) Kaoma District
(6) Nkoya Nawiko of Kaoma District
(7) Nkoya Mashasha of Kaoma District
(8) Nkoya Lumbu of Namwala District
(9) Nkoya Mbwera [Mbwela] of Kasempa District
(10) Nkoya Shibanda of Mumbwa District
(11) Nkoya Shikalu of Chief Momba in Kalomo District
(12) Nkoya of Chief Mungamba of Sesheke District
(13) Nkoya Shibanda of Chief Lilanda in Kabwe District.’

Sometimes the enumeration of subgroups is given a linguistic, dialectical, rather than an ethnic slant, e.g. in a list of Nkoya dialects as compiled by Mr Nason Mushakabantu:[23]

‘Nkoya has several dialects — Shililanda of (Mweene) [*sic*] Lilanda in Lusaka; Shukulumbwe of Mweene Kabulwebulwe of Mumbwa District and part of Namwala; Balumbu of Mweene Moomba [Momba] of Namwala District; Shimashasha of Mweene Kahare at Litoya Royal Establishment; Shiukalu [Shikalu] of Mulobezi, Nyambi, Shiyowe and Luampa areas; Shinkoya of Mweene Mutondo of Lukena Royal Establishment; Mbowela[24] of Mweene Nyati of Lukulu District, Kabompo, Kalabo and Mongu Districts.

Others can be located in Kabwe District under Chiefs Ngabwe and Kankomba who claim to have Nkoya orientation. I think the problem of having lost contact with each other over years, intermingling and marriages covering a stretch of well over 500 kilometres has led to disintegration and identical dialects mushrooming. However, it appears most can still and are able to trace their backgrounds to Nkoya clans.’

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21 One such list is to be found in Parts II and III below, in the Preface which Mr Hamba H. Mwene wrote for *Likota lya Bankoya.* Another similar one is given in oral source [3] 19.11.1973.

22 In a letter to the author, 25.10.1979.

23 In a letter to the author, dated 21.10.1987.

24 A contamination perhaps of the ethnonym *Mbwela* and the Lozi word *mboela,* which means ‘south’ and in particular refers to the Nalolo court.

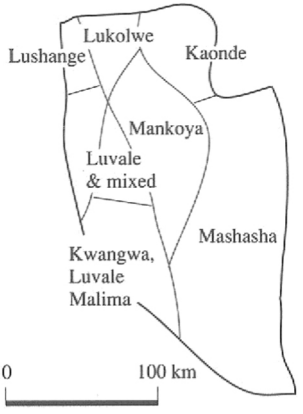

Diagram 3. Ethnic groups and subgroups in Mankoya district in 1933.[27]

Most of these ethnic subgroups are also discussed in the scholarly and popular literature on the area,[25] and in the district records.[26] The latter also contain an early sketch map of the main ethnic groups and subgroups in the district, reproduced here as diagram 3.

The nomenclature of these subgroups is neither stable nor consensual, and the various ethnic labels are often interchangeable. Thus Mwene Kabulwebulwe's people, now largely in Mumbwa district, are alternately claimed to be Mashasha,[28] Mbwela, Lumbu, Shibanda,[29]

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25 Clay 1945; Brelsford 1965; McCulloch 1951. Of the Nkoya sub-groups, the following were mentioned in Holub (1879: 3f): Lushange (*Alushanga*), Nkoya (*Mankoja* or *Mankoë*; Holub counts them among the principal ethnic groups of Barotseland), and Shibanda (*Wassiwanda*).

26 E.g. District Commissioner Mankoya to Provincial Commissioner Mongu, 30.4.1935, 'Tribal boundaries', enclosure in Zambia National Archives, KSX 1/1/1 Mankoya correspondence 1931-35.

27 District Commissioner Mankoya district to Director of Surveys, Livingstone, 17.7.1933, enclosure in Zambia National Archives, KSX 1/1/1 Mankoya correspondence 1931-35.

28 E.g. in District Commissioner Mankoya to Provincial Commissioner Mongu, 30.4.1935, 'Tribal boundaries', enclosure in Zambia National Archives, KSX 1/1/1 Mankoya correspondence 1931-35.

29 *Likota lya Bankoya* (22: 4).

Since Rev. Shimunika organized *Likota lya Bankoya* in chapters and verses, reference to specific passages of *Likota lya Bankoya* is made by

Kaonde-Ila (Brelsford 1965), and even (as in Mr Mushakabantu's statement) Shukulumbwe — the latter designation equating them with the dreaded raiders of the early administrative reports and travelogues.[30] Normally, however, the Mashukulumbwe are assumed to be identical to the Ila, the Nkoya's eastern neighbours.

Interchangeability of ethnic nomenclature is also striking in the context of the name Mbwela. A case in point is Sandasanda's (1972) remarkably rich compilation of Kaonde oral traditions belonging to the same literate ethno-history genre as *Likota lya Bankoya*, the text on which the present study revolves. Sandasanda discusses the Mbwela, *whom he also calls Mashasha and Nkoya*, as one of the four groups of original occupants of Kaondeland, northwestern Zambia. The other three groups are alleged to have been the 'Bushmen' (locally called *Bambwena Kulipi*, according to Sandasanda), the 'Mashasha of the Busanga area', and the 'BaSubya' (Subiya) (identified by Sandasanda as 'Hottentots'). The Busanga Mashasha[31] are claimed to be related to the Luyi or Lozi — the dominant ethnic group of the Zambezi flood plain and throughout Zambia's Western Province, and as such a referent in much of Nkoya history. In Sandasanda's description of early Busanga Mashasha society the extremely primitive economy is evoked which also other writers[32] have associated with the Mbwela and in general with the earliest Bantu inhabitants of western Zambia: in the absence of cultivation, their food is said to have consisted of fish, meat and raw birds, and they reportedly lived on floating dwellings in the water (Sandasanda 1972: 8f).

In contrast with many other sources, Sandasanda does not offer an etymology of the ethnic labels of Mashasha and Mbwela. A common explanation for the name *Mashasha* is that the name derives from the Lozi word *shasha*, equivalent to the Nkoya *manala*, 'a mat made of reed rushes'. According to widespread traditions, the Lozi gave this name to the group of people they saw leaving the Zambezi flood plain eastward, carrying their sleeping mats on their shoulders.[33] The Mbwela ethnic label, which is found all over western and northwestern

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citing chapter and verse numbers, separated by a colon, e.g. (12: 4). The edited Nkoya text of *Likota lya Bankoya*, and an English translation, are included below in the present volume, as Part II and Part III respectively. Alternatively, reference to specific numbered sections of my own argument in Part I will take the form of two digits separated not by a colon but by a period, thus: (3.2). Reference to unnumbered sub-sections will be through quoting their titles.

30 E.g. Tabler 1963; Holy 1975; Serpa Pinto 1881; Selous 1893.

31 'But these Busanga people it's known that some of them are Nkoya, the Mbwela people' [*sic*], Sandasanda 1972: 13; further on the Busanga of Mwene Kayingu, see Rennie & Mubita 1985a, 1985b.

32 Cf. White 1949, 1962; Schecter 1980a; Derricourt & Papstein 1977.

33 E.g. oral source [20]. Below we shall see that this etymology is not supported by *Likota lya Bankoya* (41: 8).

Zambia but which is particularly associated with the earliest Bantu dwellers on the Upper Zambezi and further north of the Zambezi/Congo watershed,[34] is generally considered to mean 'Westerners', but interpretations differ as to the specific people whose western neighbours the Mbwela are: are they 'west of the Lunda',[35] which would fit in with their early association with the Zambezi/Congo watershed; or are they 'west of the Lenje', as claimed in another oral source?[36]

This might suggest that the use of the word Mbwela has a situational aspect, and that the group designated by this ethnonym in any specific case merely depends on the speaker's geographical location.[37] Is Mbwela then no longer the designation for a specific cultural cluster? Twentieth-century Nkoya in or from Kaoma district scarcely recognize any historical or cultural links across the Angolan border. This is understandable in the face of an overwhelming immigration from Angola during this century, and hence the desire to insist on firm boundaries between the Nkoya identity and that of the immigrants. This state of affairs regrettably obscured the relevance of Angola-Zambian continuities for the interpretation of Nkoya history and culture until very late in my research. However, the affinities on the linguistic and cultural plane are unmistakable.[38] Serpa Pinto's description of the Angolan Mbwela — whom he visited in 1878 on his way to Barotseland and the Indian Ocean — is reminiscent of the situation in the Land of Nkoya in the early nineteenth century, but remains too unspecific for far-reaching conclusions:

> 'The Ambuelas [Mbwela], of far more favourable disposition, are not at all bellicose. They may well be the nicest indigenous people of Southern Africa. Great cultivators, they are no less active in the collection of wax. They are poor, but could be very rich indeed if they took to animal husbandry. They form a federation like the

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34 Cf. White 1949, 1962; Derricourt & Papstein 1977; Papstein 1978; Schecter 1980a.

35 'The name Mbwela was given to them by the Lunda, it means ''Westerners'', namely west of the Lunda'; oral source [20].

36 'The name Mbwela means ''Westerners'' and was given to them by the Lenje, who chased them to the west'; oral source [3], 19.11.1973.

37 By comparison, the ethnonym Tonga is used in South Central Africa for at least five very different ethnic groups (Mitchell 1971: v), and it is possible to explain at least some of these cases in terms not of cultural specificity but of political relations — notably, the rejection of central political authority (Lancaster 1974); a similar explanation, incidentally, is given for the ethnonym Kwangwa in Barotseland: 'those who have grown tired [*ku-kwanga*] of the state'. Kwangwa is the name for forest Lozi, who at one stage in their history voted with their feet and left the flood plain — without effectively leaving the sphere of Lozi influence; cf. Ikacana 1971; Brelsford 1965: 17f.

38 Cf. McCulloch 1951; Derricourt & Papstein 1977; Papstein 1978; Serpa Pinto 1881, i: 248-301; Capello & Ivens 1886, i: 267f.

> other[people]s, but the chiefs retain a certain measure of independence. Throughout in Africa we see that the people governed by minor rulers are the more happy and free. Here we do not witness those horror scenes which are familiar from the great empires ruled by autocrats' (Serpa Pinto 1881, ii: 95f; my translation).

In the twentieth century large geographical gaps — filled by many other ethnic groups — exist between the Angolan Mbwela, the dispersed pockets of Mbwela identified in Zambia, and the Nkoya proper (McCulloch 1951: end map). But something of a missing link, which bridges these distances, is offered in the 1799 account by M. Botelho de Vasconcellos of the head-waters of the Zambezi, where the 'Land of Loval', governed by 'the Soveta Caquica [Headman Kakenge]', is said to be

> ' ''bounded by the Sova-ship [Kingship] of Luy Amboellas [Luyi of the Mbwela?]'' '

to the east, and

> ' ''on the right (south) by the powerful Amboellas [Mbwela] chiefs of Bunda and Canunga [Kanongesha]; on the left (north) by lords, vassals to the great Sova [King] of the Moluas (the Miluas [Luba], or people of Muátá yá Nvo [Mwaat Yaamv]) (...). The traders were hospitably received, business was prosperous, and they found less robbery than in our territory — the more we advance the less villainous are the people.''
>
> Thus we see the Portuguese, in 1799, pressing into the heart of the country visited by Dr Livingstone.' (Burton 1873: 25, n.)

Around 1800 the ethnonym Mbwela turns out to be in use on the Upper Zambezi for groups which are associated with Mwaat Yaamv and which in the twentieth-century will be known as Lunda (e.g. Kanongesha).[39]

Cultural and linguistic affinities unite the Mbwela (including the Nkoya) in Angola and Zambia under a common ethnonym which far from being merely situational points to an original, if fragmented, shared identity. This is also reflected in the material culture (e.g. patterns of hunting and collecting, the presence of the *munkupele* hourglass drum). And even beyond the designation 'Mbwela' these affinities extend over much of eastern Angola, including such ethnic groups as the Ganguela (also cf. Burton 1873: 17) and the Luchazi. The

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39 On the significance of the use of the ethnonym Luba in this connexion, see below.

Ganguela word list as offered by Serpa Pinto[40] shows a great similarity with Nkoya as spoken today in Kaoma district, and this (against the background of the similarity between Nkoya and other non-Lozi languagues of Barotseland, particularly Luyana) may have brought Serpa Pinto (1881, ii: 8) to claim that there were three principal languages spoken in Barotseland by 1878: *Ganguela, Luina* (Luena, i.e. Luvale and Mbunda) and *Sezuto* (Sotho, i.e. Kololo or Lozi). Of course, the actual linguistic situation is far more complex than Serpa Pinto suggested (cf. Fortune 1963), but his observation convincingly brings out the linguistic continuity which exists between the Land of Nkoya and much of eastern Angola.

McCulloch (1951) confidently — but not yet on the basis of personal field-work — discusses all these peoples as one cultural cluster, and only has difficulty fitting the Nkoya in; he reserves a special chapter for them. Much more work remains to be done on this point. What is particularly needed is the type of research as undertaken by Papstein (1978) for the Luvale: extending the field-research, from Zambia, into Angola and Zaïre, searching for continuities which have become obscured by the fact that three very different nation-states have emerged in this African region during the past hundred years, each studied by the remarkably self-contained national academic communities in the former metropolitan countries of Great-Britain, Portugal and Belgium, and thus involving publications in English, Portuguese, French and Dutch. Given the relative international isolation of the Zambian Nkoya today, and the political and military insecurity which has prevailed in much of the region, I did not yet venture on such a major exploration, but it has to be undertaken in the near future, though not necessarily by myself.

pan-Nkoya convergence and its implications for the study of history

The full history of the many separate groups now brought together under the umbrella of Nkoya-ness, and of the interrelatedness of these subgroups, remains to be written, and lies largely outside of the present book's argument. Our view is blurred here by at least two factors. First should be mentioned the tendency towards 'pan-Nkoya' unification as an aspect of the overall ethnic process in modern Zambia. As one oral source out of many puts it:

> 'The Nkoya came from Luba as one people, under one chief.
> Mwene Manenga is the source of the kingships of both Mutondo and Kahare.'[41]

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40 Serpa Pinto 1881, ii: 325-35; he claims that, with slight modifications, Ganguela is spoken by '*Quimbandes* [Ovimbundu], *Luchazes* [Luchazi]*e Ambuelas* [Mbwela]' — 1881, ii: 95.

41 Oral source [18] 13.10.1977; cf. Shimunika's statement:

Secondly there is the difficulty of unravelling the different strands of linguistic, cultural and political traits which by contemporary ethnic activists are seen as but one, holistically integrated package but which in fact may have been less coinciding. For instance, while in the contemporary Nkoya core land people listed as Nkoya tend to be united by a common language and culture under the two major chiefs (Mwene Mutondo and Mwene Kahare) who are clearly identified as Nkoya, the Nkoya-ness of Mbwela in Mwinilunga and Kasempa is far less marked, and whatever their cultural and linguistic traits, the Nkoya headmen in those districts resort under Lunda and Kaonde chiefs.

Are the Nkoya really an ancient people, dispersed by the accidents of history in the nineteenth and twentieth century, and now struggling to reclaim some original unity? This is what those identifying as Nkoya today like to believe. The evidence in this book, and my specific arguments as based on that evidence, lead to a very different interpretation. Nkoya turns out to be a rather recent ethnic label, whose traceable historical referent was originally a fairly small polity (that centring on the Mutondo kingship) in what today is called Kaoma district. Largely because of the relatively prominent position of the Mutondo kingship, among other Nkoya royal titles, *once these had been incorporated in the Lozi state*, the Mutondo title has subsequently managed to emerge as a focus and a name for widespread cultural and linguistic affinities. These affinities may well predate the process of state formation which gave rise to that 'Nkoya' polity in the first place, but in earlier centuries this set of cultural traits was certainly not yet designated as 'Nkoya'.

Meanwhile, however, the word Nkoya has obtained such hegemonic qualities as to obscure the fact that the Nkoya are not so much a people, but rather a historically and geographically heterogeneous set of inhabitants of the western half of Zambia now *seeking to define themselves as* a people. Originating from the group which in the last few centuries was most consistently associated with the land of Nkoya (an ancient toponym), the word Nkoya thus features *both* as the name of one of the ethnic subgroups (namely Mwene Mutondo's subjects, also called the Nawiko), and as the name of the — newly invented — overall group.

Identity formation goes hand in hand with the construction of a common past, and therefore many of the oral traditions one can today collect among people identifying as Nkoya, seek to state the unity of Nkoya ethnic subgroups by tracing historical and political links between these subgroups. The most obvious way to claim such links is through the chief's titles associated with them. Often these links are conceptualized as genealogical ties between specific past rulers which ties then are supposed, by the participants in the local society, to be far

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'Even though the fruits may be scattered, we come from one and the same mukolwa tree' (4: 3).

from metaphorical but instead to correspond to actual historical fact. Another way of conceptualizing these links is by *perpetual kinship*: the metaphorical expression of political relations in a kinship idiom involving two royal or chief's titles A and B, so that *every* incumbent of title A stands forever in the same fictive kin relation (e.g. that of 'younger brother') to every incumbent of title B. Political relations of hierarchy and seniority, autochthonous versus immigrant status, and secular rulers versus ritual specialists, throughout South Central Africa are commonly expressed in terms of perpetual kinship (cf. Roberts 1976; Schecter 1980a), but among the Nkoya this idiom is little developed; yet we shall repeatedly come back to this point in the course of our argument.

In the scholarly study of the history of western Zambia, the ethnic and historical constructions of the local people are our obvious point of departure. It is essential that we seek to understand their conscious history in the context of their experience, identity and political concerns. The study of history involves, among other things, the study of a particular ideological idiom. In this sense, but in this sense alone, it is eminently meaningful to speak of 'the Nkoya' — for they certainly exist as a symbolic entity in the minds of contemporary participants. However, historiography proper would seek to take distance from that idiom, and use whatever understanding we have achieved, in order to trace back the actual course of events and the actual political and social relationships from under the smoke screen of a local ethno-history that particularly serves identity formation. An academic history which entirely concentrates on such decoding, and that misses or ignores the meaning with which the people endow their own constructed history, is not worth pursuing. In the course of the present argument we shall see that to some limited extent it is possible to unravel 'actual' historical process in a way that abstracts almost entirely from local consciousness, and thus to reconstruct processes of state formation, the economic and ideological basis of these processes, and the amazingly central role of gender therein. We shall also see that such reconstruction is only possible at the level of broad generalities — specific genealogical relations, deeds and movements of specific historical individuals can hardly be traced in detail on the basis of an ethno-history which serves identity formation. In that respect our analysis will be one of Nkoya (ethno-)history, but it will not produce an academic history of 'the Nkoya' — this ethnonym being an evasive category which belongs to the realm of ethno-history more than that of academic history.

1.3. The major Nkoya chiefs and their political environment today

The two principal Nkoya *Myene* today, Mwene Mutondo and Mwene Kahare, have managed to maintain at least the appearances of an intact traditional chief's court (*lukena*, pl. *zinkena*), with a number of state-subsidized traditional offices: the principal councillor or *Mwana-*

shihemi (usually referred to as Prime Minister in outside contacts), retainers, *kapasus* (uniformed chief's messengers with limited powers of law enforcement), and the court musicians whose task it is to announce the chief's presence and well-being by playing the royal music every day at sunrise and nightfall. The *lukena* population further consists of the *Mwene*'s wife (*Lihano*, pl. *Mahano*), female kin, and clients (often of slave ancestry),[42] all of whom are not eligible for state subsidy.

In the course of my ethnographic and oral historical field-work in Kaoma district, I lived with my family at the *lukena* of Mwene Kahare Kabambi, from September 1973 to April 1974, and returned there for shorter periods in 1977, 1978, 1988 and 1989. My sharing in the day-to-day life of the 'royal establishment' (as the *lukena* is called in the official state terminology) not only yielded insights in its contemporary functioning (van Binsbergen & Geschiere 1985b: 261-70), and its underlying organizational and conceptual structure; it also created a context in which I could elicit oral data on the history of these courts and their subjects, and could begin to evaluate this information against the background of contemporary issues: increasing insistence on a unitary Nkoya identity in the face of regional and national political and economic processes, as well as local interests, factional conflicts within the Nkoya group and its neo-traditional political structure.

Nkoya chiefs today operate within four superimposed political complexes, each stemming from a particular phase in the historical genesis of the socio-political structure of central western Zambia. These complexes are:

(a) a very vague association with the historical Musumban Lunda empire of Mwaat (King) Yaamv in southern Zaïre;

(b) the internal structure of incapsulated Nkoya polities;

(c) the remnants of the Barotse indigenous administration; and

(d) the post-colonial state.

We shall discuss these four complexes one after the other, in the above, chronologically-inspired order. However, we should constantly remind ourselves that in actual fact, whatever their differential historical origin and reference, each complex in its own way informs the *current* socio-political structure of central western Zambia.

the distant Lunda association

The contemporary Nkoya political culture retains a lingering notion that ultimately, across the ages, Nkoya kingship derives (via an inter-

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[42] Some court clients are still alleged to hold the traditional office of *Tupondwa*, the *Mwene*'s secret executioner.

mediate stage of dwelling near the Zambezi/Congo watershed) from the Musumban Lunda empire of the Mwaat Yaamv[43] in southern Zaïre. Although there appear to have been no actual contacts with Lunda courts for decades (cf. Mutumba Mainga 1973: 19, n. 43), members of Nkoya royal families still pride themselves on being from Lunda stock; they sometimes speak Lunda when among themselves.[44]

In this connexion a peculiarity needs to be addressed: the fact that the Nkoya oral sources as well as *Likota lya Bankoya* insist on an origin, at the same time, 'from the Luba people' (2: 1) and 'from Mwantiyavwa'. Until a few decades ago it was customary, in synthetic academic accounts of demographic, cultural and political expansion from southern Zaïre southward, to speak obliquely of 'Luba-Lunda'. Meanwhile detailed historical and linguistic research by Hoover (1980) and Reefe (1981), among others, makes it impossible to maintain this indiscriminate use of ethnonyms. Reefe (1981: 73f) clearly distinguishes two parallel belts in Southern Zaïre, one (designated Luba) north and east to the other (designated Lunda); Mwaat Yaamv belongs to the Lunda belt and is usually identified as such in our days. Does this mean that the Nkoya claim a distant ethnic origin in the northeastern Luba belt, while only at a later point in time they (or more precisely, the ancestors of their ruling groups) were caught in the political sphere of influence of Mwaat Yaamv?

The problem with such an interpretation is that not the slightest collective memories appear to exist among the Nkoya as to what such a Luba connexion, as distinct from that with Mwaat Yaamv, might have consisted of.

An ethnonym however does not constitute a timeless and permanent datum, but is necessarily subject to constant redefinition in time and space. An easy solution to the Luba/Lunda puzzle, at least with reference to the Nkoya and to central western Zambia, is suggested by the fact that in the earliest Portuguese sources relating to the region, the term Lunda is not found and Mwaat Yaamv is identified as Luba. This is particularly the case in the oldest reference by M. Botelho de Vasconcellos in 1799, as quoted above (Burton 1873: 25, n.). Almost a century later, Capello & Ivens (e.g. 1886, i: 427) use the ethnonyms *Lunda* and *Lua* [Luba] as interchangeable, and refer to Mwaat Yaamv as *Lua.* This most probably reflects the local usage at the time on the Kabompo (along which they are trekking) and in adjacent areas. Much as Mbwela, the Luba ethnonym (which actually shades over into Mbwela) is associated, from the point of view of western Zambia, with the head-waters of the Zambezi and the country immediately north of

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43 Cf. Vansina 1966; Bustin 1975; and extensive references cited there. In Nkoya this ruler is called *Mwantiyavwa,* and this orthography will be retained in this book in Nkoya texts and their translation.

44 In an undated, untitled manuscript notebook in the possession of Ntaniela Mwene Mulimba in 1977 (cf. oral source [16]), Mwene Kahare is listed as a Lunda chief, along with such well-known Zambian Lunda chiefs as Musokantanda and Kanongesha.

them across the Zambezi/Congo watershed, rather than with the far Zaïrean interior. Therefore, when the Nkoya identify as hailing from 'the Luba' they are merely repeating, rather than complicating, their claim of Mwaat Yaamv association.[45]

Capello & Ivens (1886, i: opposite 333, 412-19, ii: 12) also make clear that by the late nineteenth century Mwaat Yaamv's empire was still a presence on the Upper-Zambezi. They claim to have crossed the Barotse/Lunda boundary and entered his realm at the Lunda chief's Chilembe's capital, near the Kabompo/Zambezi confluence, i.e. as far south as 13 °20' and only 80 km north of the Lozi village of Libonta on the Zambezi. Clearly Chilembe's was a rather isolated outpost. It is only after trekking in a northeasterly direction along the Kabompo through 300 kilometres of forest (sparsely inhabited, as Capello & Ivens describe, by Lozi, Mbunda, Mbowe, Mbwela, Luena and Nkoya), that they claim to have crossed again into Mwaat Yaamv's territory. However, had they gone due north they would have reached a contiguous Lunda area within only about a third of that distance. These are important geographical parameters to keep in mind when, in the course of our analysis of Nkoya state formation, we shall discuss the Humbu war (c. 1790) as an attempt to force the Nkoya *Myene* back under the control of Mwaat Yaamv. This war was fought in the Upper Zambezi area, where a hundred years later Musumban overlordship was not a distant nominal association (as it is today among the Nkoya) but still a living reality.

Ideas of Lunda links were rekindled in the time of the Mushala guerilla in Zambia's Western and Northwestern Province in the late 1970s: along with other major 'chiefs', Mwene Mutondo featured, at least on paper, in grand schemes that, after the envisaged abolition of the post-colonial state in its present form, stipulated a confederation of neo-traditional states extending over much of Zambia, Zaïre and Angola (cf. Wele 1987: 153).

Significantly, in everyday conversation and in court proceedings, neither the very distant Mwaat Yaamv, nor latter-day Lozi rulers (whose generic title is *Litunga*) would normally be referred to by the term *Mwene*, although Nkoya traditions use it freely for Barotse rulers prior to Lubosi Lewanika I (1842-1916), under whose reign Lozi domination over much of western Zambia was consolidated and carried over into the colonial period. While references to the Lunda tend to be limited to a distant past, the Lozi are a main reference point in Nkoya ethnic and political identity: they are seen as an ethnically and historically closely related people, who nevertheless have politically dominated and socially humiliated the Nkoya ever since Lewanika's rise to power, and throughout the colonial period. If the Nkoya consider their historical experience as bitter, it is by exclusive reference to the Lozi (cf. van Binsbergen 1985a).

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[45] Probably a similar argument applies to the puzzling Luba group east of the Lumbu.

chiefs, royal kin, and headmen: the internal structure of the neo-traditional Nkoya polities

The relations between the *Mwene* (as recognized by the state and the Barotse system), royal kin, councillors and subjects are complex: embedded in ordinary kinship relations, they involve a multitude of dynastic titles, so that the only two *Myene* in Kaoma district who are still recognized as 'royal' by the outside world in fact are surrounded by a considerable number of other *Myene*, some of whom are heriditary councillors at the two royal courts and even contenders for royal succession. In Nkoya discourse today, the word *Mwene* (designating an incumbent of the institution of *Wene*: the kingship) is used not only for major Nkoya rulers past and present and most other ethnically foreign rulers of similar stature, but also for many members of the royal kin, for lesser nobles, for clan heads, and for every village headman. The title of *Mwene* carries various shades of formality, which reflect the various intermeshing political and administrative contexts in which Nkoya royal courts function today. Thus *Mwene* on the one hand means the unique incumbent of the highest political office among the Nkoya, and on the other hand has a more diffuse usage applying to a much larger number of people. The same applies to other terms for royal status, particularly: *Lihano* (pl. *Mahano*), female escort to a male *Mwene*; and *Mwana Mwene* (pl. *Bana ba Bamyene*), (classificatory)[46] child to a *Mwene.* The title *Mukwetunga* (pl. *Bakwetunga),* male escort to a female *Mwene*, these days has no longer living incumbents since for almost a century all Nkoya *Myene* have been male.

This tension between formal, unique versus more diffuse, multitudinous usage of these terms can also be detected in various passages of *Likota lya Bankoya.* Royal kin who have clearly not or not yet acceded to the kingship may yet be called *Mwene,* and then the word would mean 'prince', 'royal' or 'lord' rather than 'king'.[47] At one point greater clarity is achieved by speaking of the 'senior or principal *Mwene*', implying the existence of several lesser bearers of that title:

> 'When they arrived here in Nkoya they did not want Mwene Mutondo Kashina to be their senior Mwene any more.' (34: 5)

In the life at the *lukena* today, women are not very much in evidence. Not only the *Mwene* but also all court officials are men. The *Mwene*'s

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46 The anthropological concept of classificatory kinship applies when kinship categories which could be biologically distinguished are pooled under the same general term, e.g. when the same term (such as the Nkoya word *mwana*, 'child') is used indiscriminately and without further qualification for Ego's biological children, brother's children, father's brother's children, mother's sister's son's children, etc.

47 Cf. 6: 2; 44: 2; 44: 3.

sisters play a ceremonial role, e.g. as watching over the *Mwene*'s beer and drinking vessel (the fear of poisoning is very strong among neo-traditional officeholders), and as singing with the royal orchestra. The *Mwene*'s immediate female kin are among the very few people who have free and unlimited access to his chambers. As cupbearers they are often present at private meetings between the *Mwene* and his councillors. They are treated with deference by the *Mwene*, but there are no indications that they are considered as actively sharing in the *Mwene*'s status and prerogatives. They play a role in the preparation of offerings (beer, meal) for the domestic shrine of the royal village, and feature in the enthronement ceremony there, but the important rain ritual at the graves of the royal ancestors is — at least at present — entirely in the hands of senior male courtiers.[48]

The rather humble and informal position of the Nkoya female royal kin today contrasts with the pattern prevailing in many parts of Africa.[49] Moreover, the relative aloofness of women in traditional political relations today should not make one overlook the fact that in the rural economy, in day-to-day domestic and conjugal matters, and in non-royal ritual, Nkoya women display considerable power and initiative. Their economic and legal position and their gender solidarity (primarily achieved and expressed through female puberty rites) grant them considerable independence vis-à-vis men. Underneath a formal etiquette of female submissiveness, Nkoya culture tends to stress a considerable gender equality (van Binsbergen 1987a).

In chapter 5 we shall see the great extent to which the contemporary pattern of gender relations at the *lukena* differs from the situation in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

Given the fact that, with regard to many aspects of socio-political dynamics, the distinction between chief and headman is mainly gradual in twentieth century Nkoya neo-traditional politics, a closer examination of Nkoya headmen and their titles not only throws light on fundamental local-level processes in Nkoya village society, but will turn out to be very illuminating for the analysis of Nkoya royal titles and political history in general.

My data derive from the Njonjolo and Kazo valleys of Mwene Kahare's area, in the eastern part of Kaoma district. In the 1970s and

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48 Oral sources [2], [3] 21.11.1973, [21] 16.10.1973. The *Mwene* himself is not allowed to go to his ancestors' graves for reasons of symbolic avoidance: death and kingship are incompatible. This appears to be a fundamental difference between the Nkoya and the Lozi kingship: the Lozi royal graves feature prominently in Lozi court ritual and *Litungas* have been recorded to take offerings there themselves (cf. Coillard 1971: 217).

49 Of course, the special ritual and political roles of female royal kin is a recurrent feature in African 'Early States'; cf. Claessen 1984; for a Zambian example, cf. Shimwaayi Muntemba 1970; Mukuni n.d. (both on the Mukuni Leya of Livingstone District, incidentally close neighbours of the southernmost Nkoya, those of Mwene Momba).

1980s cash-cropping, either within or outside the sphere of influence of the state's agricultural schemes, introduced the concept of 'the farm' (with fragmented and isolated settlement, mounting emphasis on the nuclear family, and some agricultural wage labour — in other words as an incipient form of participation in the peripheral capitalist mode of production) as an alternative to 'the village'. However, the village mode has remained the standard option in many outlying villages, and the personal and labour histories I collected in 1973-74 among two hundred adults of both sexes and various age brackets shows that its fundamental outlines have remained fairly constant since the 1930s and 1940s — if not much earlier. One important aspect of the village mode is a career model stipulating that a man by the age of forty or fifty should seek to establish himself as a village headman, after decades in which he would have attached himself as junior kinsman to a series of senior kinsmen/patrons, intermittently with spells of absence as a labour migrant.[50]

Villages are named after their headmen (although they may also have, in addition, a less formal nickname). The most honourable way to succeed to headmanship is by *ushwana*: to inherit a previous incumbent's name, social person, and selected material goods (cf. van Binsbergen 1981b).

A name inheritance ceremony is to take place up to a year after a person's death, and consists of a nocturnal musical festival attended by hundreds of people. After midnight elders come forth to implement their earlier secret deliberations as to who of those present at the festival should inherit the name. They scoop down on the person of their choice and literally try to catch him or her, while the one elected struggles and runs in order to avoid the dangerous responsibility inherent in succession: not only may the new name not agree with the candidate — which leads to the latter's illness, possibly death — but also does the successor attract the envy and malice of other candidates, often channelled through sorcery attacks, poisoning, or more open acts of violence. Theoretically, a chosen candidate who manages to run downhill from the village and reach the stream and plunge into it, before the elders can catch him or her, will go free[51] — but I have never come across actual cases: 'to be caught' is a very great honour. Once 'caught', the candidate — these days to be dressed in white

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50 Van Binsbergen 1975. For similar dynamics, cf. Turner 1957; Fielder 1979. For the overall discussion in this section, cf. van Binsbergen, in prep.

51 This is our first encounter, in this argument, with water symbolism, which occupies such a prominent role in Nkoya culture. Water is a catalyst in the contact between Man and the Supernatural, as is also clear from the fact that traditional prayers are to be preceded by taking water in one's mouth and spitting it out (1: 7 and author's field-notes). The more direct contact with the ancestors through the river — which throughout Central and South Central Africa is considered their abode — redeems the candidate from the ritual association, subject to human volition and choice, with one particular ancestor through *ushwana.*

clothes, in the past to be smeared with white koalin clay — is placed on a reed mat inside a half-circular reed windbreak, and welcomed by the electors and members of the community in general by clapping, praises and short speeches in which the merging of the social personality of the heir and the predecessor is stressed. While seated under a newly-erected shrine of the appropriate type, the heir's new identity is confirmed when members of the community line up to sprinkle meal over his or her head. Royal succession follows the same ceremonial pattern but in a grander form, and also involves secret medication at the hand of the court priests.

Usually the headman title thus inherited is a name which has circulated in the family group for some generations — but not necessarily as a hereditary title granting rights to exercise the village headmanship. The family group is a micro-political more than a genealogical or residential unit, usually extending — along with other such groups — over a number of villages, with rights to headmanship in only one or a few. Ever since the inception of labour migration more than a century ago, close kinsmen residing in distant places of work are still counted as 'members' of the village conceived primarily as a micro-political cluster. A central concern of the village group is the management and transfer to new generations of a repertoire of established, hereditary personal names (*lizina*, pl. *mazina*). Intragroup conflict is often interpreted in supernatural terms referring to difficulties in the transfer of such names (van Binsbergen 1977, 1979), and inter-group conflict in terms of the attempt to usurp or eradicate the other group's name.

In this fascinating dialectics of individuality[52] and group identity, demographic vicissitudes and survival as a group, some names may become latent for a few decades, only to be revived after some generations. Thus about one third of the names of village headmen[53] in the twenty-odd villages of the Njonjolo valley (where Mwene Kahare's *lukena* has been situated since the 1920s) goes back to the generation of the present Kahare's grandfather Shamamano and his siblings in the late nineteenth century, even if people are now unable (or, for reasons of partial slave ancestry, unwilling) to trace their precise genealogical links to that generation.

A particular name may accrue to a socio-political office such as village headman; but on the other hand the pool of a group's names is not unchangeable, and powerful and impressive individuals often manage to add their own chosen praise-names to that pool. Individual achievement is then incapsulated, and redeemed from its initial sorcery connotations (cf. van Binsbergen 1981a: ch. 4), to precipitate (as a collective good) a new name, which is subject to transmission to later generations.

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52 For on one level *ushwana* celebrates the deceased incumbent and the latter's heir; cf. van Binsbergen 1987a.

53 Some of these names appear below, 3.3, 'bias in the treatment of slavery'.

Likewise, if even after many years of waiting (in exile, or as a labour migrant in town) and politicking no village headmanship becomes available (and such office is heavily, sometimes murderously, contended), an ambitious man may go and found his own village, rallying his junior kinsmen, lending either his given birth name or his self-chosen praise-name to the newly established village, and hoping (but now more resignedly) that in later years one of the more prestigious names circulating in his kin group may yet be given to him through *ushwana.* Equally likely, his own name may be inherited by his successor as headman of the new village, and the wider kin group's pool of names will then have slightly altered its composition.

It is no exaggeration to say that, until the alternative career perspective of the individualized farm became available (and in most villages this is still only an option open to a minority), the process of individual mobility and group identity preservation constituted[54] the very motor of Nkoya village society, the central organizing principle of kin groups, factions, individual careers, and leadership outside the domain of neo-traditional *lukena* politics. The process was and is still articulated in serene or festive integrative collective rituals: not only *ushwana* but also the redress, at the village shrine, of illnesses interpreted in terms of defective name inheritance; and the process is also reflected in the no less frequent, deeply emotional outbursts of hostile gossip, sorcery actions and accusations, and inquests, where it provides the idiom for the expression of the kin group's anxieties, particularly in a context of grave illness and sudden death.

In this way everyday village life is to a considerable extent structured by the process of incessant waxing and waning of names and titles at the level of village headman, an interlocking process of ascription (through *ushwana*) as well as achievement through personal initiative, power games and the handling of public opinion and rhetorics. Given the diffuse and contentious nature of authority and the negotiable, situational nature of kinship roles in Nkoya village society, the formal status of headman is indispensable if one is to manage the social, marital, productive and ritual affairs of the small village group, and to arbitrate its numerous minor and major conflicts. In the process, the headman is usually aided by a junior kinsman acting as assistant headman.

It is very likely that the local-level socio-political processes described here have formed a constant in the society of central western Zambia, extending throughout the colonial period back into the last few centuries before the imposition of colonial rule. However, in at least one respect did the colonial state significantly alter the overall pattern. In line with the general bureaucratic remodelling of local polities, and while respecting the headmen's subordinate position vis-à-vis the chiefs, the colonial state accorded headmen a bureaucratic status of

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54 That is, at the micro-political level; no doubt there are underlying economic and symbolic factors and constraints.

their own by issuing them with 'the book': the village register used for the administration of hut tax. Rural-based taxation was abolished at Independence. However, when the responsibilities of chiefs and headmen in the context of village registration and village productivity were redefined in the Zambian Village Registration and Development Act of 1971, the village register took the place of the earlier tax book. The public status of a new village headman has to be confirmed by his inheriting his predecessor's book or, in the case of a newly created village, his being issued with a book of his own. 'The book' is therefore still the much-coveted sign of office for the village headman, and as such the subject of numerous machinations within Nkoya village politics.

the indigenous Barotse administration and the colonial state

The Lozi state[55] had reached its greatest expansion in the late nineteenth century, after the Luyana dynasty had put an end to a quarter of a century (1840-1864) of immigrant rule by the Kololo, a Sotho military force immigrating from presentday South Africa. In this expansion process, many groups in western Zambia were relegated to the status of 'Lozi subject tribes', with their rulers incorporated in relatively junior positions in the Lozi indigenous aristocratic hierarchy, and eclipsed by Lozi 'representative *indunas*', which the *Litunga* had begun to station in the outlying areas of the Lozi kingdom after its restoration from Kololo rule. Clay (1945: 16) cites the year 1899 for the advent of representative *indunas* in Mwene Kahare's area, and *Likota lya Bankoya* mentions the date of 1904, but also suggests much earlier dates (43: 13; 43: 15; 48: 4). In those initial years of British South Africa Company rule Lewanika's territorial claims were still in full expansion (Stokes 1966). The arrangement was formalized in 1917:

> 'As far back as 1917 the Lozi Paramount Chief felt that the two Nkoya chiefs were not in effective control of the district and so reinforced them with 14 Silalo[56] Indunas each of whom had a court and made people pay tribute to the Lozi Paramount Chief.'[57]

The number, geographical distribution, and power of these *indunas* was greatly expanded in the first two decades of colonial rule — much to

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55 Cf. Mutumba Mainga 1973; Prins 1980; Gluckman 1943, 1968a, 1968b; Turner 1952.

56 The *silalo* is a Barotse administrative district under an *induna*; each consists of several *sililanda* units, which in turn each comprise several villages (Mutumba Mainga 1973: 48).

57 District Secretary Kaoma to Permanent Secretary Western Province, 10.5.1974, enclosure in Kaoma district files, ADM/12 'Chiefs and headmen'.

the resentment of non-Lozi populations, and to the increasing irritation of colonial administrators in these areas.[58] In the Nkoya case, their inferior status as 'subject tribe' was clearly brought out by the fact that the major, kettle-shaped royal drums (*liwoma*, pl. *mawoma*) of the Mutondo kingship, captured by the Kololo around 1860, after the restoration of the Luyana dynasty had never been returned; also the other royal titles among the Nkoya (especially Mwene Kahare) were never allowed to have anything but minor drums (*zingoma*).[59]

As the argument of this book develops, we shall have occasion to assess the extent of Lozi overlordship in central western Zambia in the *precolonial* period. With some minor qualifications, the emerging picture turns out to confirm the views held by both the Lozi establishment and the scholarly literature: Lozi control of what is now Kaoma district dates back to at least the middle of the nineteenth century. The Lozi viewpoint was for instance phrased, in 1977, by Chief Litia, son of Litunga Mbikusita and the most senior representative of the Lozi indigenous administration in Kaoma district. He claimed that Lozi representative *indunas* were in Kaoma long before the Whites came,

> 'partly in request of the Nkoya chiefs for protection against the Kaonde'.[60]

However, this state of affairs, far from humiliating to the Nkoya, merely allows them to share in the great Lozi identity, for in Chief Litia's view

> 'The Nkoya are Lozi — the Nkoya chiefs are Lozi chiefs.
> Soka [Shihoka, a key figure in Nkoya traditions] Nalinanga was a Lozi prince, a brother of the Lozi prince Mwanambinyi.'[61]

The Nkoya sources are greatly divided on the point of Lozi overlordship: some[62] admit it as a precolonial reality, and the author of *Likota lya Bankoya* is among them. Others vehemently reject this

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58 Cf. Stokes 1966.; the irritation is e.g. very clear from the data contained in Zambia Archives ZA 1/13, Barotse influence.

59 Drums of the *liwoma* type (semi-globular, and with a diameter of about 1 metre), which are now completely absent among the Nkoya, have since formed part of the Lozi royal orchestra (Brown 1984), and significantly enthronement of the *Litunga* on the principal *liwoma* is the climax of the Lozi coronation ceremony; cf. Zimbabwe National Archives, photographic collection, Barotse section, photograph 20143 (showing the coronation of Litunga Imwiko in 1946), and 6707 (showing the Lozi royal instruments in the 1910s).

60 Oral source [9].

61 Oral source [9].

62 E.g. oral source [11].

interpretation, and claim that the Lozi only came to control Kaoma district as a result of their being favoured by the colonial state.[63]

The latter, Nkoya-chauvinist interpretations are often expressed by reference to Dr Mutumba Mainga's book *Bulozi under the Luyana kings*, which is strongly disliked by some Nkoya readers since they feel that the Nkoya material which Mutumba Mainga, a Zambian historian of Lozi background, collected at the *zinkena* of Mwene Mutondo and Mwene Kahare, while duly acknowledged (Mutumba Mainga 1973: 240f and passim), has been misused to overstate the case of Lozi control of the Land of Nkoya in the nineteenth century.[64] I am convinced that such an assessment of Mutumba Mainga's well-balanced pioneering work is undeserved. Her use of the Nkoya sources is enthusiastic, respectful, and largely free of Lozi chauvinism.

Letting the precolonial political relations rest for the moment, under the colonial state's policy of indirect rule the Barotse indigenous administration was certainly allowed to control most of western Zambia including the Nkoya area. In this context the Nkoya *Myene* have functioned in a Lozi (neo-)traditional political hierarchy.[65]

Within Kaoma district, the central division among the Nkoya today is that between Mwene Mutondo and Mwene Kahare. This moiety-like structure has emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Mwene Mutondo and Mwene Kahare happened to be the only Nkoya chiefs who had managed to be incorporated into the expanding and encroaching Lozi precolonial state administration without total loss of royal status and power, and who in that process successfully withstood the machination of Lozi representative *indunas*.

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63 E.g. oral source [4]. I regret that this interpretation has one-sidedly dominated my earlier published accounts of Nkoya/Lozi relations. Not only does the evidence as presented in this book prove beyond the slightest doubt that the Nkoya states were subservient to the Kololo and Luyana state as from the middle of the nineteenth century, but also we have to admit that strong rejection of Lozi overlordship has *not* been a constant ever since, and was nurtured by events and processes in the colonial period (e.g. the Lozi monopolization of political representation, development and party organization at the regional and provincial level, the dethronement of Muchayila, etc.) as much as by any animosity going back to the nineteenth century. If the Mutondo and Kahare titles survived into the twentieth century it was under domination by, but also under the protection of, the *Litunga*, and this must have created considerable sympathy at least among aristocratic Nkoya circles; cf. Timuna's statement in 1947, as quoted below. Prins summarizes my earlier position in the following words:

> 'W. van Binsbergen proposes a theme of consistent Nkoya enmity to the east' (Prins 1980: 256).

However, in the light of the present evidence such a position can no longer be supported.

64 E.g. oral source [5]. Rev. Shimunika, too, admitted having read Mutumba Mainga's book and denounced it sharply in ethnic terms but without identifying specific points of error: oral source [22].

65 Cf. Gluckman 1943, 1968a.

In asserting their royal status, the then incumbents of the Kahare and Mutondo titles did benefit from the fact that their court was of royal stature, and could boast of a royal orchestra, however curtailed. Some other factors in their political survival we shall discuss below: Mutondo was an important source of skins and ivory for the Lozi court, while Kahare had ingratiated himself with the Lozi king, and enriched himself in cattle, by services in the Lozi war against the Nkoya's eastern neighbours, the Ila. When the Lozi state became the Barotse-land Protectorate under British South Africa Company rule and continued as such within the later colonial state of Northern Rhodesia, the incorporated status of Kahare and Mutondo in the Lozi state was carried over into the colonial context.

Another Nkoya royal chief, Shakalongo, of equal if not greater esteem and stature as compared to Kahare and Mutondo, did not survive Lozi and colonial incorporation, and was completely eclipsed by Afumba, the representative *induna* placed in Shakalongo's area.

Apparently, the downfall of Shakalongo was the most serious defeat the Nkoya chiefs sustained. One oral source indicates that in this case Afumba's subjugating efforts were facilitated by the internal strife over this title:

> 'When the Europeans came there was a quarrel between four brothers because of that name; and because of such lack of unity the name of Shakalongo was not recognized, abolished, replaced by a Nkamba.[66] Shakalongo did not protest. Timuna did protest and therefore the Kahare name did not disappear.'[67]

The royal claims continued to be cherished for some decades. One Nkoya historical text[68] relates a court case in the mid-1930s between the then holder of the Shakalongo title — already reduced to a mere village headmanship, as it still is today — and Afumba, in which Shakalongo sought in vain to assert his seniority.

A fate similar to Shakalongo's awaited almost all other Nkoya *Myene*: their titles lived on as those of simple headmen, without any formal recognition and remuneration from the colonial or the post-colonial state. The list of these *Myene* whose titles now only exist as titles of headmen or even as mere individual's names and who since the early decades of the twentieth century have had no official chief's status any more, is amazingly long:

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66 *Nkamba* is the Nkoya term for Lozi representative *induna*.

67 Oral source [22].

68 Anonymous (a), n.d.; this is Rev. Shimunika's pamphlet *Muhumpu wa byambo bya mwaka — Nkoya*, to be discussed below.

> 'Mwe[69] Shewana, Kamanisha, Shoma, Nyungu, Nyati, Shakalongo, Kangombe, Pumpola, Yawoka, Mwe Funjo, Shamawango (his overlord was Mwe Funjo), Mwe Tumbama, Mwe Tulisha, Mwe Shingongo, Mwe Kingama, Mwe Yuvwenu, Mwe Kafunguta, Mwe Lishenga, Mwe Kawango [Kawangu], Mwe Mboma, Mwe Kumina, Mwe Mulimba, Mwe Muleka.
>
> Of these, Shakalongo was the only one to have a fully-fledged royal orchestra, but all these *Myene* possessed *zingongi* [royal bells] as proof of their royal status.'[70]

But even Mutondo's and Kahare's position remained precarious throughout the colonial period, and particularly Kahare continued to be threatened by the representative *induna* in his area, Simuliankumba Nkumbula.

The last Mwene Kahare whose reign had predated colonial rule, Mwene Kahare Shangambo Shamamano, died in 1913 (cf. Clay 1945). The next few years of the Kahare kingship were unstable:

> 'After the death of Mphelembe [Mpelembe; reigned 1914-1921], Kubama assumed the chieftainship and rushed to the Lozi P.C. [Paramount Chief] for recognition. At this point in time it was established that for anyone to become chief in Kaoma district it was necessary to seek the recognition of the Lozi P.C. On his way back from Mongu Kubama died at Nkenge. His brother Timuna succeeded Kubama, 1921-1954.'[71]

One oral source attributes Mpelembe's death to sorcery committed by Simuliankumba;[72] whatever the factual status of this allegation, it suggests that competition between *Mwene* and representative *induna* dated from even before Timuna's accession. Simuliankumba's attempts to destroy the Kahare title and supplant it by an exalted *induna*-ship for himself continued under Timuna's reign. Shortly after Timuna's accession he was actually threatened with demotion and replacement by Simuliankumba (cf. Gluckman 1968a). Among the allegations was the refusal to forward tribute to Lealui. Timuna was formally tried at the *Litunga*'s central court in Lealui, acquitted, and confirmed in his royal status. Around 1930 the extent of Simuliankumba's power can still be read from the fact that the cattle at Mwene Kahare Timuna's Litoya

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69 *Mwe* is a shortened form of *Mwene*, suggestive of a diminutive which does not necessarily imply lesser status but might simply indicate intimacy or affection.

70 Oral source [19] 20.10.1977.

71 District Secretary Kaoma to Permanent Secretary Western Province, 10.5.1974, enclosure in Kaoma district files, ADM/12 'Chiefs and headmen'.

72 Oral source [6].

capital[73] is partly attributed to Simuliankumba, thus following a general pattern among representative *indunas* in Mankoya district:

> 'It appears that there is only one small herd of cattle at Litoya, owned partly by Daniel Kafuna (the Paramount Chief's son) and partly by Simuliankumba, the local induna. (...) Between Simuliankumba's and the Mulambwa stream (...) there is a fly area. (...) Afumba, a Mutotela-Murozi [Totela-Lozi] Nduna [*induna*] on the Luampa, to the north of Mutampwa, and Siwaliondo, a Mulozi Nduna still further north are reported to have heads of cattle belonging to the Paramount Chief in addition to their own.'[74]

However, Simuliankumba finally fell out with the Lozi establishment and was demoted in 1933. This was certainly a victory for Timuna, and one that would have been impossible without considerable support from the Mankoya district headquarters. But Timuna was soon to disappoint these allies. As the Mankoya District Commissioner wrote soon afterwards,

> 'For many years Kahari [Kahare] had a Barotse Induna Simuliankumba in his area to look after him. This led to constant quarrel and Simuliankumba has recently been removed. I do not know if it is the Ngambela's [the *Litunga*'s Prime Minister's] intention to appoint another Murozi [Lozi] Induna in his place. In the ordinary course of events I should be opposed to the appointment, but in the light of the present attitude of Kahari,[75] and remembering

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73 Nkoya oral sources (e.g. [6]) consider these cattle to derive from Shamamano's raiding of Ila cattle in the course of Lewanika's Ila campaigns and hence as the property of Timuna, Shamamano's son and one of his successors.

74 District Commissioner Mankoya to Provincial Commissioner Mongu, 22.1.1931, enclosure in Zambia National Archives, ZA 1/9/53/2/1 'Census of native owned cattle'. This report was produced in answer to an enquiry from the Acting Director Animal Health to Secretary of Native Affairs, 4.11.1930, enclosure in the same file. There the Litoya cattle are all attributed to the *Litunga*:

> '...vague allegations have reached me about Barotse cattle being smuggled across the border into Namwala district. (...) I understand that Chief Yeta has a habit of keeping a large herd of cattle at Retoya [Litoya] in the Mankoya district and perhaps you would be good enough to write to the District Commissioner, Mankoya, for a census of the Retoya cattle for the years 1928-29-30. It is probable that in the event of any movement taking place that the most likely route would be from Retoya to the headwaters of the Lwanagdu down (...) the L[w]anagdu to the Musa river which runs into the Kafue.'

75 From the rest of this enclosure this — and also 'his conduct', below in the same quotation — is clear to mean: Kahare's support for Watchtower preaching in his area, to which the colonial administration and the Barotseland indigenous administration were very much opposed; see below.

> that he has been deposed on at least one previous occasion,[76] I should like to know what the khotla's[77] intention is in the matter. In any event I think it would be a good thing if Kahari be called in to Lealui, to explain his conduct to the khotla.'[78]

The Lozi representative *indunas* at the time turned out to take the curtailing of their powers far from lightly. In the same period an *induna* Mutembanja had been ordered by the *khotla* to go and live under the more trusted Siwaliondo, but he failed to comply.[79] Simuliankumba, too, was

> 'refusing to obey the khotla's order and was still living at his old site near Kahari.'[80]

The District Commissioner requested stern action, fearing that this development would set a bad example, particularly

> 'among the many Mawiko tribes of this district, to whom the khotla is at the best of times only a very distant power whose authority is little felt.'[81]

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76 An unfair reference to Timuna's 1923 trial at Lealui, in which he was acquitted.

77 The Barotse central court at Lealui, and by extension the indigenous administration in general.

78 District Commissioner Mankoya to Provincial Commissioner Mongu, 18.8.1934, 'Induna Kahari', enclosure in Zambia National Archives, KSX 1/1/1 Mankoya correspondence 1931-35.

79 Mankoya tour report 2/1934, Annexure 6, enclosure in Zambia National Archives, KSX 1/1/1 Mankoya correspondence 1931-35.

80 District Commissioner Mankoya to Provincial Commissioner Mongu, undated letter [1935], 'Lealui khotla and Simuliankumba and Mutembanja', Zambia National Archives, KSX 1/1/1 Mankoya correspondence 1931-35. Nkumbula (= Simuliankumba) village has persisted on the Njonjolo stream to this day.

81 District Commissioner Mankoya to Provincial Commissioner Mongu, undated letter [1935], 'Lealui khotla and Simuliankumba and Mutembanja', enclosure in Zambia National Archives, KSX 1/1/1 Mankoya correspondence 1931-35; a 'Letter from Ngambela' (the *Litunga*'s Prime Minister) is enclosed. The Lozi term *Mawiko* — later reserved for Angolan immigrants who flooded western Zambia from the 1910s — is here meant to loosely apply to all non-Lozi subject tribes, including the Nkoya, and perhaps particularly the Nkoya **Na**wiko, i.e. Mwene Mutondo and his subjects.

Unless otherwise stated, here and below **bold** type will be used to add particular emphasis to parts of textual material in quotations, the more conventional use of *italics* being reserved for specific editorial purposes spelled out in chapter 2.

In this period the dissatisfaction among the neo-traditional establishment converged with the popular ideology propounded by Watchtower preaching all over Northern Rhodesia, kindling hopes for a new heaven and a new earth. It is ironic that among the Watchtower preachers who were active in the southern part of the Mankoya district, was

> 'a Watchtower preacher named Kayukwa who is the son of an ex-Induna Simuliankumba.' (...) Kayukwa had baptised people in four villages and was sent by sub-induna Kumina to baptise him and the people in his village.'[82]

Watchtower preaching in the district in the 1930s and 1940s represented a millenarian idiom with occasionally anti-Barotse and anti-colonial overtones;[83] and whatever the preachers' specific pronouncements concerning the colonial or indigenous administration of Barotseland, throughout Northern Rhodesia they were being perceived as potentially dangerous trouble-makers and treated accordingly. In addition to Kayukwe, there was

> 'Joseph Pili, Watchtower preacher arrived from Mumbwa District early 1934.'[84]

He was removed by the local *induna* and forbidden to enter Barotseland, but he returned none the less. The Paramount Chief sentenced him to one month imprisonment with hard labour, and upon completion of this sentence Pili was evicted from Barotseland.

> 'His usual game is baptising people and discovering by his own methods if a man he baptises owns medicines which he then destroys. Fairly harmless at present, but he is in league with others'.[85]

In addition to Joseph Pili,

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82 District Commissioner Mankoya to Provincial Commissioner Mongu, 2.5.1935, 'Watchtower preachers Afumba and Fumina', enclosure in Zambia National Archives, KSX 1/1/1 Mankoya correspondence 1931-35.

83 Cf. Cross 1973; Fields 1985; van Binsbergen 1981a: ch. 4.

84 District Commissioner Mankoya to District Commissioner Mumbwa, 29.1.1935, 'Joseph Pili, Watchtower preacher', enclosure in Zambia National Archives, KSX 1/1/1 Mankoya correspondence 1931-35. The name 'Pili' [Phiri] has eastern Zambian or Malawian associations. The wave of witchcraft eradication then spreading over Northern Rhodesia started in the east.

85 *Ibidem.*

> 'two other Watchtower preachers had been arrested (...) but they escaped.'[86]

Watchtower preaching, even when totally devoid of political overtones, was understood by the colonial administrators as a reminder that the relatively peaceful colonial order might not last forever:

> 'My impression is that this area is impregnated with Watchtower doctrine and that both Afumba and Kumina are shifty and entirely unreliable. (...) One other fact is that natives in this area have apparently not gone away to work in any numbers and it has been very obvious lately that, whereas natives from all other areas have been paying tax (...) lately in large numbers, almost no taxes have been paid by Afumba's and Kumina's natives. I am led to think it possible that the Watchtower preachers' activities in these areas have something to do with this.'[87]

The Mankoya District Commissioner was understandably alarmed when he learned that also Mwene Kahare was in collusion with a Watchtower preacher:

> 'I do not consider Kahari's [Kahare's] behaviour at all satisfactory. He allowed this man to preach in his area, encouraged him to do so and did not bring him in to me until he was told to do so. He admits that he knows that no native may preach without a permit, and he acknowledges that he is a Watchtower follower. He also said he believed in the existence of witchcraft.'[88]

In the mid-1930s Mwene Kahare Timuna, finally freed from the threat Simuliankumba represented, must have gone through a period of personal assertiveness in the face of the colonial and Barotse indigenous authorities. Not only did he encourage Watchtower activities in his area; at the same time he made remonstrations to have the drums of kingship restored to him. When he asked the District Commissioner Mankoya if he might resume playing his drums, the latter expressed his agreement, but

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86 District Commissioner Mankoya to Provincial Commissioner Mongu, 2.5.1935, 'Watchtower preachers Afumba and Fumina', enclosure in Zambia National Archives, KSX 1/1/1 Mankoya correspondence 1931-35.

87 *Ibidem.*

88 District Commissioner Mankoya to Provincial Commissioner Mongu, 18.8.1934, 'Induna Kahari', enclosure in Zambia National Archives, KSX 1/1/1 Mankoya correspondence 1931-35. The use of the term *induna* for Mwene Kahare here is remarkable, and suggests that the colonial administrator saw him primarily as a senior member of the Lozi indigenous administration.

> 'I now find that the present Kahari [Kahare] has never been given permission by the Khotla to have drums, although his predecessor had them.'[89]

The District Commissioner asked for further information, on which I have no specific records. It is significant, from the point of view of Lozi domination during the colonial period, that the administrator should present the possession of royal drums as subject to the *Litunga*'s permission. Apparently, Timuna succeeded in reviving a royal orchestra of sorts. However, half a century later, the royal orchestras of Kahare and Mutondo are still mutilated for lack of *mawoma.*

Meanwhile, during the 1930s the surviving Nkoya *Myene* in Mankoya district were to be affected by a development that threatened their position to a far greater extent than the individual actions of representative *indunas* and that led to expressions of self-assertion far more focused than those relating to Watchtower preachers and royal drums: the creation of Naliele.

At the imposition of colonial rule in the first decade of the twentieth century, the colonial administration (until 1924 the British South Africa Company) sought to streamline and 'rationalize' the existing patterns of political leadership according to North Atlantic models of territorial administration, clear-cut and mutually exclusive areas of jurisdiction, hierarchy, and fixed (preferably patrilineal) patterns of succession (cf. Chanock 1985). In western Zambia, this process of accommodation and redefinition to a large extent converged with the claims of the Lozi king (the *Litunga*) to extensive precolonial power, which fell in line both with colonial interests (mining claims, the international requirement to produce treaties with local rulers), and with the administrator's preconceptions of a Sudanic, splendid kingship heading a centralized African state. The convergence was not total, and even in the above cases concerning the representative *induna* in Kahare's area, and the restoration of his royal orchestra, we see that the boma retained its autonomy vis-à-vis the Lealui *khotla,* and was also approached by Mwene Kahare as a political agency in its own right.

A very clear case of the colonial authorities supporting local political aspirations in the face of Lozi claims of overlordship occurred in another outlying area, Balovale district, which after a careful and extensive consideration of the historical record was allowed to secede from Barotseland in 1940 and attain an administrative status similar to other districts in Northern Rhodesia.[90] Mankoya district continued to sigh under what was felt to be Lozi oppression, and what is more, at the same time as preparations were made for the Balovale secession, the

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89 District Commissioner Mankoya to Provincial Commissioner Mongu, 17.4.1935, 'Chief Kahari's drums', enclosure in Zambia National Archives, KSX 1/1/1 Mankoya correspondence 1931-35.

90 Cf. Papstein 1978 and references cited there.

colonial state allowed the Lozi presence in Mankoya to be stepped up dramatically by the creation, in 1937, of a new Lozi royal establishment, five kilometres from the Mankoya boma. The court was to be called Naliele, in reminiscence of the splendid capital near the flood plain which was visited by Livingstone in the middle of the nineteenth century (Livingstone 1971). Naliele was to function as an appeal court and as the seat of the Mankoya Native Treasury, and was to be headed by a very senior member of the Lozi royal family (the *Litunga*'s son), with a higher subsidy from Lealui than any Nkoya *Mwene*, with more remunerated court personnel than any Nkoya chief, with judicial powers exceeding those of any Nkoya chief, and occupying a prominent position in a fixed structure of Lozi positional succession, only a few steps removed from the *Litunga*-ship. The colonial authorities were in favour of this arrangement, not only because the *Litunga*'s overlordship over Barotse was taken for granted, but also because the need for an appeal court that could oversee the fragmented and segmentary judicial structure prevailing in Mankoya at the time was deeply felt.[91]

This new form of Lozi presence, with the unmitigated backing from the colonial state, was a source of great humiliation and resentment among the people of Mankoya district, which precipitated major conflicts between particularly the Mutondo *lukena* milieu and the *Litunga*'s court at Lealui.

The events are described in the Kaoma district files:

> 'In 1937 Paramount Chief Lewanika [*sic*][92] of the Lozi decided that he should be represented in each district within Barotseland Protectorate. He therefore sent his son, Mwanawina, to be chief at Naliele, thereby making the two Nkoya chiefs, Kahare and Mutondo, sub-chiefs of Mwanawina. It is said that appeals from Chief Mutondo's court and Chief Kahare's court were heard by headman Kapupa who was chosen by the D[istrict] C[ommissioner], Mankoya. The two chiefs were unhappy about this because headman Kapupa was under them and so he should not have been allowed to hear appeals from the chiefs.[93] (...) And so the presence of Mwanawina at Naliele strengthened the position of the Silalo Indunas. Establishment of a Native Authority at Naliele is also said to have influenced Lewanika's decision to send his son there. It is said that during the days of Sipopa, a Lozi Paramount Chief, and Munangisha, the father of the present Chief Mutondo of the Nkoya, the Nkoyas agreed to pay tribute to the Lozi Paramount Chief. From 1943 to 1948, when Muchayila was Chief Mutondo, he refused to

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91 Gervase Clay, letter to the present author, dated: 31.1.1975.

92 In fact, Litia III.

93 The episode is treated at great length in Shimunika's *Muhumpu*; further [18] 14.10.1977, [19] 19.10.1977; the resentment of Kapupa's position is a recurrent theme in these sources.

recognise Lozi overlordship and so he was deported to Kalabo for ten years. In 1948 Mwanawina became Paramount Chief of the Lozi and so his brother Amukena Siteketu succeeded him at Naliele. In 1956 Amukena died in (a plane) an air crush [*sic*] when flying from Kaoma to Mongu. Amukena was succeeded by his brother Mwendaweli who was [later] transferred to Mwandi, Sesheke, to succeed Mukwae Nakatindi who died.[94] Mwendaweli was transferred in June, 1973. Mwendaweli was replaced by Litia Mbikusita, a son of Litunga Lewanika Mbikusita. (...)

The Naliele chief was to be regarded as senior to the local chiefs in the district. So when Muchayila succeeded Kanyinca he refused to recognise the Lozi overlordship so the chieftainship was taken away from him. He was chief from 1943 to 1948. In 1949 Kalapukila[95] became chief and is [*sic*] chief up to now.'[96]

Muchayila's intransigent stance against Lozi arrogance and particularly against the Lozi chief of Naliele, was greatly influenced by the Balovale secession from Barotseland in 1940, and particularly[97] by Muchayila's friendship with the Luchazi chief Samuzimu, who must have had many contacts in Balovale. The latter had his headquarters in the northern part of Mankoya district but soon was to cross into Kasempa district — which brought him, too, outside Barotseland but against the high price that his subjects did not follow him.[98]

The episode of Muchayila's dethronement and forced exile to Kalabo district for ten years (1948-58) still looms large in the Nkoya consciousness and forms a dominant topic whenever the colonial history of Kaoma district is discussed among the Nkoya.[99] Its impact has been felt in Nkoya neo-traditional politics for many decades. As one informant claimed in 1977, the fear of being demoted like Muchayila was influencing the behaviour of the Nkoya chiefs to that day, making them defer to the Lozi even to an extent that was no longer necessary given the deteriorated relations between the Lozi aristocracy and the Zambian central state.[100]

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94 On Princess Nakatindi, who died in 1971, see van Binsbergen 1987b: 171-174.

95 Kalapukila was an educational officer before he became chief; oral source [4]. An irony of history is that when Kalapukila died in 1981, the aged Muchayila was still around to succeed him at his turn.

96 District Secretary Kaoma to Permanent Secretary Western Province, 10.5.1974, enclosure in Kaoma district files, ADM/12 'Chiefs and headmen'.

97 Oral source [13].

98 Cf. Chipela 1974 [1976], according to whom Chief Samuzimu resided for seven years in the northern part of the then Mankoya district.

99 E.g. oral source [18] 14.10.1977.

100 Oral source [4].

Over the decades, the Naliele court has very much continued to discharge the functions for which it was designed, although soon after Zambia's independence (1964) the 'Native Treasury' was taken over by a modern district administration revolving on the Mankoya, later Kaoma, Rural Council. To this day, Naliele takes care of many affairs of the other chiefs in Kaoma district. Lozi representative *indunas* are sworn in at Naliele; they still constitute the backbone of the neo-traditional administration in the district, and of the administration of justice since they preside over the Local Courts. Naliele also oversees the succession of the Nkoya chief's Mwanashihemi. And it handles delicate court cases — those in which chiefs are themselves the defendants.[101] Naliele is still very much the link between the district's neo-traditional structure and the central Lozi *khotla* at Lealui. At Naliele the Kaoma chiefs or their courtiers pay courtesy visits and take tributes in money whenever the developments at Lealui prompt such action — e.g. at the enthronement of a new *Litunga*.

My information on the presentday relationship between the Lealui *khotla* itself and the Nkoya *Myene* is limited. Letters bearing the characteristic letterhead of the *Litunga*, with its proud elephant logo, are often seen at the Nkoya *zinkena*. There is frequent correspondence between the *Ngambela* and the *Myene*, calling the latter to *khotla* meetings, and announcing important visitors to the province. For the 1973 general elections the Ngambela even sent the chiefs of Western Province, including the Nkoya *Myene*, a voting advice in favour of the United National Independence Party (UNIP). UNIP is the political party which, under the leadership of Kenneth Kaunda and Simon Kapwepwe, in 1959 broke away from the then main independence party (the African National Congress, ANC); UNIP dominated the final phase of the Zambian struggle for independence, has constituted the ruling party ever since 1963, and in 1971 at the creation of the Second Republic under 'One-party Participatory Democracy' became Zambia's unique party, in which the former ANC was incorporated.

In recent times the correspondence between Lealui and the Nkoya *Myene*, although firmly authoritarian in tone, seems to lack the condescension or arrogance the Nkoya read so often in Lozi expressions directed at them; rather, the situation does seem to be as described by Chief Litia at the beginning of this section: the Nkoya chiefs are seen as part and parcel of the Barotse indigenous administration, and are approached as such by their Paramount Chief, the *Litunga*.

The neo-traditional structure of the province and its manifestations at the district and local level have considerably altered since the creation, in the 1970s, of the position of Member of the Central Committee (MCC), the principal representative of the UNIP-dominated central state in the province, and of such bodies as the Provincial Development Council and the Provincial Chiefs' Council, chaired by the MCC and counting among their members both Nkoya *Myene* and other senior

101 Oral source [9].

members of the Lozi neo-traditional administration. The situation underwent a major change again when, in the mid-1980s, the *Litunga* himself became an MCC (van Binsbergen 1987b: 142). These highly interesting and important developments at the provincial level offer much scope for further research.

Twentieth-century political issues, which are at the heart of Nkoya ethnicization, are hardly touched upon in Rev. J. Shimunika's *Likota lya Bankoya*, which concentrates on the nineteenth century. Yet that book ends with an assessment of Nkoya/Lozi relations. Ethnic politics in the context of Lozi domination, meanwhile, have been treated in a more extensive, and controversial, manner in *Muhumpu wa Byambo bya Mwaka — Nkoya*, Rev. Shimunika's first historical text, which was to be published in a private, eight-page edition at Luampa Mission, Mankoya district, in the early 1960s.[102]

In Mankoya district, this was again a period of considerable confusion. The 1930s wave of witchcraft accusations and witchcraft eradication repeated itself (cf. Reynolds 1963). This may be seen as a drastic form of self-cleansing and sometimes self-destruction on the part of a society that was still largely incapable of analysing its disruption, anomie and powerlessness in other ideological idioms than those of witchcraft, cleansing and millenarianism. However, secular alternatives for the interpretation of recent social change, and secular blueprints for action, were rapidly gaining in importance. They took the form of a militant Nkoya ethnic awareness (very much expressed, and partly kindled, by Rev. Shimunika's work), coupled to the overall struggle for independence throughout Northern Rhodesia.

In that period Mankoya's alleged propensity to secessionism (from Lozi overrule) was even a major reason to refuse registration of a branch there of ANC, Northern Rhodesia's main independence party in the 1950s (Mulford 1967).

The spirit of the times in Mankoya district, and the extent to which Rev. Shimunika's work was a powerful factor in the furthering of Nkoya ethnic awareness, is clear from the comments made by Mutumba Mainga. She writes:

> 'The most significant forces at work between 1962 and 1968 [in Bulozi, i.e. Loziland, the Lozi core area of Barotseland] were all political, the main issue being how and whether Bulozi was to survive the transition from colonial rule to independence within a multi-tribal state of Zambia (...). In Mankoya the situation was different. The coming of Northern Rhodesia's independence offered a unique opportunity for the Nkoya, who were politically conscious,

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102 A copy is in my possession. The title means: 'A discourse on past events — Nkoya'; the word *Nkoya* appears to be added much in the way the New Testament (Testamenta 1952) and smaller pious tracts identify their language on the front page or in their colophon.

> to breakaway [*sic*] from Lozi domination. In 1964, for example, the African National Congress in Mankoya[103] published a vernacular history of the district which put much emphasis on Nkoya independence in the past. [Note in the original:] The Lozi aristocracy at Naliele kuta,[104] on the other hand, was showing great insecurity to the extent where they refused to tell traditions of the Lozi people in the presence of non-Lozi Indunas elected and nominated to represent local groups.' (Mutumba Mainga 1973: 227f)

Mutumba Mainga does not however appear to have had access to this 'vernacular history', which cannot be other than *Muhumpu.* If she had, she would have found half of the pamphlet taken up by a discussion, not of the past but of recent Nkoya/Lozi conflict in the colonial era. It must however be the same 'short written Nkoya history (in Nkoya)' which she mentions (Mutumba Mainga 1973: 242) when giving a brief write-up on her informant Rev. Shimunika. Mutumba Mainga goes on to quote an anonymous ANC secretary Mankoya[105] in terms highly suggestive of the ethnic overtones associated with Nkoya support for ANC at the time:

> 'A Nkoya, Anti-Lozi. ''Nkoya is Nkoya: Lozi is Lozi.'' ''The Lozi do not care for the land — only Nkoya vote for A.N.C. The Lozi do not want to improve the country.'' He opposes the kuta and wants to abolish it.' (Mutumba Mainga 1973: 242)

However, the specific hopes and aspirations with which the Nkoya joined the struggle for independence took many years to even begin to be fulfilled. ANC lost out to UNIP, and the latter party had, in the Wina brothers and Princess Nakatindi, a strong if controversial footing in the Lozi aristocratic establishment. For years therefore, ANC, even if increasingly powerless at the national level, seemed a more attractive option than UNIP from a Nkoya ethnic point of view. It was only by the late 1960s that the tide turned (van Binsbergen 1985a, 1986a). With the revision of the Barotse Agreement and President Kaunda's confrontation with the Lozi aristocracy in 1969 (cf. Caplan 1970), the temporary decline of Lozi power in Zambian national politics (Tordoff 1974), and the drive for reconciliation and mobilization following the ANC-UNIP merger when UNIP became Zambia's unique party in 1971, Nkoya ethnic awareness found positive venues of expression at

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103 My data suggest a somewhat earlier date and a different publisher: the South Africa General Mission, Luampa, Mankoya district, where the anonymous author Rev. Shimunika was working as a pastor.

104 *Kuta* is the Nkoya form for the Lozi *khotla.*

105 Probably Joel Nalishuwa, closely related to the Mutondo royal family and nephew of Mwene Mutondo's Mwanashihemi; cf. Dickson K. Makiyi, 'Nkoya History — Kaoma, Western Province, Zambia', 58 pp, author's collection.

the district, provincial and even the national level. But this brings us to a discussion of the post-colonial state in the Nkoya context.

the post-colonial state

The post-colonial state recognizes and subsidizes only a handful of Nkoya *Myene*, along with their councillors and further retinue (retainers, court musicians): Mutondo, Kahare, Kabulwebulwe and Momba. The state has co-opted selected Nkoya *Myene* or their councillors as members of national and regional representative bodies such as the House of Chiefs, the Western Province Provincial Development Committee and the Kaoma Rural Council.

The attitude of the post-colonial state vis-à-vis chiefs in general has not been constant, but shows an oscillating movement, from repulsion and dismantling in the 1960s to restoration and substantial increase of chiefs' status and power in the 1980s (van Binsbergen 1986a, and for Zambia in general, 1987b).

The judicial field may illustrate this. In 1966, to the distress of the neo-traditional *lukena* milieu, state-controlled Local Courts were created which denied the *Mwene*'s direct involvement in the judicial process.[106] The severance never became absolute: court president and assessors would be appointed in consultation with the *Mwene*; they were members of the *Mwene*'s Royal Council; outside the Local Court, neighbourhood courts of senior village headmen, again members of the *Mwene*'s Royal Council, continued to operate; and informally the *Mwene* himself would be called upon to settle family disputes (cf. van Binsbergen 1977). But despite these informal links, the *Myene* could no longer claim formal control over the administration of justice in their area. In the mid-1980s, this development was turned back by the installation, at the *zinkena* of both Mwene Mutondo and Mwene Kahare, of so-called *muwambola* ('discussion', 'reconciliation') courts, once again presided by the Mwanashihemi and seeking to adjudicate minor cases outside the Local Court. Locally this move is seen as a restoration of the *Mwene*'s prestige and power, and a return to cherished principles of justice.

One of the most remarkable aspects of neo-traditional structures among the Nkoya is the success with which the modern state and its district-level institutions have managed to retain a large degree of invisibility, and yet form the ultimate financial and organizational basis for the visible neo-traditional politics in the outlying areas.

Succession to high office and appointment to paid positions as councillor, retainer and musician at the royal establishments, are subject to constant intriguing and politicking at the local level, and to the superficial observer would appear to follow a neo-traditional logic entirely

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106 The judicial role of the *Mwene* in the colonial period was described in oral source [1]; for Mongu-Lealui district, e.g. Gluckman 1967.

of their own — pursuing forms, one would be inclined to think, eminently inherent to the tributary mode of production of which the contemporary Nkoya *zinkena* may be considered a survival. The local villagers certainly look at the *Myene* today as independent representatives of a culture-specific, ethnic way of life which opposes or legitimates the institutions of the modern state. They do not realize that this state is the very life breath of modern chieftainship (van Binsbergen 1987b).

Neo-traditional chieftainship is reproduced in collusion with the colonial state to such an extent that the royal graves associated with the two major Nkoya chieftainships are now listed as national monuments, the colonial state and its bureaucratic institutions such as the National Monuments Commission taking the place of the royal gravekeepers and senior courtiers of an earlier period in the upkeep of symbols of chieftainship. As a letter[107] in the Kaoma district files reads:

> 'Chief Mutondo would like to have the following *thino* [*sic*][108] declared national monuments:
>
> (1) *sithino* of Mwene Mutondo Mate [Shinkisha] at Kalimba [Kalimbata], Lalafuta Silalo;
>
> (2) *sithino* of Mwene Mutondo Wahila at Nyango;
>
> (3) *sithino* of Mwene Mutondo Shiwowa [Munangisha] at Lukundi near She Kombwe [Shikombwe]...'

For the Kahare dynasty the following graves are proposed:

> '(1) *sithino* of Kahare Kabambi [Shamamano], 16 miles from Kahare Palace;
>
> (2) *sithino* of Kahare Mpelimbe [Mpelembe] at Yange Plain 10 miles southeast of Kahare;
>
> (3) *sithino* of Kahare Timuna at Litoya Stream.

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107 Kaoma district files, ANT/2 'National Monuments', Kaoma, District Secretary Kaoma to Permanent Secretary Western Province, 4.1.71 'Declaration of National Monuments'.

108 I.e. *shizino*, royal grave. From the point of view of historiography these and other royal burial sites are of the greatest importance: their locations, and the names of the associated *Myene*, are generally known to local people, and this provides a rather firm and consistent framework around which historical data concerning these *Myene*, their capitals, genealogical relations, exploits, are loosely, inconsistently and manipulatively attached; also cf. H.H. Mwene's lists of Nkoya royal graves at the end of Part II below.

> The above *Thino* are in order of significance to the Nkoya people.'[109]

One of the mechanisms of the persistence of chieftainship in Zambia is the very apt way in which chiefs have been transformed into petty state officials while retaining the cultural symbols of a royal status that have an independent existence from the state (van Binsbergen 1987b). The underlying logic becomes somewhat better understandable, once we realize that neo-traditional office does not only carry tremendous prestige among Nkoya villagers and even urban migrants, but also constitutes one of the very few opportunities for semi-literate villagers to gain a regular cash income without having to migrate away from the village sphere of life.

It is only when one is allowed a glimpse of the administrative and financial records at the district level, that one realizes the full extent to which the Nkoya royal establishments today are orchestrated by and conducted by the apparently distant boma: since the payment of the *Mwene*'s subsidy and of the *lukena* staff salaries is administratively and physically controlled from there, every dynastic quarrel, every appointment or dismissal of a retainer or musician, is approved or questioned by the boma, and the correspondence between the District Secretary and the *Myene* leaves little doubt as to who is in charge. Every so often the *Myene* are summoned to board government vehicles in order to be taken to meetings and functions at the district, provincial and national level; on the other hand they need the boma's formal permission to leave their areas on personal business.

Since 1969 the financial position of the Nkoya *Myene* has improved considerably. Before that time they only received a slight subsidy from Lealui. After that year they received a subsidy from the state, to the still modest sum of K40.[110] In 1975 remonstrations by prominent Nkoya

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109 District Secretary Kaoma to Permanent Secretary Western Province, 4.1.71, 'Declaration of National Monuments', enclosure in Kaoma district files, ANT/2 'National Monuments'. With the phrase 'order of significance' this statement reproduces the claim of seniority of the Mutondo title over the Kahare title. With a significant understatement concerning the alien nature of Lozi overrule in the district, the letter concludes:

> 'Chief Mwendaweli explained that his important shrines and relics are as submitted by the Litunga [i.e. in the Zambezi flood plain, where the Lozi royal graves are situated; their secret cults reach their highest expression at the enthronement of a new *Litunga*]. His history begins in this district in about 1939, when he [i.e. his predecessor Mwanawina; the correct date for the creation of Naliele is 1937] settled at Naliele.'

110 By that time, K1 equalled about US $1.60. For an extensive discussion of the economy of Mwene Kahare's *lukena* in the early 1970s, cf. van Binsbergen & Geschiere 1985b: 261-270. At the time, the sale of ivory procured by the *Mwene*'s hunters still constituted a major source of income, and the basis for capital investment in the transport sector. Less than two decades later elephant and other big game have virtually

leaders brought to light that the revenue under the Barotse Treaty Obligations (dating from the early days of colonial rule but still in force) were only distributed within the Lozi royal family, and henceforth the Nkoya *Myene* have received their rightful share.[111]

By the same token, Nkoya have sought to redress the fate of their lost kingships through petitions to district and provincial administrators since the mid-1970s. As Minister Kalaluka MP, the only Nkoya Minister and Member of Parliament so far, declared in an interview with the author in 1977:

> 'We try to lend new life to chieftaincies which have not been recognized: not only Shakalongo, but especially: Mwene Lishenga, Yuvwenu, Mwanatete, Fungo. We could well do with a larger number of chiefs here. In other provinces there are many more chiefs than here in Western Province.'[112]

Mr J. Kalaluka won his parliamentary seat in the general elections of 1973. His involvement at the district and provincial level is only one indication that the position of Nkoya *Myene* in the post-colonial state cannot be understood without looking at the political process through which people from central western Zambia sought access — not so much to the neo-traditional power structure of local chieftainship — but to the representative bodies of the political machine in the centre of the colonial and later the post-colonial state, in the face of almost total domination of the political process in the then Barotseland by members of the Lozi establishment.

Nkoya modern political emancipation was very much a process of trial and error, where one rallying cry and mobilization platform was easily exchanged for another, as long as it appeared to provide the means to by-pass the Lozi blockage to effective Nkoya representation in modern politics. The political career of Mr J. Kalaluka is very instructive in this respect. Before Independence (1964), he sought access to political leadership in the urban-based 'Mankoya and Bantu Fighting Fund' (1961) and by standing as a candidate for the 'Mankoya Front' in 1963. In the general elections of 1964 he stood as a candidate for Michello's party, the People's Democratic Party (cf. Mulford 1967: 311 and *passim*) and in the general elections of 1968 for African National Congress (ANC), then the main opposition party on the Zambian scene. Not being successful in any of these attempts, he retired for a while from active politics to be a national-level manager of a major petroleum company, only to find his ambitions of lifting the Nkoya and himself to the level of national representation fulfilled in the

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disappeared from the area. As a result the *Mwene* has become more dependent on the state subsidy.

111 Oral source [4].

112 Oral source [4].

1973 general elections. Then the spirit of reconciliation extended by the then unique party UNIP to former ANC partisans allowed him to stand and (in the face of the narrow ethnic claims of his Luvale and Mbunda contesters) win on a UNIP ticket as the candidate for part of Kaoma district. After a brilliant ministerial career, the ethnic rallying of Luvale and Luchazi in Kaoma district caused him to lose his parliamentary seat, and ministerial post, in the 1988 general elections.[113]

Mutondo and Kahare: moiety-like structure and the struggle for seniority

Above we have seen how Mwene Mutondo and Mwene Kahare survived as the sole royal *Myene*, partly because of their stronger initial position in the process of Lozi incorporation, and partly because all the other Nkoya chieftainships disappeared under the encroachment of Lozi representative *indunas*. Despite the vicissitudes around Simuliankumba[114] and the Naliele establishment, the two Nkoya chiefs managed to hold their own throughout the colonial period, and when Lozi powers began to wane with Zambian independence, these Nkoya chiefs' stars rose both in the district and at the national level. In the process of Nkoya ethnic identity formation both *Myene* have occupied a central symbolic position.

Formally, neither the colonial and post-colonial state, nor the Lozi neo-traditional administration, has specified that either *Mwene* should be senior to the other. In the Zambian local government structure, both are officially designated as simply 'chief'.[115] Formally speaking, Kaoma district does not have any senior chiefs, although in practice the Lozi chief of Naliele is considered senior to both Kahare and Mutondo.

On closer analysis, the moiety-like pattern, dividing contemporary Nkoya society into two balanced halves, is far from stable in this respect that the subjects of Mwene Kahare and those of Mwene Mutondo are involved in constant rivalry lest either should claim to be the senior Nkoya *Mwene* — or would be considered as such by the outside world, particularly the central Zambian state. This is a recurrent theme in many discussions of Nkoya political history.[116]

The rivalry between the subjects of Mwene Mutondo and those of Mwene Kahare is largely articulated by contemporary concerns: the Mashasha and Nawiko are continually comparing each other's performance and success vis-à-vis the central state, the provincial and

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113 Oral sources [4]; [7] 8.10.1977; author's field-notes.

114 In this volume, word division of Nkoya words including proper names follows Nkoya conventions as set out in chapter 2 below, section 'Nkoya as a written language'.

115 Northern Rhodesia 1943, 1960; these lists of chiefs are still largely valid.

116 E.g. oral sources [4], [5] and [7].

district administration, and the Barotse neo-traditional administration. Even issues which to the outsider would add splendour to the emerging Nkoya 'nation' as a whole (such as Mr Kalaluka's election to parliament in 1973; or the first election to the national House of Chiefs of a Nkoya *Mwene*, Kahare, in 1970) immediately triggered resentment among that half of the district's Nkoya population that can identify less closely with the person or matter in question.

By contrast to such equality of the two *Myene* as springs from their similar position in the Lozi indigenous administration and the central state of Northern Rhodesia and later Zambia, there is the more specifically local, Nkoya perspective. Here there is a tendency for Mutondo to be considered senior: both Kahare and Kabulwebulwe address Mwene Mutondo as *yaya* (elder brother), while the latter calls them *mukonzo* (younger brother),[117] in an idiom reminiscent of perpetual kinship.

The local, largely informal recognition of Mutondo seniority today does not preclude that the subjects of Mutondo jealously watch such political advancement as Mwene Kahare and his subjects are making in modern Zambian society. Mwene Kahare Kabambi was not only a member of the national House of Chiefs through the 1970s, but also a UNIP Trustee, and a member of the Kaoma Rural Council (where Mwene Mutondo was, for much of the 1970s and 1980s, only represented by his court president and former Mwanashihemi, as well as by the granddaughter of a previous incumbent of this kingship). Mr Kalaluka grew up at the Kahare *lukena* as Mwene Kahare Kabambi's close kinsman.[118] Mutondo's subjects tend to see all this as a plot, on the part of the Mashasha, to wrench seniority from the hands of Mwene Mutondo.[119]

Between 1948 and 1980 the record of the Mutondo chieftainship was less impressive due to the relative aloofness of Mwene Mutondo Kalapukila vis-à-vis the Lozi neo-traditional administration; the latter had put him in office in the first place, after demoting his cousin Muchayila for opposing Lozi overlordship.

For the subjects of Mwene Mutondo today Muchayila's demotion, which made Kalapukila's accession possible, forms not only a source of continued animosity vis-à-vis the Lozi, and a reminder of what might be in store for any other chief defying the Lozi dominance — but also a major occasion when Mutondo/Kahare rivalry manifested itself. Mwene Kahare Timuna did not openly oppose Muchayila's demotion. In 1947-48, when the conflict occurred, he is reported to have said:

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117 Oral sources [2] and [19] 18.10.1977.

118 Mr Kalaluka is the FFZDS of Mwene Kabambi.

Here and below, the following abbreviations for kin relationships are employed: F = father; M = mother; B = brother; Z = sister; S = son; D = daughter; H = husband; W = wife. Classificatory links are indicated by the sign '#' before the letter symbol.

119 Oral source [8].

> 'My father accepted the Lozi overlordship. I follow my father, I have no quarrel with the Lozi'.[120]

Shimunika, in his *Muhumpu* pamphlet, added fuel to the fire of Mutondo/Kahare rivalry by stating that Mwene Timuna paid the excessive tribute of a leopard skin in order to ingratiate himself with the Lozi at the time of Muchayila's dethronement. This allegation has been deeply resented by the Kahare subjects ever since *Muhumpu* was published. Shakupota, the then Mwanashihemi of Mwene Kahare who would have overseen such a payment of tribute if it ever took place, is quoted as forcefully denying that it ever did.[121] In an interview with the present author[122] Shimunika admitted that his allegation was based on 'just a rumour' and that he himself should have been more responsible than citing it in what was intended to be an objective historical account, and as a statement of (pan-) Nkoya ethnic identity at that.[123]

When after Kalapukila's death his aged predecessor once more acceded to the Mutondo throne, Muchayila's powerful and buoyant personality soon allowed him to reclaim such psychological seniority as his predecessor had lost to Kabambi's political instinct, cool and reticence. When *Kazanga,* a new Nkoya cultural society, was founded in 1982, and the annual *Kazanga* royal ceremony[124] was revived as a (hopefully) touristically attractive challenge to the time-honoured Lozi Kuomboka festival, it was self-evident that the first festival of this nature was to be held at the Mutondo royal establishment in 1988 — in recognition of that *lukena*'s precedence over Kahare's, Momba's and Kabulwebulwe's. As a piece of neo-traditional 'bricolage', the *Kazanga* festival today lacks virtually all ritual content — with the exception of a short dance of the members of the Mutondo royal family around the royal ancestral shrine which consists of a collection of stylized statuettes under a low shelter. The modern festival amounts to

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120 Oral source [13].

121 Oral source [5].

122 However, in the presence of the informant of oral source [5]!

123 Oral source [22]. Largely on Mr D. Kawanga's initiative, the editorial committees for *Likota lya Bankoya* were set up partly to prevent a repetition of the internal friction among the Nkoya as caused by *Muhumpu.*

124 Historically, *Kazanga* is the name of a traditional harvest ritual, in which the Nkoya *Mwene* was the main officiant; each *Mwene* would stage his or her own *Kazanga* in the local polity. The ceremony involved among other things the doctoring of an anthill through human sacrificial blood flowing in a furrow in the earth; oral source [17] 30.9.1977. In the middle of the twentieth century, selected unbloody remnants of this ritual were incorporated in a first-fruits ceremony belonging to the *Bituma* cult — adepts of the cult were not allowed to eat the year's new maize harvest without staging this ceremony (author's field-notes; cf. van Binsbergen 1981a).

a one-day presentation of the full range of Nkoya musical and dancing repertoire (streamlined, rehearsed, organized and even in part remunerated in a move towards 'folklorization'), before an audience of not one but *several* Nkoya *Myene*, guests of honour, and hundreds of local people assembled in the specially constructed festival grounds adjacent to the *lukena* fence. In 1988, Mwene Muchayila presided over the proceedings with compelling dignity, his hair shining with three *zimpande* royal ornaments,[125] while it was common knowledge that Mwene Kahare did no longer possess these regalia.[126] All the same, it was agreed that the *Kazanga* ceremony would alternate between Kahare and Mutondo, from year to year, but the 1989 festival was again staged at Mutondo's *lukena*, hosting this time not only Kahare but also Kabulwebulwe and Momba. At a few hundred metres' distance from the Mutondo *lukena* the three visiting chiefs — subject to severe rules of avoidance vis-à-vis each other — each had their own temporary camp erected out of reed rushes, poles and vegetable rope — where they were lodged with their people in a fashion which must have been similar to that of the nineteenth-century travelling *Myene* depicted in *Likota lya Bankoya.*

Further in my argument I shall come back to the question of the historical relationship between the Kahare and Mutondo title in centuries preceding colonial rule. At this juncture, having introduced the Nkoya people and their chiefs in their twentieth-century setting, let us turn to the text on which this study revolves, Shimunika's *Likota lya Bankoya.*

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125 *Mpande*, pl. *zimpande*: the polished bottom of the Conus shell imported from the Indian Ocean; the convolutions of the shell have left a characteristic spiral pattern on its surface. With a string attached through a hole bored in the centre, the *mpande* is worn around the neck of the *Mwene*, as one of the regalia.

126 On the occasion of the second *Kazanga* festival, 1st July 1989, Mwene Kahare was given a *mpande* from Malawi by the present author, in recognition of my great indebtedness since 1972. In all fairness it cannot be ruled out that our close relationship may have lent some slight partiality to my discussion of Mutondo-Kahare relations in the course of my argument below.