

1. Description

1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family: Buganda, Luganda and Ganda, Uganda (1p4-5)

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): ISO 639-3: lug

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): 0° 18' 56" N / 32° 33' 56" E

1.4 Brief history: The first king of Buganda lived approximately in the end of the 13th century or the beginning of the 14th century. Ganda was “known as a warlike people who conquered many of their neighbors. At the time of White contact, the Ganda kingdom was at the height of its power” (5). In 1890 Britain had official control over the area due to an agreement with Germany, although there already had been missionaries in the area since 1875 (3). The British then clumped the Ganda people with its neighboring tribes to create a country that today is known as Uganda (5). “In 1962 the status of Uganda changed from that of a British protectorate to an independent nation and a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. In the Uganda Agreement, the position of the king (*kabaka*) was confirmed, and the native system of administration was preserved” (5).

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: After the British and the French sent their own Protestant and Catholic missionaries to Buganda, they converted its citizens relatively quickly and within ten years the Baganda people drove out their non-Christian king. After a few religious wars amongst the Catholic, Protestant, and Islamic citizens of Buganda, Great Britain helped the protestant religion to remain the victor by sending arms and became the dominant influence on the Baganda people. In 1900, after the Buganda king had been forced out of his country, the rule officially went to his four year old son, but in reality the regents selectively chosen by the British government were in control (1p4).

1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

Terrain: There are many hills, rivers, swamplands, and pasturelands, as well as some islands and forests in Buganda (2p162-170).

Buganda has plenty of fertile soil for growing crops (1p8).

Climate: The climate is warm, but pleasant. There is a rainy season but if the rains are strong, the sun usually dries it up pretty quickly during the day (4). In Buganda the “temperature [is] never below 50 degrees Fahrenheit or higher than 105 degrees; [there is] an even rainfall; and [there is] no particular dry season” (1p8).

Flora and Fauna: There are grasslands and forests in the Buganda area. The climate is the perfect temperature for bananas and coffee plants to grow (2p162-170).

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density

Over a million people were in the Buganda kingdom. They all lived within ten thousand square miles just north of Lake Victoria (1p8-9).

“The overall density [of the Ganda people is] 42 persons per square kilometer” (5). A more recent census (1986) has determined that their population is now around 2,352,000. Each village housed from approximately 60 to 100 males and their families (5).

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): The Baganda eat potatoes, bananas, yams, sugar cane products, plantains, and fruits to get carbohydrates (2p162-170).

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: They eat cattle, goats, sheep, beans, peanuts, chickens, and fish products which provide proteins and lipids to their diets ((2p162-170) and (5)).

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Buganda has blacksmiths that make spears, axes, and knives for the people to use (2p161-170).

2.4 Food storage: Dried meat was stored in jars called kitafuka while coffee and grains were stored in baskets (2p104). Beer “was stored in a jar called Kawulula” (2p51).

2.5 Sexual division of production: The women do the gardening, farming, cooking, and cleaning while the men are usually working in the military, hunt, fish, and build houses and other things that they need (6).

2.6 Land tenure: The king decides which chiefs get what piece of land. Then through the chiefs, the male villagers could ask for the land that they needed to provide for their families. These plots of land were passed on through the male line (6).

2.7 Ceramics: Pottery was most popular when King Kintu was ruling. The Buganda pots were called Myoli. To make them “the potter had first to pulverize gravel and very hard rocks into... the consistency of sand... [which was then] covered with the wet decayed pith of a plantain stem, which kept it from drying... [The pots] were made on a mat of dried leaves and left there till the next day” (2p159). After the clay was shaped in the way that the potter wanted it, “designs were carved on the pot near the rim... For ten days more the drying continued after which it was set in the sun a few times and then fired” (2p159).

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: Not found.

2.9 Food taboos: “Women were not allowed to eat “sheep, chicken, lung fish, hog, and some fish” and only noble women could eat eggs and fish (2p105).

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

The clan chiefs are supposed to watch the building of a canoe which specifically requires two steel axes to make one. These canoes were generally made out of oak and were “from ten to fifteen feet long on the inside” (2p151).

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): “The original Baganda are said to have been short” (8).

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): “The original Baganda are said to have been... stocky” (8).

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f): The specific age at menarche was not found but the family does hold a ceremony after she gets her first period (6).

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): Not found.

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): Not found.

- 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): Not found.
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): Not found.
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: Compared to other cultures in Uganda, the Buganda have a high divorce rate (7p82).
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: Polygyny amongst males was very common. When the British came and converted the Baganda to Christianity, most of them became monogamous. "In the 1960s, only one in twenty marriages was polygamous" (6).
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: The grooms must pay his bride's father in cowry shells during the wedding ceremony unless he is one of the tribe's chiefs. Once a girl is sent to a chief by her family, the chief then sends her parents "five jars of beer, two cows, two goats, two bundles of barkcloth, two baskets of salt, and five thousand cowry shells" (2p99).
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns: Only those blood related to the father receive inheritance, so his wife will get nothing when he dies. Half then goes to his eldest son and rest is divided between remaining his sons and daughters equally (6).
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: Due to the society's high social standards, the parents in Buganda will often send their kids to live with their relatives who will teach them manners because they don't have as much of a close blood tie to the children as the parents would have (6).
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: Not much is known about homosexuality but it has been said that the arrival of the Arabs in Buganda "did much to encourage and legitimize the kind of activity that Mwanga engaged in with the young pages at court" (1p205).
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):
The children must marry outside of their mother's and father's clans to avoid incest (7).
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?
No evidence of partible paternity.
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows")
The mother would be taken away for special care after being pregnant for three months. Extensive precautions were followed by her servant when she was close to her due date, all in order to ensure a successful pregnancy (2p102).
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? Not found.
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: In the earlier part of the Ganda history one king, Suna II, ordered that "anyone who wronged a young girl be put to death." Later, during and after Mukabya's kingship, these rules were not as strictly enforced (2p98). Any man that fathered a baby through a woman that he was not married to was fined a goat (2p101).
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): Parents of those to be wedded preferred their children's spouses to be of a clan other than their own to avoid problems of incest (6).
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? Females are limited to only sexual intercourse with her spouse (6).
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: The only gift that an extramarital partner received was a goat from the baby's father, which he was required to give to her and her family by tribal law (2p101).
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? Not found.
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females
There are more females than there are males, so the need for multiple wives was established.
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades: No evidence for sympathetic pregnancies was found.
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older) "The birth father is recognized as the true father" (6).
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? Not found.
- 4.24 Joking relationships? Not found.
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations
The patterns for descent amongst the Ganda are patrilineal (6).
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules:
The king is the only one that can marry a sibling, for the rest of the Baganda; incest is not allowed (1p319). "Any one who committed incest was taken to Lwube in Bulemezi and there killed at the slaughtering place Kubamitwe" (2p101).
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? A formal ceremony is held, at which the groom exchanges cowry shells, with his future in-laws, for his bride to be (2p99).
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? Breach babies were to be called Kidnaneje and babies born with harelips were to be called Nakim. In normal circumstances, the parents must try to avoid offending anyone before the naming ceremony, otherwise the baby would die (2p102). For the naming ceremony there was a preparation known as okugunekera that required a mixture be made with salt and other ingredients. The "umbilical cords were fastened to the children for this ceremony, the boys around the right [hand], and the girls around the left hand. [During this ceremony] the children were seated on their mothers' laps." There also be a test administered on the mothers to see if their child was born from adultery during the naming ceremony (2p103).
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) Neither the sons nor daughters can marry from within their parents' clans (7).
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? The man usually courts the female and then asks her for her hand before sending presents to her parents as a way of asking them for their approval of the wedding (2p99).
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: Not found.

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: Not found.

- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: The Banyoro and the Baganda fought to gain political dominance and often went to war over it (1p7-8).
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: Men who fell in love with the princesses could be killed for their crimes. Superstitions say that a person with a “cataract or a white hand” should be slaughtered as well (2p79). If travelers riled up the policemen, they then could be slaughtered (2p80).
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): The Baganda and the Banyoro were in close proximities of one another so there would often be wars for political dominance (1p7-8).
- 4.18 Cannibalism? There is no mention of cannibalism.

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: Each village housed from approximately 60 to 100 males and their families (5).
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): Due to the fact that the Ganda live in large villages, I suspect that they do not move around much.
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): There is a king, called the *kabaka*, that is the head of all of the clans. He appoints “chiefs, military chiefs, and traditional clan chiefs” who are the leaders of the individual clans (6).
- 5.4 Post marital residence: Newlyweds live in separate residences from their parents (6).
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): There was territoriality amongst the Ganda and different cultural groups. “Violent conflict among the Baganda occurred in the wars of territorial expansion and royal succession. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Buganda was a predatory state, constantly warring with its neighbors” (6).
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions? (age and sex): The women do the agricultural domestic chores while the men are in charge of building anything that his family will need as well as being a soldier for his tribe. The children “sweep the yards, fetch water from the well, and cook meals (6).
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: Not found.
- 5.8 Village and house organization: For each house unit there is “a house and kitchen with additional sleeping huts and a latrine. A yard surrounds the house and itself is surrounded on three sides by gardens where permanent crops of coffee and bananas grow” (6).
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens’ houses): Only the kings wives live in separate houses than their husbands, the common woman lives with her husband (2p102).
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? There are special huts in which they sleep that are separate from the main house (6).
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: The Baganda are patrilineal. Each clan has a clan leader, all of whom are governed by the king of all of the clans. People must not marry within their own clans to avoid incest (6).
- 5.12 Trade: Trade was what originally brought the Arabs to Buganda. The Baganda people often traded “bananas and bark cloth for iron from the Lake Albert region and salt, clay pots, and fish from the islands in Lake Victoria. With neighboring pastoral people they traded dried bananas for cattle, sheep, and goats” (6). Often though, they did not need to trade because they were so dominant in war, they conquered other places and got what they needed from raiding their defeated foes (6).
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? There are social hierarchies amongst the Ganda people. To better prepare themselves for such a society, children were trained by their relatives to follow a certain social etiquette called mpisa(6).

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6.0 Time allocation to RCR: The priests were the ones that usually did the major religious rituals but the people had everyday customs that they had to adhere to or else they believed that severe consequences would befall them (2p114-128).
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): Fortune tellers would help the sick know if they were going to get any better. They had an intricate ritual that required an offering to gods and ancestors that included beer, “a goat, chicken, and barkcloth” (2p125). They also had “prognostication by means of a chicken... divination by water... the offering of something accursed... the capturing of ghosts... luck medicine... and [bleeding] by cup” (2p126-7).
- 6.2 Stimulants: Opium and coffee are stimulants that are used by the Baganda (2p166-8)
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):
- 6.4 Other rituals: Whenever a woman was menstruating she “was not allowed to touch anything and to go wherever she liked,” if she did not do so, it would affect her ability to give birth (2p101).
- 6.5 Myths (Creation): Not found.
- 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): The Baganda made music with drums, sticks, harps, fiddles, flutes. They also sang songs that included stories of war. (2p140-9).
- 6.7 Sex differences in RCR: Men were usually the priests while, for the “chief of all gods,” Mukasa, the prophets were female (2p114-5).
- 6.8 Missionary effect:
After Britain sent missionaries and then won religious wars against the French Catholics and the Islamic Arabs in Buganda, the majority of the Baganda had converted to Christianity (1p4).
- 6.9 RCR revival: Not found.
- 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: “The widow washed and shaved the corpse and after two days wrapped it in bark cloth. Traditionally, the direct descendants rubbed butter on the face of the deceased. The corpse was buried at night under the supervision of a senior clansman. Relatives helped dig the grave in the homestead’s banana grove. Beer was brewed and drunk. The installation of an heir concluded the mourning period... The Ganda believe that the spirit of the deceased remains in or near the grave but can travel on occasion. It stays in close contact with its descendants and must be placated with offerings if the descendants are to avoid misfortune and prosper. The ancestral spirit can express its anger by possessing its descendants and making him them speak” (6).
- 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? Not found.
- 6.12 Is there teknonymy? Not found.

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.) Before missionaries were sent to Uganda the Ganda people were polytheistic. They had priests that did private ceremonies most of the time and often had animal sacrifices to appease their gods. The main god was Mukasa, who was very merciful god that offered animal sacrifices as punishment instead of forcing a death penalty (2p112-6). The Ganda people did also practice ancestor worship (5).

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: Not found.

7.2 Piercings: Women would have holes pierced in their lower lips so that spit could drain through it when they smoked (2p104).

7.3 Haircut: Both sexes keep their hair cut short (1p102-3).

7.4 Scarification: "The Ganda do not practice bodily mutilation or scarification" (6).

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): Not found.

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: In a ritual to prepare for birth, expecting mothers will be "rubbed with butter mixed with medicine, from the back, around the ribs, and down to the stomach... to balance the child and strengthen its passage" (2p102).

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: The men and women both wear animal skins, the richer people had hairless hides while the poorer people left the hair on their clothes. Prepubescent girls "wore pieces of wood strung together about their waists, and small varicolored pieces hanging down in front," once they were twelve, they began to wear barkcloth like the adults (2p135).

7.8 Missionary effect: No missionary effect has been found on the apparel of the Ganda.

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: Not found.

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: The firstborn male child is given the majority of his father's inheritance, while all of his younger siblings, of any gender, split the remainder of the inheritance amongst themselves (6).

8.2 Sororate, levirate: Not found.

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): "All the father's brothers are called 'father,' all the mother's sisters are called 'mother,' and all the children are called 'brother and sister'" (6).

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

1. "After marriage a man was not allowed to see... [any of] the female relatives of his wife. They were called Bakodomi, Untouchable. A woman was not allowed to touch her father-in-law or her brothers-in-law. When visiting them she walked around the yard instead of going through it. She was not allowed to hand anything to them. However, she was allowed to meet her mother-in-law, sitting at a distance of about six feet" (2p100).

2. "The Baganda feared death very much... Whenever someone died, they would weep and wail round the corpse. Weeping was important because one who would not weep and wail could easily be suspected of causing the deceased's death. The Baganda did not believe that death was a natural consequence. All deaths were attributed to wizards, sorcerers and supernatural spirits. Therefore, after almost every death, a witch doctor would be consulted." (8).

3. There is a Ganda game called *Kicking*. "Two groups of pages would challenge each other to a kicking contest. Each side would try to knock down the individuals on the other team by kicking them. An outstanding feat was to kick one's way out of an encircling group of kickers. This game was only indulged in by those who knew that they were strong. It was a great favorite with the shepherds" (2p136).

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