

The Drum, the Church, and the Camera: Ham Mukasa and C. W. Hattersley in Uganda

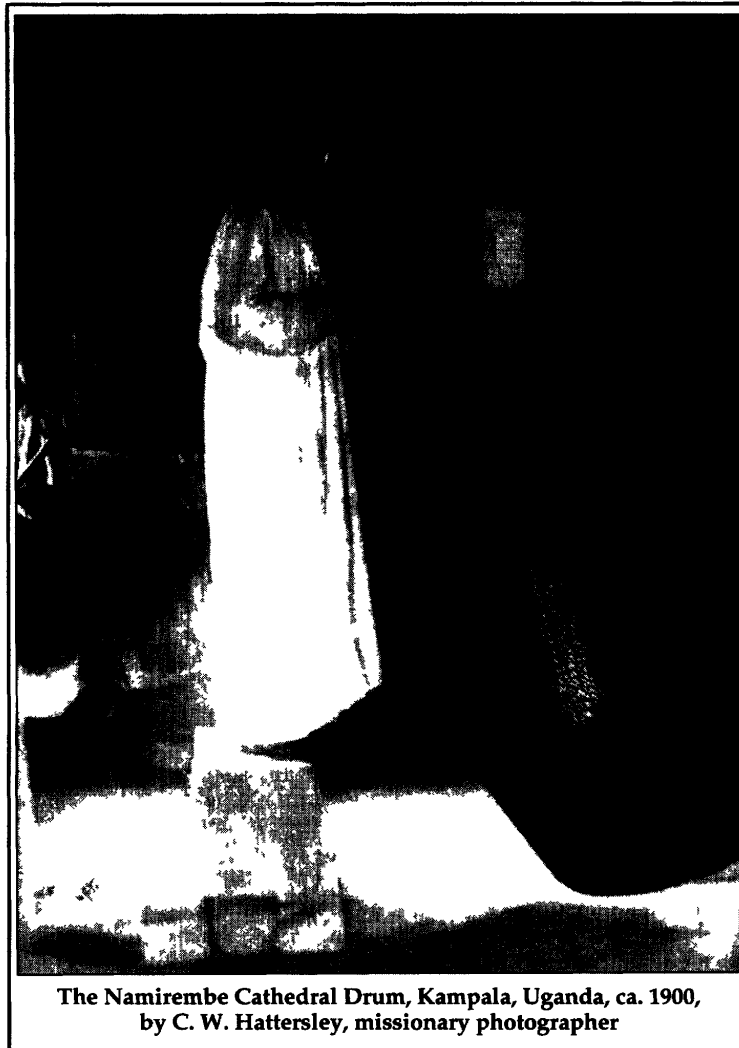
Terry Barringer

In May 1902, two of the most distinguished converts of the Church Missionary Society (CMS)—Apolo Kagwa (1865–1927) and Ham Mukasa (1870–1956), respectively the Katikiro (prime minister and regent) of Buganda and his secretary—came to England for the coronation of King Edward VII. Mukasa, a licensed lay reader and author of a Luganda commentary on Matthew's gospel, was regarded highly as a writer in missionary circles. He kept copious notes on the voyage and visit, which was extended by several months through the postponement of the coronation because of the king's appendicitis. On his return, he wrote an account in Luganda that was subsequently translated and edited for publication by Ernest Millar, the CMS missionary who had acted as the Katikiro's official interpreter. Millar claimed in his introduction to *Uganda's Katikiro in England* that Mukasa's account was

written for the natives of Uganda as a description of the journey and what was seen on it, and everything is described from an entirely native point of view and not with the idea of any translation into English. The book simply shows what impressions the visitors gained during their visit; some of the impressions are obviously false ones . . . but I have not attempted to rectify such things as I think they add to the charm of the book.¹

In packaging Mukasa's account for a British readership, Millar chose to illustrate the book not with the photographs that had been taken of the Ugandans in England but with eight photographs of Uganda by a CMS missionary, Mr. C. W. Hattersley. The most striking of these, reproduced here, combines exotic and Christian elements in such a way that it can be said to encapsulate the Baganda story. An unknown youth, wearing a white garment, stands in Namirembe Cathedral, Kampala, a church designed by Europeans for an African context

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The Namirembe Cathedral Drum, Kampala, Uganda, ca. 1900,
by C. W. Hattersley, missionary photographer

and built by Africans. He stands on a platform, beating a large drum. Near him is a notice, or reading sheet, a reminder of the Baganda passion for literacy, which almost overwhelmed the missionaries. To the European observer, unfamiliar with East Africa, the young man's apparel suggests an ecclesiastical surplice. Subliminally perhaps it suggests the white robes of the newly baptized of early church tradition. It is, in fact a *kanzu*. This garment was introduced by the Arabs and, despite its Islamic associations, was favored by the missionaries as the most suitable garb for converts, preferable to both the native bark cloth, which was considered unhygienic, and to European clothing. "Nothing," said Bishop Alfred Tucker, "could be more seemly."²

The drum does not feature in most published accounts of the building and consecration of the cathedral. J. D. Mullins tells us, "The Rev. Henry Wright Duta has given the Cathedral a huge

drum, 5 ft. high, whose booming sound carries an immense distance. The drum is not only effective as a church bell, but far more in keeping with national customs."³

Henry Wright Duta (d. 1913) was one of the first Baganda converts, baptized at Zanzibar in 1882. Narrowly escaping martyrdom in 1885, he survived to be commissioned as a lay evangelist by Tucker in 1891. He was ordained deacon in 1893, one of the first group of native clergy, and priest in 1896. He was George L. Pilkington's chief assistant in his translation work and played a major part in the production of the Luganda Bible.⁴

One longs to know more about the drum. Was it made specially for the cathedral, or did it have a pre-Christian past? If the latter, for what purposes had it been used?

Drums in Pre-Christian Uganda

Drums played a great part in the life of the pre-Christian Baganda and gave many proverbs and idioms to their language. A large number of named drums or groups of drums, with their own drumbeats and designated drummers, were associated

with the ritual of the court of the Baganda king. For example, when the Kabaka ("king") presented a chief with any office, he would give him a drum, and the man so invested would be said to have "eaten" the drum. Other drums were associated with lesser chiefs, clans, and local shrines. Apart from these special drums, any individual might own one. Drums were widely used to accompany singing and dancing and to announce news. In the words of John Roscoe, the drum "had its place in the most solemn and in the most joyous ceremonies of the nation." The Namirembe Cathedral drum is reminiscent of the royal drums described by Roscoe:

The drums were made from hollowed-out tree trunks encased in cowhide; only one end of the drum was beaten upon, and that was always kept uppermost. Some of the drums were beautifully decorated with cowry-shells or beads. It was the rule to suspend them on posts slightly raised from the ground so as to get the full benefit of the sound, and the man stood over the drum with two short sticks for beating it.⁵

Given that drums were so closely linked to traditional shrines and the life of a royal court, where human life was held cheap, and that they usually contained fetishes, it seems surprising that the missionaries and converts were willing to countenance their use in Christian contexts. It is not clear from the sources whether

Exotic and Christian elements in the photograph combine so as to encapsulate the Baganda story.

the new use of drums arose because of Baganda pressure or whether because of deliberate missionary adoption.

Over the years drums lost much of their importance. Allan J. Lush, writing in 1935, reports that although drums were still used, the majority of young Baganda were ignorant about their names and history. He attributes this to the end of despotic rule and the adoption of Western ideas.⁶ Henry Wright Duta's drum, re-covered more than once, is still kept in the drum-house at Namirembe and used on special occasions. It is not normally used to summon people to church; that is done, Western-style, by bell.⁷

In *Uganda's Katikiro in England* the photograph is used to illustrate a particular point in Mukasa's text. One of his recurring themes is admiration of the technological feats of the British, "the cleverness of the English which is never-ending," and he struggles to describe these wonders in ways intelligible to his fellow Baganda. He uses a biblical analogy to describe his difficulty. "The things of the Europeans are always amazing; and I thought to myself that if we were always wondering at these things which we saw while we were still on the way we should be like the Apostle of our Lord who was called St. John the Evangelist, who when he saw the wonders of God, which he had never seen before; and when he wrote them down in his book he had just to compare them to the earthly things they knew, though they were not really like them."⁸

However, unlike the apostle, Mukasa could call photography to his aid. The first marvel he encountered was the steamer that took the Katikiro's party from Mombasa to Aden:

Let me tell you about it. Its height is twice as great as that of Silasi

Mugwanya's house. . . . With what can you compare a seven-stories ship? It is as wide as Ham Mukasa's brick house . . . the masts are as big round as the Katikiro's drum . . . the length is one and a half times that of Namirembe Cathedral, the great tube out of which the smoke comes is as large or larger than the largest drum in Namirembe Cathedral.⁹

Backing the opposite page in Millar's edition is the photograph that is reproduced here, with Mukasa's comparison to the drum as caption.

We are accustomed to the idea that missionary supporters in England were fascinated and influenced by visual images from the mission field. It is less usual to be able to observe the reactions of Africans to these images. Mukasa describes a visit to Herbert Samuel in London:

He took many photographs of our country and of different kinds of people, peasants and chiefs and of the king and of the old kind of houses which are being done away with at the present time and of our different styles of clothing. . . . After dinner he showed us a great many photographs from Uganda and the neighbouring countries.¹⁰

Later Mukasa visited the Millars, and "Mr. Millar showed us a great many photographs of people in our country."¹¹

The Katikiro and Mukasa obviously relished the many opportunities to have their own photographs taken. They were photographed with British army officers¹² and at the headquarters of the Mill Hill Fathers.¹³ Photographs were taken at the door of the Houses of Parliament¹⁴ and at Crewe with a railway engine.¹⁵ On the return journey to Uganda, Mukasa had further opportunities to indulge his passion for photographs. On a visit to Mombasa prison, Mukasa was particularly struck by photographs of the prisoners "which were very well taken." He went on to commend the prison administration's use of photography:

They register the prisoners very cleverly; they first take photographs of them and then write down the height of each man and the size of his chest, and his colour, and his offense, and the length of his imprisonment, and the place he comes from and his name and religion. All this they do to remind themselves about each man, so that when he commits another offense it is always known what he is like in every respect. I thoroughly approved of this, because it teaches us a spiritual lesson. If we men have the wisdom to mark criminals who offend against our human laws, how will it be with the creator of heaven and earth?¹⁶

Back in Buganda, the travelers were besieged by people wanting to hear about their experiences. "We had no rest by day or night; some people went to the Katikiro, others came to me, all wanting very much to learn all about England; and I showed them . . . the photographs which had been taken of us while we were in England and the pictures of the king's coronation."¹⁷ It would be good to know if these photographs survive. But while we may regret that Millar did not share them with the British public, there is no doubt about the quality and interest of the photographs by Hattersley that he used instead.

Hattersley the Missionary Photographer

Charles William Hattersley (1866–1934), despite the influence of his books and photographs and his major role in the development of education in Uganda, is not a well-known figure. Accepted by the CMS in February 1897, he was previously manager of a cutlery works in Sheffield.¹⁸ He left for Uganda in September, and his missionary career had a tragic beginning. On the way up from the coast, Hattersley's rifle misfired, shooting his colleague

E. H. Hubbard in the back. Despite all the efforts of Dr. Albert Cook, Hubbard died at Mengo a few weeks later. No blame seems to have been laid on Hattersley, and his name was suppressed in the published reports of Hubbard's death.¹⁹ Hattersley's initial duties were to assist Archdeacon Robert Walker "in the business part of the work," keeping accounts, supervising the stores and the sale of books. Bishop Tucker, having asked Hattersley to implement a system of primary education, writes that he took the task in hand with characteristic energy. (Everyone who wrote about Hattersley commented on his energy.) Later his interests moved from general primary education to the education of sons of the chiefs and the future elite, and he became the founding headmaster of Mengo.²⁰

Back in England in 1902-3, Hattersley married Florence Annie Middleton, who accompanied him back to Uganda. Photographs published in *The Baganda at Home* give glimpses of their domestic life with their infant son Stanley, named for the explorer who first invited missionaries to Buganda. Stanley kept an interest in the progress of the mission and corresponded with Hattersley. A photograph, captioned "Black and White: A Little Negro Boy and the Son of the Author," shows the two children looking at what could be a photograph album. Hattersley labors his point: "Our picture of the little white boy with his native playmate affords a very good illustration of the safety in which people exist at the moment. Ladies and children live in almost

Hattersley assiduously recorded pre-Christian and Christian use of the drum.

perfect security amongst a people who a few years back were in a state of anarchy, bloodshed, war raiding, slavery, distress and poverty."²¹

In 1904 Hattersley's sister Emily, a clerk in the furnishing business, followed him to Uganda and worked as a teacher until her resignation in 1911.²² Hattersley himself resigned from CMS in 1913 because of a conflict of interest (he was by now a manager of the Mengo Planters Company) and differences of opinion about the teaching at Mengo Boys School. After some years, he returned to England and went into business in London. The business failed in the depression, and tormented by his inability, as he saw it, to provide for his family, Hattersley took his own life.²³

In happier days, there was no doubt of Hattersley's devotion to photographic duty. In 1907 the boy-king of Uganda, Daudi Chwa, paid an official visit to the tomb of his grandfather Mutesa. Here he was to participate in a cleaned-up, Christianized version of a ritual that had previously involved pagan rites and human sacrifice. The prime minister, Apolo Kagwa, invited Hattersley to photograph the ceremonies. Hattersley recalls,

By half past three in the morning the king's drums were booming the signal for assembling. I had been asked on this occasion to go up early and take a photograph and had thought that early might perhaps mean seven or eight o'clock. Before six however a special messenger from the Katikiro arrived on a bicycle to say that if I wished to have a photograph I must hurry up because the work was all but completed.²⁴

Hattersley, by dint of his own enthusiasm, had assumed the role of official photographer to the church and court of Uganda.

Prints circulated among his fellow missionaries, who then used them to illustrate their own books.²⁵ The print of the Namirembe Cathedral drum reproduced here comes from the Ernest Millar collection in the Royal Commonwealth Society Collections, Cambridge University Library (Y045L).²⁶ Other Hattersley prints are found in an album of photographs of Uganda ca. 1906-11 (Y3045C), which also contains photographs by the commercial photographer Alfred Lobo and by Protectorate officials. Many of these are reproduced in Hattersley's published works. An album belonging to Archdeacon Walker, currently in the possession of Walker's great-nephew, contains examples of his work, and the Hattersley family has photographs of the Hattersley children and scenes in Uganda that I have not seen reproduced elsewhere.

Hattersley's own books are profusely illustrated with photographs; *Uganda by Pen and Camera* has nearly thirty plates;²⁷ *The Baganda at Home* has "one hundred pictures of life and work in Uganda." Even the thirty-six page *Erastus, Slave and Prince* has thirteen photographs.²⁸ This tract tells the story of Erastus Kalamagi, from the Munyoro chiefly family, enslaved as a child, converted, freed, restored to his family as an adult, ready to play his part in the conversion of his people. The photographs in this work are particularly interesting in that they include three—"Slave raider catching boys by night: the glare of burning huts is seen in the background"; "Slave raider and captive"; "Slave raiders surprising a household"—that must have been posed and set up, not without skill.

Promotional Use of Photographs

Uganda by Pen and Camera is, as its title page declares, "profusely illustrated from photographs." It is a call to prayer and missionary recruits, and the prose, which oscillates between the pedestrian and the evocative, suggests origins in an illustrated talk or talks. The quality of reproduction is unfortunately poor, but the photographs are not just an added extra. Hattersley makes valiant attempts to integrate text and photographs, using text to explain the photographs, and photographs to emphasize his points.

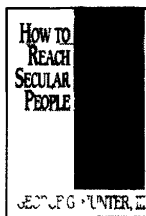
The quality of reproduction is much higher in *The Baganda at Home*. Hattersley reveals himself as a perceptive, if untrained, field anthropologist as well as missionary propagandist—a distinction he would have seen as meaningless. His camera is pressed into service on both accounts. In the first chapter, "Changes in King and Court," he describes King Mutesa's practice of preserving royal umbilical cords and announces with some pride, "The photographs which are here reproduced are the only ones that have ever been taken of these objects."²⁹ Chapters entitled "The Land and Its Products" and "How the People Live" and a harrowing description of the ravages of sleeping sickness follow, as well as more missionary-oriented and occasionally opinionated chapters on religion and education. The short final chapter, "Look on the Fields," is a missionary clarion call in which Hattersley emphasizes the spiritual darkness of the non-Buganda peoples of the Protectorate. "We have in our possession a very recent photograph of a wizard and there is no secrecy whatever about his methods."³⁰ Unfortunately, this photographic evidence is not reproduced.

It is tempting to think that Ham Mukasa learned his appreciation of photographs from the indefatigable Hattersley, although there is no direct evidence for such a conclusion. Hattersley took photographs of the Mukasa family, several of which are in the Millar collection. Certainly, Mukasa held Hattersley in high esteem, and his visit to the Hattersley family in Sheffield was one

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of the highlights of his visit to England. On their return journey he and the Katikiro made a point of inquiring after Hattersley at Aden because they had heard news of his illness. They were much relieved to learn that he was recovering.³¹

Hattersley was away from Uganda between July 1902 and July 1903, so it seems unlikely that the photograph of the cathe-

The drum that once summoned people to war but later to worship symbolizes the transformation of Baganda society.

dral drum was taken specifically to illustrate Mukasa's account. However, its careful composition and lighting suggest that it was specially posed and set up. It is no casual shot. Hattersley took many photographs of the cathedral. Some are reproduced in *Uganda by Pen and Camera* and *The Baganda at Home*, and like other missionaries writing for his home supporters, he made a great

deal of the dramatic story of the rise and fall (all too literal) of the successive structures at Namirembe. All accounts stressed the sacrificial giving and practical labor of the native Christians.³²

Hattersley was also assiduous in recording both pre-Christian and Christian use of the drum. *Uganda by Pen and Camera* reproduces a photograph of "Lubare instruments—magic wands, horns and drums." This photograph is in the Millar Collection (Y3045L23), where it is captioned "Charms etc. brought to England by the Katikiro and the Rev. E. Millar." *The Baganda at Home* has a fine photograph of "Women drummers at Suna's tomb: the women clapping their hands are keeping time to the drums," with some fairly lurid accounts of the accompanying traditional rites. Another photograph in the same volume explains how "worshippers are summoned to service by the beating of drum." Hattersley is typical of missionary writers, who rarely lost an opportunity to use the drum as a symbol of the transformation of Baganda society: "One now never hears the drum being beaten to call people to war, nor is the drum heard announcing that a human sacrifice is about to be offered, and victims are being caught on the road. In place of these are the drums beaten every morning calling people to worship in the House of God."³³ The drum has become a powerful symbol of the conversion of a society.

Notes

1. Ham Mukasa, *Uganda's Katikiro in England: Being the Official Account of His Visit to the Coronation of His Majesty King Edward VII*, translated and edited by the Rev. Ernest Millar (London: Hutchinson, 1904). This is the edition cited throughout this article. An abbreviated version, edited with rather heavy hand by Taban lo Liyong, was published in 1975 as *Sir Apolo Kagwa Discovers Britain*, in Heinemann's African Writers Series. The latter substitutes unattributed pictures of British scenes for Hattersley's photographs.
2. Alfred R. Tucker, *Eighteen Years in Uganda and East Africa* (London: Edward Arnold, 1908), 1:357–59, 2:293.
3. J. D. Mullins, *The Wonderful Story of Uganda* (London: CMS, 1904), p. 14.
4. Obituary notice, *Church Missionary Review* 64 (1913): 388–89.
5. John Roscoe, *The Baganda: An Account of Their Native Customs and Beliefs* (London: Macmillan, 1911), pp. 25–33.
6. Allan J. Lush, "Kiganda Drums," *Uganda Journal* 3, no. 1 (1935): 7–23.
7. Personal communication, Paul Beacham.
8. Mukasa, *Uganda's Katikiro*, p. 27.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 82. Herbert Louis Samuel, First Viscount Samuel (1870–1963), later high commissioner in Palestine under the British mandate, was then a young MP. He took a particular interest in African questions and had toured Uganda in 1902. On his return, he wrote and lectured on the Protectorate, illustrating his lecture to the Royal Society of Arts "with lantern slides from some of the many photographs I had taken." He spoke in the House of Commons on the Uganda Railway and was delighted at this opportunity to repay the Katikiro's hospitality. See Viscount Samuel, *Memoirs* (London: Cresset Press, 1945), pp. 33–37, 42; John Bowle, *Viscount Samuel: A Biography* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1957), pp. 46–48; *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 51 (1903): 390–400. A footnote in the *Memoirs* refers to *Uganda's Katikiro in England* as "a frank and delightfully naive picture of our civilization, as seen through the eyes of intelligent Africans who had never before been outside their own remote and isolated country" (p. 35).
11. Mukasa, *Uganda's Katikiro*, p. 92.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 174.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 170. There are further references to posed photographs on pp. 90 and 127.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 254–55.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 277.
18. *CMS Register of Missionaries (Clerical, Lay and Female) and Native Clergy from 1804 to 1904*, list 1, 1436.
19. W. D. Foster, *The Church Missionary Society and Modern Medicine in Uganda: The Life of Sir Albert Cook K.C.M.G., 1870–1951* (printed for the author, 1978), pp. 77–78.
20. Hattersley's educational work is in need of study and reassessment. Controversial at the time (Hattersley's resignation in 1913 was precipitated by disputes over the running of Mengo), it has been variously assessed since. See, for example, John V. Taylor, *The Growth of the Church in Buganda* (London: SCM Press, 1958), p. 93.
21. C. W. Hattersley, *The Baganda at Home* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1908), p. 45.
22. *CMS Register of Missionaries*, list 2, 736.
23. I am indebted to Hattersley's grandson, also Mr. C. W. Hattersley, for information on his later life.
24. Hattersley, *The Baganda at Home*, p. 19.
25. For example, Roscoe, *The Baganda*, and Mullins, *The Wonderful Story of Uganda*.
26. For an account of the development and organization of the photograph collections of the Royal Commonwealth Society, with special reference to Africa, see my article "Images of Africa in the Royal Commonwealth Society Collections," *African Research and Documentation* 68 (1995): 85–91.
27. C. W. Hattersley, *Uganda by Pen and Camera* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1906).
28. C. W. Hattersley, *Erastus, Slave and Prince: A True Story of Uganda* (London: CMS, 1910).
29. Hattersley, *The Baganda at Home*, p. 14.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
31. Mukasa, *Uganda's Katikiro*, pp. 154–64, 226–27.
32. Hattersley, *Uganda by Pen and Camera*, pp. 62–63; *idem*, *The Baganda at Home*, pp. 201ff.
33. Hattersley, *Uganda by Pen and Camera*, p. 61, cf. Tucker, *Eighteen Years in Uganda*, 1:255.



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