



International Journal of Humanities and Arts

Online ISSN: 2664-7702; Print ISSN: 2664-7699; Impact Factor: RJIF 5.26

Received: 06-01-2020; Accepted: 21-01-2020; Published: 07-02-2020

www.humanitiesjournals.net

Volume 2; Issue 1; 2020; Page No. 03-09

Reconstructing the origins of the *Imilangu* of Kalabo and Sikongo districts of Western Zambia

Simakando Silongwa

Ph. D University: Kwame Nkrumah University, Kabwe, Zambia

Abstract

This study is a reconstruction of the origins of the *Imilangu* of Kalabo and Sikongo Districts of Western Zambia. One irrefutable fact about Barotseland is that the area has been widely explored and different aspects of the area and the people therein have been documented by many scholars. However, it is surprising that in spite of the area having been extensively explored by many scholars, the history of the *Imilangu* occupies a very small portion in the literature of Barotseland. Moreover, the literature available does not give a clear understanding pertaining to the origins of the *Imilangu*. Most scholars suggest that the *Imilangu* were once part of the Luyi (Lozi) and that the former broke at once away from the latter. This study however takes a different root by accentuating that the *Imilangu* are a composition of different clans that came from different places under different leaders and at different times. Despite the fact that there could be some clans in *Imilangu* that could have broken away from the Luyi, the broader picture is that most of the *Imilangu* clans were not part of the Luyi.

Keywords: imilangu, origins, clan, luyi, composition

Introduction

Imilangu or *Akwa Shimilangu* is a nickname given to the people under discussion. This ethnic group is found in Southern Kalabo and Sikongo Districts of Western Zambia. Their original name was *Maa* and their language was known as *Simaa*. The area in which they live is called by their name, *Imilangu* or *Shimilangu*. Their language is called *Imilangu* or *Shishimilangu*. Two theories explain why the *Maa* were nicknamed *Imilangu* or *Akwa Shimilangu*. The first theory elucidates that the *Maa* were nicknamed *Imilangu* following a big *lilangu* tree under which Namulimbwa I settled upon his arrival from Angola in the current *Imilangu* area^[1]. It is believed that Namulimbwa I was asked by King Ngombala Namasiku of the Lozi to name the place where he was settled. In response, Namulimbwa said *njinahitila mucilangu*^[2]. These are Mbunda words meaning *I am settled under a lilangu tree*. It is believed that it was from this response given by Namulimbwa to Ngombala that the *Maa* people were nicknamed *Imilangu*. This view is supported by most of the Mbundas settled in *Imilangu* to be true. Sakubita expands this view by expounding that *Imilangu* is named so because the area had a lot of *malangu* trees^[3].

The other theory highlights that *Imilangu* is a nickname the *Maa* were given by the Luyi because they used to take *malangu* (rattles) as tributes to the Luyi Kings. Just like the first view which is supported by the Mbundas, this one is supported by those of *Imilangu* origin. This theory seems to be

true as Namulimbwa's revelation in the first theory regarding the name *Imilangu* is pointing at the Mbunda since Namulimbwa and his people are Mbundas that came from Angola. Therefore, there is no way that the *Imilangu* could have been nicknamed after the Mbunda since the Mbunda found the *Imilangu* already settled in this area. Therefore, the name *Imilangu* comes from the rattles the *Maa* used to take to their Luyi rulers and not from a *lilangu* tree as claimed by Namulimbwa.

Apart from *Imilangu*, the *Maa* were also nicknamed *Mandundulu*. Just like '*Imilangu*', '*Ndundulu*' or '*Mandundulu*' was a nickname given to the *Maa* due to bundles of fiber that they used to take to the *Litunga* as tribute^[4]. However, Kalabo District Note Book gives a different meaning for *Mandundulu* by stating that the *Mandundulu* were named so by the Makololo people which means a wild people^[5]. This explanation of the word *Mandundulu* is not correct because *Mandundulu* refers to bundles. The first meaning given for *Mandundulu* therefore remains indisputable.

Origins

Despite having a variety of literature on Barotseland, very little has been done by scholars like Sumbwa, Mainga, Caplan, Strike, Gluckman and others to explore the history of the *Imilangu*. Being on the periphery of Barotseland, and not having prominent activities that could have attracted the attention of scholars, less has been written on the *Imilangu*. Scholars who have written something about the *Imilangu* did

¹ Interview with Nalishuwa Namushi, (Former Chief Namulimbwa) on 28th November, 2016.

² Interview with Nalishuwa Namushi, (Former Chief Namulimbwa) on 28th November, 2016.

³ M.M. Sakubita, *Kalabo Wa Mboanjikana* (Ndola: National Educational Company of Zambia Limited, 1982), p. 41.

⁴ Interview with Moses Mutuso, (Headman Muhongo) on 30th November, 2016.

⁵ NAZ, KSH 2/1, Kalabo District Note Book, Vol. I., 1906-1913.

so as a by the way when they were writing some history of Barotseland where they needed to mention something about the *Imilangu*. “Although there is a proliferation of material on Lozi history, there is a lamentable gap left in our knowledge of the province as a whole. This is a result of the concentration by existing history on politics at the centre”^[6].

Scholars have given varying explanations concerning the origins of the people of Barotseland, *Imilangu* inclusive. Clay stresses that:

It will probably never be known for certain whether the people of Barotseland came from the north, from the land of the great Lunda Paramount Mwatiamvwa (Mwatayamvo) or, as it is perhaps less likely, from the south. The traditions of the tribe point to a northern origin and a gradual movement southwards down the Kabompo River^[7].

Clay’s point of view which stresses that the origin of the people of Barotseland, *Imilangu* inclusive, will never be known, is what this research seeks to clarify. Having done a detailed research about the *Imilangu*, people with doubts or without knowledge about the origins of the *Imilangu* are provided with a detailed description of the origin of the *Imilangu*.

The *Imilangu* have both oral and written histories explaining their origin. Written literature, however, has lapses as it does not clearly show a specific area or clear direction concerning the origins of the *Imilangu*. Two main views about the origin of the *Imilangu* arise from written sources. The first group of scholars show that the *Imilangu* were once part of the Luyi and that they broke away from their parent ethnic group. The other group show that the *Imilangu* were not part of the Lozi, but that the Lozi found them already settled in Barotseland and conquered them.

Some prominent scholars like Mainga, Sumbwa and Roberts have written on the origin of the *Imilangu*. Mainga, to start with, shows that the *Imilangu* were originally part of the Lozi. She states that according to their traditions, the *Imilangu* are of Luyi origins and began coming to Luyaland^[8] at the end of the 17th century^[9]. Mainga explains that the *Imilangu* were once part of the Luyi. In this case, the *Imilangu* are portrayed to have been one and the same people with the Luyi until the end of the 17th century when they broke away and moved to Luyaland. Unfortunately, Mainga does not give any reason leading to the breaking away of the *Imilangu* from the Luyi. Giving the reasons that made the *Imilangu* to break away from the Luyi would have helped readers to appreciate that indeed the *Imilangu* broke away from the Luyi. The 17th century given by Mainga as a period when the *Imilangu* moved to *Imilangu* is supported by Namushi who indicated that the *Imilangu* came to settle in *Imilangu* around the 17th century

^[10]. Mushiba also supported Mainga by indicating that some of the *Imilangu* were once part of the Luyi and that they broke away from the Luyi on their own or after being sent by the *Litunga*^[11]. Supporting Mainga’s view, in a study done by Simwiinga, the *Imilangu* are portrayed to have been once part of the Luyi. Simwiinga indicates that before the Lozi were conquered and ruled by the Kololo, the *Imilangu* were part of them and that they used the same language^[12].

Simwiinga’s account seems to be true following language similarities. *Imilangu* is exactly the same as the language used by the Luyi in their royal courts. This is especially true for Luyi proverbs. This is the more reason it is very easy for the *Imilangu* to understand Luyi proverbs because the language used in Luyi proverbs is pure *Imilangu*. However, some of Simwiinga’s information needs to be corrected. For instance, he indicates that the *Imilangu* and the Ndundulu (Mandundulu) are two different groups of people. As explained earlier, this is not correct because the two nicknames refer to the same people, the *Imilangu*. In line with Simwiinga, Fortune states that there are numerous tribal groups in Bulozhi who were there long before the Makololo invasion and whose dialects are very closely related to Siluyana^[13].

Apart from the view that depicts the *Imilangu* to have once been part of the Lozi, the other view shows that the *Imilangu* were not part of the Lozi, but that the Lozi found them already settled in Barotseland and conquered them^[14]. Despite indicating earlier that the *Imilangu* were once part of the Lozi, Mainga gives her second thought that proposes that the *Imilangu* were not part of the Lozi. She states that the *Imilangu* were not part of the Lozi, but that they were conquered by the Lozi. Mainga shows that the Luyana (ethnic groupings found in Kalabo and Sikongo Districts) originated from Luba land, and that they came to Bulozhi prior to the Luyi advent. When the Luyi arrived, they fought, conquered and assimilated the Luyana^[15]. During data collection the informants were asked to tell if they could recall any war with the Lozi which led to their conquest. All of them could however not remember any war and they showed ignorance how, from being free people, they became subjects to the Lozi. Kalabo District Note Book has an answer to this ‘mystery’. “The colonization of the surrounding areas was facilitated by a number of factors. ... It should be remembered that the neighbours of the Lozi ... comprised small decentralised groups which presented little resistance to the Lozi”^[16]. Having a decentralised type of leadership is what gave way to the Lozi to easily colonise the *Imilangu* because

⁶ G.N. Sumbwa, ‘A History of the Luyana of Kalabo to 1906’, M.A. Thesis, University of Zambia, 1979, p. 3.

⁷ Gervas Clay, *Your Friend Lewanika: The Life and Times of Lubosi Lewanika Litunga of Barotseland 1842 to 1916* (London: Chatto and Windus Ltd, 1968), p. 3.

⁸ Luyaland refers to Kalabo and Sikongo Districts. *Imilangu* is part of Luyaland.

⁹ M. Mainga, *Bulozhi under the Luyana Kings: Political Evolution and State Formation in Pre-Colonial Zambia* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1973), p. 216.

¹⁰ Interview with Nalishuwa Namushi, (Former Chief Namulimbwa) on 28th November, 2016.

¹¹ Interview with Mushiba Silenga, (Former Headman Sikombwa) On 30th November, 2016.

¹² J. Simwiinga, ‘The Impact of Language Policy on the use of Minority Languages in Zambia with special Reference to Tumbuka and Nkoya’, (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Zambia, 2006), p. 166.

¹³ G. Fortune, ‘A Note on the Languages of Barotseland’, *Conference of the History of the African Peoples*, Rhodes Livingstone Institute, Lusaka, 1963, p. II.

¹⁴ M. Mainga, *Bulozhi under the Luyana Kings* (London: Longman, 1973), p. 216.

¹⁵ Mainga, *Bulozhi under the Luyana Kings*, p. 216.

¹⁶ NAZ, KSH 2/1, Kalabo District Note Book, Vol. I., 1906-1913.

they could not easily organize themselves to fight against the Lozi. According to Mackintosh, “the deposition of the Barotse was to form alliances with their neighbours rather than to crash them by force of arms. Many were glad to come under their sway, and to gain protection by paying an annual tribute^[17]. Strike gives a different view from Mackintosh by stating that the Barotse were very fortunate in the class of people they found occupying the country they settled in; the more timid tribes were at once enslaved, while more powerful people were propitiated and gradually enslaved^[18].”

Traditions linking Buluzi with the Lunda appear to concern only the ruling dynasty. While admitting the existence of a previous people in the plain, they do not include or account for the origins of the groups which were conquered and absorbed by the new rulers^[19].

The above thought clearly shows that the *Imilangu* were not part of the Lozi. This view seems to be true as one of the *Imilangu* informants had this to say:

The history of the Lozi Kingdom you teach to the learners in your schools does not include us. We are totally different from the Lozi. Their area of origin, their language, their culture and many other aspects of their life are different from ours. The sad part on our side is that we have no written history and this makes it easy for the Lozi to claim that we were once part of them. However, despite the nonexistence of our written history, it is there in our brains. As long as we live, we know that we have never been part of the Lozi^[20].

Furthermore, Mainga points out that, “The consolidation of Lozi power involved...the Lozi sovereignty over the surrounding people. Mboo the first king, conquered and subjected the Ma-Kwamakoma, Ba-Mulangu^[21], Ma-Mwenyi, and Ma-Mbumi^[22]. Jalla supports the view that the *Imilangu* were not part of the Lozi by outlining that:

Mboo is said to have fought and conquered ... *ba Imilangu*. The people said to have been conquered by Mboo are today dispersed widely over Buluzi as a result of migration and intermarriages. But their indigenous home areas remain identifiable and in most instances tribal names are linked with place names like *Imilangu* and *Imilangu Lake*^[23].

Despite the indistinctness that seems to arise from the origin of the *Imilangu*, Mainga finally makes it clear by highlighting that:

Despite the uncertainty concerning ...Aluyana origins, traditions indicate that the Lozi kingdom was a conquest-state which imposed its institutions on a preexisting population. The original inhabitants of the area offered little resistance to their invaders; and there is no mention of any major war

following the Lozi settlement in the present Buluzi^[24].

Lamenting on the inconsistencies that come from written sources, Joseph bemoans that, “the written sources are thin, uneven, and often mistaken. Records which were left contain many fundamental mistakes because the information ... was second-hand and from prejudiced sources”^[25]. Following the imprecise information from the scholars cited above, Sumbwa posits that, “the problem with these interpretations is their inconsistency with the oral information I collected. According to the accounts I obtained, the story of the origins of the Luyana is not of whole groups like ‘Makoma’ or ‘Nyengo’; but of individual clans”^[26] Just like Sumbwa has put it, the *Imilangu* also say that they have no specific area of origin. This is so because they came to *Imilangu* according to their clans from different areas and at different times. However, the actual time or period when the *Imilangu* migrated could not be established as all the respondents stated that they did not know time when their forefathers migrated. According to Headman Muhongo, “there is no one here in *Imilangu* who can tell you when the first people came to settle here because none of them was educated to know the years. What we know is that they migrated many years ago but the actual years are not known^[27]. Sumbwa states that the coming of the *Imilangu* to Luyaland is shown as a gradual process, in which different clansmen came to the area either as hunters or as refugees. And for historical reasons, these clans merged into the major peoples now existing^[28].

Moreover, Pinto also suggests that the *Imilangu* are a composition of people from different clans that came from different places. “The Luyana peoples come from different peoples outside Buluzi. The inhabitants of Lutwi, like all the aborigines of Nyengo plains, are of the Ganguella race”^[29]. In supporting the view that the *Imilangu* were not part of the Lozi but were just conquered, Andrew Roberts puts it that by about 1800 various peoples to the west had been brought under Lozi rule^[30].

***Imilangu* clans**

As alluded to, for one to understand the origins of the *Imilangu* he/she requires to have an understanding of the clans found in *Imilangu*. This is so because they originated from different places at different times. The *Imilangu* are a composition of not less than nine clans which include the Mulonga, Nyuwe, Ngondo, Bula, Namaya, Shangu, Ng’omba, Shalishinji, Noka, and others.

Mulonga (Bamulonga) is one of the major clans in *Imilangu*. Both written and oral sources give varying explanations regarding the origins of the Mulonga. However, both of them point to a place outside Zambia as their place of origin. The

¹⁷ C.W. Mackintosh, *Lewanika of the Barotse: Paramount Chief of the Barotse and Allied Tribes 1875-1916* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1942), p. 5.

¹⁸ D.W. Strike, *Barotseland: Eight Years among the Barotse* (New York: Negro University Press, 1969), p.40.

¹⁹ Mainga, *Buluzi under the Luyana Kings*, pp. 10-11.

²⁰ Interview with Moses Mutuso, (Headman Muhongo) on 30th November, 2016.

²¹ Ba-Mulangu refers to the *Imilangu*. Instead of *Ba-Mulangu*, this should have been *Ba-Imilangu*, meaning the *Imilangu*.

²² M. Mainga, ‘The Lozi Kingdom’, Brian M. Fagan (ed.), *A Short History of Zambia: From the Earliest Times until A.D. 1900* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 125.

²³ A. Jalla, *History, Traditions and Legends of the Barotse Nation*, P.S. Sikota Akufuna typescript, p. 4.

²⁴ Mainga, ‘The Lozi Kingdom’, p. 125.

²⁵ Papstein, J. Roberts, ‘the Upper Zambezi: A History of the Luvale People, 100-1900’, Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, 1978, p. 1.

²⁶ Sumbwa, ‘A History of the Luyana of Kalabo to 1906’, p.33.

²⁷ Interview with Moses Mutuso (Headman Muhongo) on 17th June, 2018.

²⁸ Sumbwa, ‘A History of the Luyana of Kalabo to 1906’, p. ii.

²⁹ S. Pinto, *How I Crossed Africa* (London: Alfred Elwes Translation, 1881), p. 368.

³⁰ A. Roberts, ‘The Political History of Twentieth-Century Zambia’, T.O. Ranger, (Ed.). *Aspects of Central African History* (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1973), pp. 75-76.

Mulonga are believed to have originated from Mboi in Namibia. Their name comes from a place called 'Mulonga' in Senanga where they settled on their way from Namibia as they were coming to *Imilangu*. All the oral informants confirmed that these people migrated from Namibia and that they have never been part of the Luyi. Sumbwa confirms this by stating that the Mulonga is one of the few clans that make no claim to any direct link with the Luyi^[31]. Among the notable people who led this group was Lishaala who was a sister to Libebe, one of the great rain makers in Mboi. Lishaala, being the most senior in the group, was the leader for the Mulonga. The other ladies in this group included Luhunja, Lishaala's daughter who was married to Kaputi, and Mulangu Shishesha another sister to Libebe. Among the notable men were Shikapaako and Simangolwa Linganja.

From Mboi, the Mulonga moved northwards and entered Zambia through Senanga, as earlier mentioned, where they got their name from. Here they split into two groups, one group used the southern route while the other one used the northern route. The group that used the southern route is commonly known as *real Mulonga* whereas the one that used the northern route is called *Mulonga wamunya shishopyolo*.

Mulonga wamunya shishopyolo was under the leadership of Namangolwa, Kaywa (Namangolwa's brother) and Mwalye (Namangolwa's son)^[32]. This group went to Nambwata near Sefula. At Sefula they left Nalumango and proceeded to Kakita. Encountering Luyi hostilities over hunting rights, they left for Liuwa via Libonda and settled at a place called Konje^[33]. From Liuwa they moved southwards and entered *Imilangu* where they met with the other Mulonga group that used the southern route. Their villages are found in Honge, Utapa and Tuuwa.

The 'real Mulonga' moved westwards and entered Angola with their leader Lishaala. From Angola they went towards the northeast and entered Zambia through Sikongo District of Western Province. As they entered Zambia they passed through an area called Muhae where they spent two days. On the third day early in the morning they left Muhae and continued moving eastwards. Since they had left Muhae when it was still dark, little did they know that their old mother (Lishaala) had been left behind^[34]. Immediately they discovered that their mother was not in their midst, some group members went back to follow her. Unfortunately, when they reached Muhae they found her being eaten by hyenas. From there they went to report to the other group members what happened to their great mother^[35].

From Muhae this group went to Namushe, across Howana Lake where they settled for a while and built grass thatched

structures called *mangulu*^[36]. After being there for some time, they split into different groups. The first group under the leadership of Mulangu went to Mulonga among the Fwee people. The second group under Shikapaako went to Nyengo. The other group under the leadership of Simangolwa Linganja and his nephew Mwiya went to Lutwi. Mwanamuke and his group went to Uмба while Mulombwe went to Kangulo. Lilombo and his group went to Chilele. Matengo and Matengu went to Lutwi and Lulang'unyi respectively. Simushi *wa* Kaluchi went to Lukowela whereas Muhongo went to Sihendo. Mulombwe and his group went to Kangulo. Kabubi^[37] remained in Howana.

Apart from the Mulonga, the other vital clan in *Imilangu* is Nyuwe. The Nyuwe are believed to have originated from Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo). According to Sumbwa, the Nyuwe arrived earlier than any of the other clans^[38]. Sumbwa's assertion is however disputed by most of the *Imilangu* who stated that the Mulonga were the first ones in the area. This group was led by Muluwe the son of Musama. On their way from Congo they passed through 'mushitu wa Mbuni', 'Mbuni forest', between Mongu and Lukulu, as they went southwards to settle at a place called Mutomena in Senanga^[39]. From Senanga they went westwards to Angola, Kutii to be specific. From Kutii they split into three groups following a disagreement that erupted after Namulimbwa, one of the family members, refused to share with his friends a zebra he had killed. Following this misunderstanding, the whole group came back to Zambia, not as one group but as three groups, each under a different leader. As they entered Zambia, each group went to settle in an area of its own. For instance, Muluwe went to Mabuwa whereas Simakando and Lishomwa went to settle in Litwi and Luoke respectively.

The other clan found in *Imilangu* is the Ngondo. The name *Ngondo* means lightning. This group is believed to have originated from Mboiwa in Angola under the leadership of Mukenge and Noleya. Sumbwa also confirms that the Ngondo originated from Angola^[40]. From Mboiwa these people passed through Mashi and then proceeded eastwards up to the time they reached Barotseland where they went to report themselves to the Lozi ruler, Mbuyamwambwa. Upon reporting themselves to Mbuyamwambwa, she sent them to go and settle in an area south of Kalabo boma called Lukona. From Lukona the Ngondo moved northwest to Lilengo, west of Kalabo boma. From Lilengo, this group left one of its family members called Kachapulula as others went westwards until they reached Nyengo. Due to 'darkness'^[41] in Nyengo, this group left this area and moved northwards and then went to Sibuwu in Lilundu area. From Sibuwu a group under the leadership of Mukenge Mwalyeana left the place and went to Muunga. From Muunga others moved southwards and went to

³¹ Sumbwa, 'A History of the Luyana of Kalabo to 1906', p. 35.

³² Interview with Liswaniso Namakando, (Former Headman Lyambombola) on 2nd December, 2016.

³³ N. Mushele, 'Nyuwe History: K.S. Mushele', Manuscripts on Origins of the Nyuwe as related 'by my father', p.1.

³⁴ Lishaala was very old when the Mulonga reached Muhae such that she needed someone to be closer to her. Due to lack of close monitoring, she was left asleep at Muhae when the other group members continued with their journey.

³⁵ Interview with Moses Mutuso, (Headman Muhongo) on 30th November, 2016.

³⁶ *Mangulu* were simple round structures made out of poles and grass. The grass covered the structure from its bottom part up to the roof.

³⁷ Kabubi was very important to the *Litunga* because he was the one who used to collect and take fish from the whole of Howana area to the *Litunga*.

³⁸ Sumbwa, 'A History of the Luyana of Kalabo to 1906', p. 30.

³⁹ Interview with Siambango Sinonge on 8th July, 2018.

⁴⁰ Sumbwa, 'A History of the Luyana of Kalabo to 1906', p. 42.

⁴¹ The darkness being referred to here was the absence of fire in Nyengo. Nyengo, being a plain without firewood, was found to be a very difficult place for the Ngondo to live in.

settle in Sikushi. It must be noted here that Ngondo clan is found in Lukona, Lilengo, Sibuwu, Muunga and Sikushi areas.

Bula is another clan that adds up to the ethnic group that are today called *Imilangu*. Bula is an *Imilangu* word meaning 'rain'. Just like the Ngondo, the Bula are also believed to have originated from Angola. This group was under the leadership of Mushulumuko and his sister Namabunga. From Angola, this group passed through Mashi and then proceeded to Barotseland^[42]. Upon reporting themselves to the *Litunga*, they were given the southern part of Kalabo called Ndoka. Mwanamwambwa, the *Litunga* then, sent them to Ndoka specifically for them to become his hunters in that area as it had a lot of animals. The Bula are today found in Mabuwa, Simbuu and Lulang'nyi.

Another clan found in *Imilangu* is Namaya. This group was led by four brothers namely; Nawa Mushiko, Kapuka, Ushiwa Nang'ango and Mwanamambo. The Namaya originated from Totela land in Senanga around 1720-1750^[43]. From their place of origin, they moved northwards and entered Nkoya land in Kaoma. From Kaoma they passed through Nyunyi forest in Mongu. From Nyunyi forest they went in the northwestern direction to Kakulunda in Mbowe land, Lukulu. From Kakulunda they diverted southwards to Kama in the Barotse floodplains where they spread into different groups. One group under the leadership of Mengo, Sikokotwa and Mukunda went to the southern part of *Imilangu* (Mboela). Nawa Mushiko, Kapuka and Ushiwa went to Nyengo where they died from. Before dying, Nawa Mushiko had made a muundo^[44] which was later inherited by his two brothers, Nyambe^[45], and Mukwa. Since this muundo was closer to where Sikongo boma is today, Nyambe Ndelwa decided to shift with his family from Nyengo to settle in Sishosho, a place located about 4 kilometers south of Sikongo boma. It was through this movement that the Namaya found themselves in *Imilangu*.

Another prominent clan in *Imilangu* is known as Shangu. The Shangu are believed to have originated from Mbowe, under Imenda. Mbowe is an area on the northern side of Lukulu District of Western Province. Shangu is a nickname coming from a Mbunda word *mashangu* meaning 'finger millet'. As this group was migrating, it was led by a woman called Lingongi who was married to an Angolan. It is believed that Lingongi was one day found with some millet (*mashangu*) in her Bantu knots by some Mbundas. It is from the millet seen in her Bantu knots that this clan is named Shangu^[46]. This clan is believed to have migrated during the Lozi-Kololo war. Apart from Lingongi, this group was under the leadership of four men namely; Makonde, Shiyama, Simangolwa and Lingomba. Of the four brothers, Makonde was the oldest.

⁴² Interview with Patson Mungela Like on 8th July, 2018.

⁴³ Sumbwa, 'A History of the Luyana of Kalabo to 1906', p. 36.

⁴⁴ Muundo is *Imilangu* which refers to a dyke built of mud including gaps where fish-traps can be set.

⁴⁵ Nyambe was nicknamed Ndelwa following some special hats he used to make from feathers of birds called ndelwa for the *Litunga*. These were special hats won by paddlers during the Kuomboka ceremony. Hats made out of Ndelwa feathers are still won today during the Kuomboka.

⁴⁶ Interview with Namushi Kakundu, (Headman Shilunduko), on 8th July, 2018.

From Lukulu, the Shangu moved southwards and entered Kalabo District through Makoma. After they had stayed in Makoma for some time, they proceeded southwards to Nyengo. Upon their arrival in Nyengo, Limbwata village to be specific, the Shangu found Prince Imbuwa who got married to Namiluko, a sister to Makonde. As the group continued going southwards, some people like Mandika, Nambayo, Kalimbu, Nyangala and others remained in Nyengo. While in Nyengo, some of the group leaders moved southwards into *Imilangu* to survey for a place where they could settle. Having found land in *Imilangu*, the surveyors went back to Imbuwa and told him that they had found a place where they could settle. Imbuwa in turn allowed them to move to *Imilangu*.

On their way from Nyengo to *Imilangu*, the Shangu crossed Natalui River as they proceeded to Malondo. From Malondo they passed through Nong'e and then Tuuwa where they met with the Nyuwe of Luandamo. After staying in Tuuwa for some time, they moved westwards to Honge. From Honge they continued westwards and then passed through a forest they named *Shang'aka*. This forest was named so because of a *ng'aka* (pangolin) they found there. After passing through this forest they continued westwards to 'Lilundu wa Chisonde' near the current Lilundu Primary School. It was at this point where the Shangu met with the Mulonga. From Lilundu wa Chisonde they moved northeast to Lake Lyakawe and then northwards and met with the Namaya at *Shishongo sha Wamuendo*, meaning 'forest for Wamuendo'. From there they moved eastwards to Wamulume and then southwards passing through Lake Netwi. Lake Netwi was named so following some heads (mitwi) of eaten fish they found in this place. From Netwi the Shangu went to Shifulo and then Shang'ola. When this group was making all these movements their leader Makonde had remained in Nong'e. Having stayed for some time in Nong'e, Makonde also decided to follow his family members whom he met in Shang'ola. Before reaching Shang'ola Makonde got lost in Nyungu forest such that he had to spend a night there. Since then, the saying *Nyungu kaha wandambo, mwanalala Makonde natumbwa twaye mufungo* is used among the *Imilangu* to refer to the same forest. This simply means *Nyungu is not a friendly forest, Makonde and his dogs that were tied around their necks spent a night there*. It is strongly believed that even today people still get lost in this forest. The following morning Makonde managed to find his family. Having found them, he went back to Nyengo to pick some of his family members who had remained there and he brought them to *Imilangu*^[47].

Ng'omba is also one of the clans that make up the *Imilangu*. The Ng'omba are named so following a very big male lechwe (*ng'omba*) they killed on their way as they were migrating. This clan is believed to have migrated from Senanga, Sitoti in particular, among the Kwandi. The time they migrated from Sitoti to *Imilangu* could not be established as most of the informants lamented saying; *Shiwayenu kamutweshe kulimuka eshilimo nakeya, yakunatukulu*^[48], meaning, *it is not possible even for me to know the year they migrated because that happened a long time ago*. Ndopu, Mushanda,

⁴⁷ Interview with Livinus Kakundu Simushi on 10th July, 2018.

⁴⁸ Interview with Bornface Liswaniso, Muunga Village on 8th July, 2018.

Shingundungwe and Nalwendo are the ones that led this group. From Senanga, the Ng'omba passed through the Barotse flood plains heading westwards until they reached Namatengwe on the eastern side of Nyengo. As they left Namatengwe Singundungwe remained while others proceeded westwards to Nakapungu in the interior of Nyengo. From Nakapungu the Ng'omba moved southwards until they reached *Imilangu* where they spread in different parts of the area ^[49]. Some of them went to Muunga ^[50] while others went to Likandangi and Lusa where they are still found even today. Other than the above discussed clans, Shalishinji is yet another clan found in *Imilangu*. The name Shalishinji comes from *lishinji*, (*nakatenge* in Lozi). *Lishinji* is a Nyengo word which refers to a species of fish which is tiny and white in colour. This clan was named after this fish because its leader Simataa wa Manji in Makoma used to catch a lot of this type of fish. The Shalishinji are believed to have initially been part of the Bula clan which has already been discussed. This clan is believed to have originated from Kaluwe wa Simataa in Makoma ^[51]. Makoma covers the last part of northern Kalabo and Sikongo Districts. The Shalishinji migrated from Makoma because they were following their relatives in Nyengo. As they migrated from Makoma to *Imilangu* they were under the leadership of Mwaambwa and her two daughters Kashinji and Shimushobu. From Makoma the group moved southwards and came to Nangoma wa Shiluponda in Nyengo. While in Nyengo, the two daughters to Mwaambwa got married. Kashinji got married from Shang'ola while Shimushobu was married in Lwahumba to a man named Simushi. While in marriage, Shimushobu had three daughters namely; Noputu, Nalowa and Namondu. After the three daughters, she also had sons namely; Simakando Mukubonda, Ndembele and Shiyunguyungu. As soon as she had her last-born son, Shiyunguyungu, her husband Simushi died. Following Simushi's death, Shimushobu's brother Simataa followed her to bring her back to Makoma. However, Shimushobu refused to go back to Makoma stating that she had a lot of children whom she could not leave alone in *Imilangu*. She requested her brother Simataa to take her to her relatives who were part of the Bula clan in Lulang'unyi. With this request, Simataa went to ask for land from Chumbula where her sister could settle. She was given Siondo where she did not stay long due to lack of water. With this challenge in place, Shimushobu personally went to Chumbula and asked for another area where to settle and she was given Likandangi. Up to date, the Shalishinji are settled in Likandangi village of Lulang'unyi area in *Imilangu*.

The other clan found in *Imilangu* is Noka. The Noka are believed to have originated from Mwenyi ^[52]. Noka is a nickname given to this group following a black mamba (*noka* in *Imilangu*) they found in Sikushi. When they tried to kill it,

thinking it was a python ^[53], it entered into a hole. Having entered the whole, they started digging it and in the process one of them was unfortunately beaten by the same snake. Fortunately, his friends used traditional herbs to treat him and he recovered. As they were treating him, they discovered that in fact the snake they wanted to kill was a black mamba (*noka*) and not a python (*mboma*). From that point onwards, this clan became to be known as Noka ^[54]. On their way from Mwenyi, the Noka crossed Luanginga River and then proceeded to Sikushi. From Sikushi they continued southwards to Muyachi where they asked for land where they settled for some time. After staying in Muyachi for some time, some of them moved to Lueti. Among the major areas in *Imilangu* where the Noka are today found include Sikushi, Muyachi and Lueti.

Conclusion

This study is a reconstruction of the origins of the *Imilangu* in Kalabo and Sikongo Districts of Western Province, Zambia. The study has demonstrated that despite many scholars having documented the history of Barotseland, the origins of the *Imilangu* was not clearly addressed. In instances where the history of the *Imilangu* was documented, it is either the scholars documented less or they gave wrong facts about the origins of the *Imilangu*. This is common as demonstrated by most researchers who stated that the *Imilangu* originated from the Luyi. This study is a blessing as it gives a different direction by reconstructing the origins of the *Imilangu* by demonstrating that the *Imilangu* migrated into *Imilangu* from different areas, mostly outside Zambia, according to their clans. Therefore, this study is special in the sense that it corrects facts that were distorted by a number of scholars. Moreover, a detailed description of the clans found in *Imilangu*, which was not done by other scholars, has been elaborated in this study.

References

1. Interview with Bornface Liswaniso, on 8th July, 2018.
2. Interview with Liswaniso Namakando, Former Headman Lyambombola on 2nd December, 2016.
3. Interview with Livinus Kakundu Simushi on 10th July, 2018.
4. Interview with Moses Mutuso, (Headman Muhongo) on 30th November, 2016.
5. Interview with Mundia Mutsuso on 27th July, 2018.
6. Interview with Mushiba Silenga, (Former Headman Sikombwa) On 30th November, 2016.
7. Interview with Nalishuwa Namushi, (Former Chief Namulimbwa) on 28th November, 2016.
8. Interview with Namushi Kakundu, (Headman Shilunduko), on 8th July, 2018.
9. Interview with Patson Mungela Like on 8th July, 2018.
10. Interview with Siambango Sinonge on 8th July, 2018.
11. NAZ, KSH 2/1, Kalabo District Note Book, 1:1906-1913.
12. Roberts J Papstein. 'The Upper Zambezi: A History of the Luvale People, 100-1900', Ph.D. Thesis, University of

⁴⁹ Interview with Bornface Liswaniso, Muunga Village on 8th July, 2018.

⁵⁰ *Muunga* is *Imilangu* meaning thorn. The area was named so because it had a lot of thorns when the Ng'omba arrived there.

⁵¹ Interview with Siambango Sinonge on 8th July, 2018.

⁵² Mwenyi is an area that shares boundaries with *Imilangu* on the northern part. The inhabitants of this area are also called Mwenyi. Their language is also called by their name, Mwenyi.

⁵³ Pythons were, and are still eaten as relish by some *Imilangu*.

⁵⁴ Interview with Mundia Mutsuso on 27th July, 2018.

- California, 1978.
13. Simwiinga J. 'The Impact of Language Policy on the use of Minority Languages in Zambia with special Reference to Tumbuka and Nkoya', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Zambia, 2006.
 14. Sumbwa GN. 'A History of the Luyana of Kalabo to 1906', M.A. Thesis, University of Zambia, 1979.
 15. Clay Gervas. *Your Friend Lewanika: The Life and Times of Lubosi Lewanika Litunga of Barotseland 1842 to 1916*. London: Chatto and Windus Ltd, 1968.
 16. Jalla A. *History, Traditions and Legends of the Barotse Nation*, P.S. Sikota Akufuna typescript.
 17. Mackintosh, C.W. *Lewanika of the Barotse: Paramount Chief of the Barotse and Allied Tribes 1875-1916*. London: Lutterworth Press, 1942.
 18. Mainga M. *Bulozi under the Luyana Kings: Political Evolution and State Formation in Pre-Colonial Zambia*. London: Longman Group Limited, 1973.
 19. Pinto S. *How I Crossed Africa*. London: Alfred Elwes Translation, 1881.
 20. Roberts A. 'The Political History of Twentieth-Century Zambia', T.O. Ranger, (Ed.). *Aspects of Central African History*. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1973.
 21. Sakubita MM, *Kalabo Wa Mboanjikana*. Ndola: National Educational Company of Zambia Limited, 1982.
 22. Strike DW. *Barotseland: Eight Years among the Barotse*. New York: Negro University Press, 1969.
 23. Fortune G. 'A Note on the Languages of Barotseland', *Conference of the History of the African Peoples*, Rhodes Livingstone Institute, Lusaka, 1963.
 24. Mushele N. 'Nyuwe History: K.S. Mushele', Manuscripts on origins of the Nyuwe as related 'by my father'.