

## **MARACHI**

Their clans consist of the Abafofoyo who are the predominant clan, the Ababere, the Abang'aya, the Abatelia, the Abarano, the Abapwate, the Abakwera, the Abasumia, the Abasimalwa, the Abamutu, the Abonwe, the Abamalele, the Abamutsama, the Abarunga, the Abakolwe, the Ababule, the Abamulembo, and the Abatura. All these clans are descended from different ancestors. The Abafofoyo are the majority clan.

### **The Abafofoyo clan**

The Abafofoyo were the first people to come into Marachi. Along with them also came the Abatelia, the Abapwate, the Abasumia, the Abarano, the Abasimaiwa, and the Abakwera. After them came the Ababere, the Abamutu, the Abamalele, the Abamutsama, the Abatura and the Abamurono, in that order. Then the Abang'ayo came; they were accompanied by the Abonwe. The other clans came later still. When the Abafofoyo came in, they found Marachi uninhabited.

### **The migrations of the Abafofoyo and their companions**

They came from Bunyoro where they had formerly lived. After leaving Bunyoro, they went to Buganda and then crossed the Nile into Busoga. Whilst in Busoga, they built a village and surrounded it with a ditch and named it Elukala. To date it is still there with its ditch. After leaving Busoga they went to Bunyala close to the Lake at Port Victoria. Once again they named their new village Elukala.

Once again they migrated, crossed the Nzoia river, and went to what is now North Ugenya and settled there. Here again they built a village called Elukala near Sega. They then dispersed and spread out in North Ugenya and beyond as far as the Kholera river and, northwards, into this place'. Over here they spread out as far as the Nzoia and, on the Bukhayo side, the Sibbo (Sio) river. Farther to the north they extended as far as the Khulera river.

### **The People they came in contact with**

*Bunyoro:* We do not know.

*Buganda:* They were with the Baganda: the Abafofoyo were one of the clans of the Baganda. However, they broke away and separated because of a quarrel.

*Busoga:* It was still uninhabited.

*Bunyala:* Again still uninhabited. The Abamulembo, the majority clan of the Abanyala, came here after the Abafofoyo and their companion clans had already migrated.

*North Ugenya:* It was uninhabited. At that time the Abageri were over the other side in Alego. They came and found the Abafofoyo in North Ugenya'.

*Marachi:* It was also uninhabited.

### **The reasons for migrating**

*Bunyoro:* They emigrated because they were overcrowded; they were after a country with plenty of room.

*Buganda:* They fought with their fellow Baganda, hence their migration. The quarrel arose over the succession to the throne. They were some of the members of the

kabaka's lineage. Then they quarrelled over the kabakaship and emigrated; they left there some of their kinsmen who are currently on the throne. Marachi was the one who fought for the throne with the kabaka who stayed behind in Buganda. We do not know the name of that kabaka who stayed behind. Nevertheless, Sindu (Kintu) was the father of Marachi and of that kabaka and the person who led the people who came to Marachi was Mango.

*Busoga:* They migrated from here because they were menaced by mosquitoes and tsetse flies; they used to infect them with sleeping sickness.

*Bunyala:* The endless nuisance of flooding and the consequent swamping of homes was the reason for their migration.

*North Ugenya:* The Alego (Luo) people fought with the Abageri and, as a result, the latter besought the Abamarachi to allow them to come and live in their (Abamarachi's) country. At that time the Abamarachi were still living in North Ugenya. Then, after they had allowed the Abageri to come, the Abamarachi found that they were now becoming crowded. As a result, they migrated and left the Abageri to live there. They left them that land peacefully because the Kager (Abageri) used to aid them against enemy attacks. They have never fought or even quarrelled with the Abageri; they moved out peacefully.

### **Their food**

When they were in Bunyoro, their food was millet, sorghum and eleusine meal; potatoes and bananas. They also kept cattle, goats and sheep.

### **The other clans**

The Ababere clan came from the Nandi country after they had quarrelled with their fellow tribesmen. They were led by Ng'ono. They came via Imanga, the Inzeya, Musanda, and thence into Marachi. They came along with the Abamutu, the Abamalele, and the Abamutsuma who also came from the Nandi country.

The Abang'aya clan broke away from the Nyang'ori as a result of a quarrel. They came along with the Abonwe. The Abakolwe. They came from Wanga because of a quarrel. The Abarunga came from Elgon. The Abamulembo came from Elgon; they came with the Ababule. They both came from Elgon and, later, some of the Abamulembo went to Bunyala.

The Abatura came from the northern direction and asked the "omwami" to allow them to settle. Later, they quarrelled with the Abafofoyo. Then they moved out and went to Bukhayo.

### **The System of Government of the Abafofoyo**

Our ruler was called Nabongo. On the burial day of the dead nabongo a cow was speared to death. The man who held the cow by the rope became the nabongo if the cow happened to pass water while he still held it. He was usually nominated by the dying nabongo subject to the formal concurrence of the elders. The elders made the appointment if the nabongo died without having nominated one. They could also reject the nominee of the nabongo if he was not a reliable son with good character. The nabongo was buried in a cow-hide when he died.

The ruler had a copper bracelet, a leopard skin, and the “ikutusi” or cloak. He also had a head-dress, decorated with cowry shells and the “isimbishira” (whydah bird) bird’s feathers, a spear, a stool, and copper coils in the ears. These things were heritable. The nabongo ruled the entire clan of the Abafofoyo; he also had his elders in all the clans of the Abafofoyo who were his assistants.

The elders of the nabongo were the ones who judged cases. He himself only presided over the more serious cases which the elders could not settle. The nabongo never went to war. He gave charge to his army commanders. Equally, the nabongo was neither a sacrificial priest nor a medicine man. Nevertheless, he was a rain-maker.

### **Warfare**

The Masai came from Narok to raid cattle. Many of them were killed but the few survivors escaped. Then again when they were about to make a second raid, Government was established. The Abamasaba (Ababukusu) Cattle was the source of trouble. The Abasebe (Masai) who lived here raided the cattle of the Abamasaba; then the Abamasaba came here and attacked us.

The Abasebe (Masai) who used to raid the Ababukusu from here deceived the “omwami” that they would settle and live here. But, later, they began to fight with the people. This war lasted seven days. Then the Abasebe defeated them, drove the “omwami” out of the village and seized the cattle and went away. Their raids usually took place at night.

The Abamia, the Abakhayo, and the Abatura also fought with us now and then. They then “ate a dog” (The traditional way of ending hostilities and fighting was the “cutting” or “eating” of a dog by the warring parties. They solemnly pledged to keep the peace). At one time the Abamarachi attacked the Abamia and were rounded up and killed.

### **Genealogies**

Laurent Ongoma is the son of Oduya; son of Ndubi; son of Musundi; he died at Nangira in North Wanga. Both Oduya and Ndubi died here in Marachi. Musundi was Kwena’s son; Kwena died at Emalaha in North Ugenya. Kwena was the son of Omoto who died at Emalaha son of Rapong’o II who died in North Ugenya; son of Rapong’o I who died in North Ugenya son of Mareba who also died in North Ugenya son of Mango who died at Elukala in Bunyala son of Marachi who died at Ibanda in Busoga son of Sindu who died in Buganda son of Ngusa who died in Bunyoro son of Nandako who also died in Bunyoro.

### **Further information**

Before their emigration from Bunyoro, the Abafofoyo used to see the Joluo there. However, the Abafofoyo crossed over ahead of the Joluo. They followed each other very closely, as if they were travelling together. Equally, both the Abafofoyo and the Joluo called at Ibanda in Busoga. However, when the Abafofoyo went to Bunyala, the Joluo went to Yimbo Kadinlo. It was from there that they went to Alego. When the Joluo left Yimbo to go to Alego the Abafofoyo were still in Bunyala. The Abageri were the Joluo in question; they comprised the Boro, the Nyapunyi and the Kager.

*Source: Gideon Were, Western Kenya, Historical Texts, EALB, 1967*

