

Fabrication of EMPIRE

The British and the Uganda Kingdoms, 1890–1902

D. A. LOW



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Fabrication of Empire

During the 1890s, the 'scramble for Africa' created the new country of Uganda. This inland territory carved out by British agents first encompassed some twenty to thirty African kingdoms. In his magisterial new study, Anthony Low examines how and why the British were able to dominate these rulerships and establish a colonial government. At the same time, the book goes beyond providing a simple narrative account of events; rather, Low seeks to analyse the conditions under which such a transformation was possible. By skilfully negotiating the many complex political and social undercurrents of this period, Low presents a groundbreaking theoretical model of colonial conquest and rule. The result is a major contribution to debates about the making of empire that will appeal to Africanists and imperial historians alike.

D. A. Low is Emeritus Smuts Professor of the History of the British Commonwealth, University of Cambridge, and formerly Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University.

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*The British and the Uganda Kingdoms
1890–1902*

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in the University of Cambridge*



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For
Belle

In great gratitude for those archives in Zanzibar

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Preface

Many moons ago I published a number of items on the history of Uganda and East Africa from the late nineteenth to around the mid twentieth century. Fortuitously my paths then took me for quite a while into working on the immediate pre-independence history of India. In association with that and several other related ventures, including the early years of the *British Documents on the End of Empire* project, I have also written more extensively on ‘the end of empire’. Having done so, I began to ask questions about ‘the beginning of empire’. That in due course took me back to the Uganda story and to this book.

This in turn has brought back memories of many friends for whom one from each of the areas with which this book is concerned must stand for the rest – Abu Mayanja (Buganda), Asavia Wandira (Busoga), Kosea Shalita (Ankole), John Kaboha (Toro) and Sarah Nyendwoha (Bunyoro) – and memories too of those who were slaughtered in the dreadful Amin–Obote years: Basil Bataringaya, Michael Kagwa, Henry Nkutu, James Aryada, Frank Kalimuzo and so many others.

I have warm memories too of sustained interaction with that cluster of westerners variously associated with the then East African Institute of Social Research: Audrey Richards, Andrew Cohen, Tom Fallers, David Apter, Cran Pratt, John Beattie and Tommy Gee; and then of the venerable elders: Ham Mukasa, Serwano Kolubya, Paulo Kavuma, L. Kamugungunu, H. B. Thomas, Sir John Gray and Sir Keith Hancock. What memories they stir!

I recall too with immense gratitude the stimulus and help of other colleagues and students over the years at Makerere, at the University of Sussex, at the Australian National University and at the University of Cambridge. What a privilege it has been to have taught and researched in such an array of universities!

It would have been possible in most of the chapters which follow to have offered not only a good deal more detail but often a far more extensive array of references. Since, however, so many of these have now been provided by others I have sought rather to cleave to the argument.

Understandably 'Imperialism' remains a highly contested subject. There will be those therefore for whom the following pages will be far too devoid of the colour and creativity they see in the story, while others will no doubt indict them for eschewing anathemas. The purpose here is not to find some 'middle way', but rather in one clutch of instances to explore the processes by which imperial rule came to be established, along with some account of how the quite new territorial alignments in this case came to be scored.

Over the years the received orthography for the languages of the Ugandan kingdoms has varied (e.g. from Toro to Tooro, Kagwa to Kaggwa). Rightly or wrongly, I have chosen to use as far as possible the spelling employed by the earliest indigenous historians, while, to avoid pedantry, I have curtailed the range of prefixes they employ, refraining largely from using 'mu-' for the single person and 'ki-' for the adjectival form, even though this means that 'Bu-' for the territory (as in Bunyoro) and 'Ba' for the people (as in Banyoro) often need to stand in as adjectives. I have not, I have to say, found this problem being satisfactorily resolved, as some other scholars have done, by omitting such prefixes altogether (as in 'Nyoro', 'Ganda', 'Soga', etc.).

Once again I have been treated with the greatest kindness and professionalism by the staff of Cambridge University Press variously responsible for the publication of this book, and in particular by Michael Watson and Helen Waterhouse. I am much indebted too to Anthony Bright of the ANU College of Asia and the Pacific for producing the exemplary maps which vividly illustrate many parts of the ensuing story.

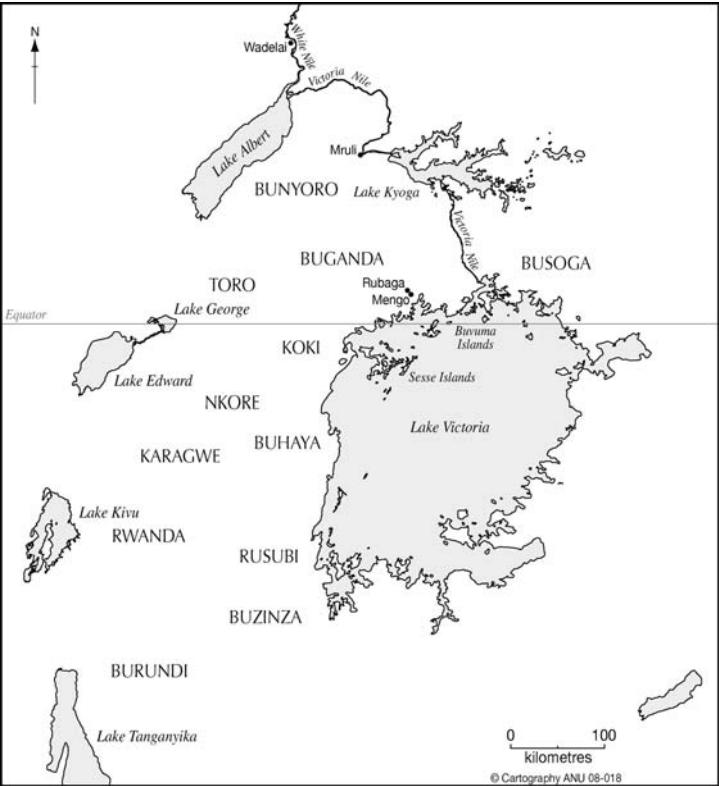
Anthony Low
The Australian National University

Abbreviations and locations

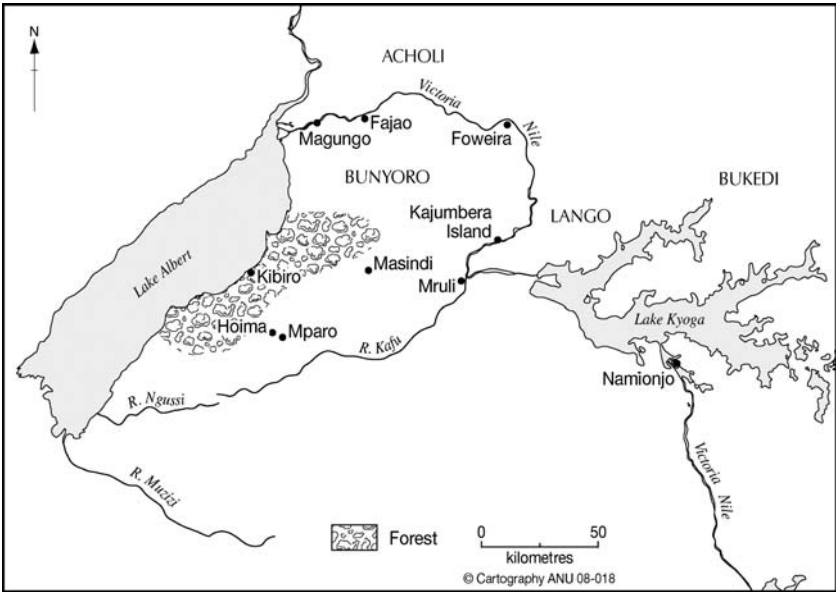
ESA	Entebbe Secretariat Archives Housed when researched in the basement of the former Secretariat Building in Entebbe, Uganda, now the Uganda National Archives N. B. In order to avoid endless repetition, ESA is only prefixed when the location of the item might otherwise be unclear. Otherwise it is omitted. In its place, all letter/numeral references beginning with A (e.g. A3/7, or A6/4) are to ESA
CMS	Church Missionary Society Archives Now in the University of Birmingham Library N. B. In order to avoid endless repetition, CMS is only prefixed when the location of the item might otherwise be unclear. Otherwise it is omitted. In its place, all letter/numeral references beginning with C (e.g. CA6/025) or G (e.g. G3 A5/01) are to CMS
Add. Mss.	Additional Manuscripts The British Library
AMC	Ankole miscellaneous correspondence Housed when researched in District headquarters, Mbabara
BD	Baskerville Diaries Makerere University Library
BRA	Buganda Residency Archives Housed when researched in the Buganda Residency offices, Kampala
CO	Colonial Office records The National Archives, Kew
enc.	enclosure
FO	Foreign Office records The National Archives, Kew
FOCP	Foreign Office Confidential Prints

FP	Fisher Papers CMS Archives, University of Birmingham Library
G/D	Gedge Diaries Rhodes House Library, Oxford
GD	<i>The Gladstone Diaries</i> , Vol. XIII, 1892–96, ed. H. C. G. Mathew, Oxford, 1994
GDD	E. T. S. Dugdale (ed.), <i>German Diplomatic Documents 1871–1914</i> , 4 vols., London, 1928–31
GP	Gedge Papers and Diaries Rhodes House Library, Oxford
JAH	<i>Journal of African History</i>
JICH	<i>Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History</i>
LD	<i>The Diaries of Lord Lugard</i> , 3 vols., edited by Margery Perham and Mary Bull, London, 1959
LP	Lugard Papers Rhodes House Library, Oxford
MP	Mackinnon Papers School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
ND	Nsambya Diary Mill Hill Fathers Mission, Nsambya, Kampala
PP	Portal Papers Rhodes House Library, Oxford
QVL	<i>The Letters of Queen Victoria</i> , 3rd series, Vol. II, ed. G. E. Buckle, London, 1933
RGS	Royal Geographical Society
SNR	<i>Sudan Notes and Records</i>
SP	Salisbury Papers Christ Church, Oxford
TD	Ternan Diaries Rhodes House Library, Oxford
UJ	<i>Uganda Journal</i>
WP	Walker Papers CMS Archives, University of Birmingham Library
ZA	Zanzibar Archives Housed when researched in the Beit al-Ajaib, Zanzibar, now in the National Archives of Zanzibar
ZM	Zanzibar Museum Housed when researched in the Beit al-Amani, now in the National Archives of Zanzibar
ZRA	Zanzibar Residency Archives Housed when researched in the Zanzibar Residency, now in the National Archives of Zanzibar

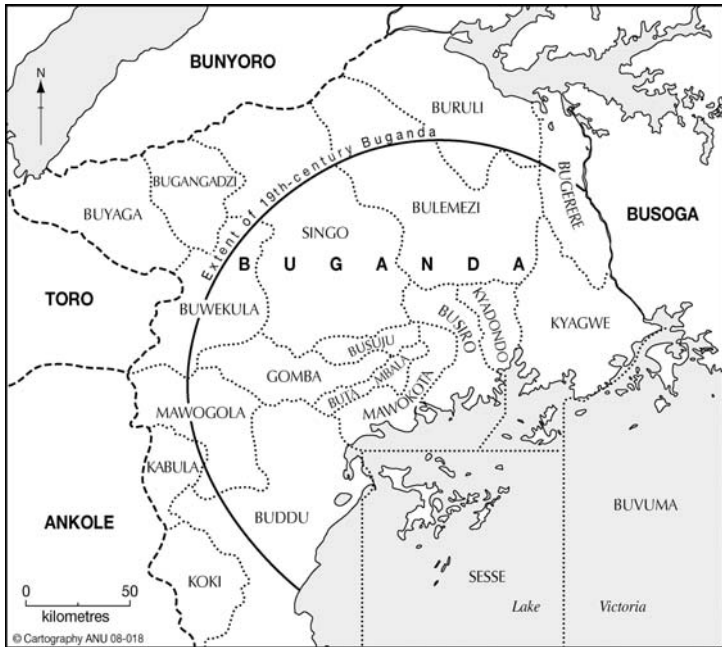
Sketch maps



Map 1 Pre-colonial: location of principal interior East African lakes kingdoms, and some clusters



Map 2 Wars in Bunyoro 1894–1899



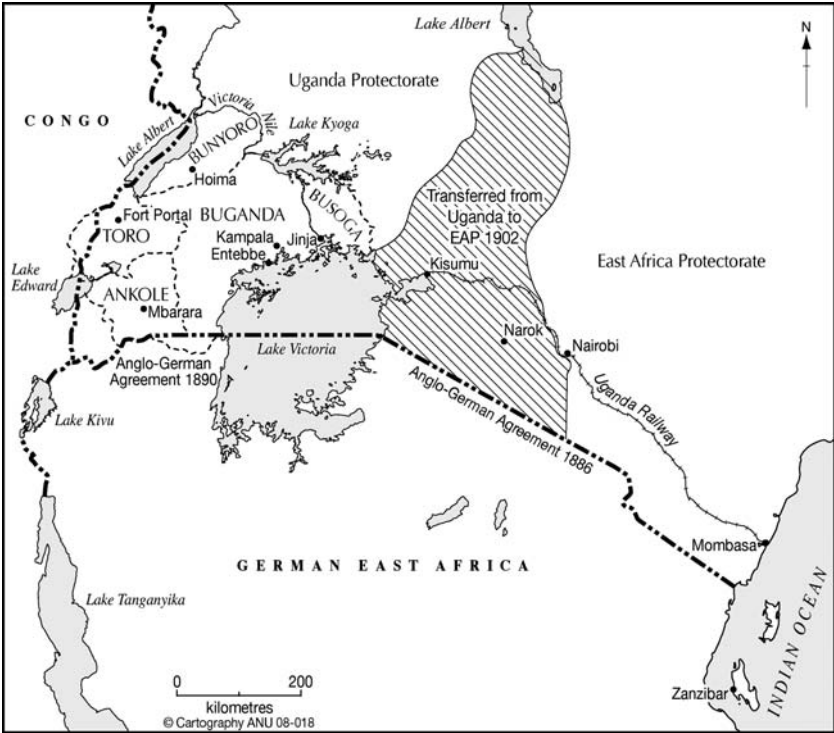
Map 3 Buganda's Sazas (counties) 1900



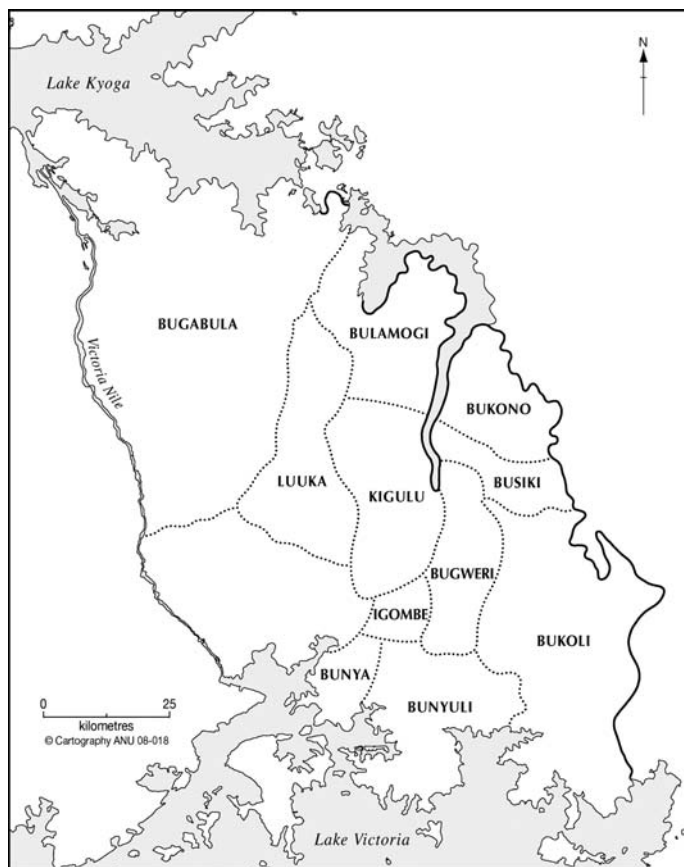
Map 4 Toro and 'Toro proper' 1900



Map 5 Ankole post-1901, and pre-colonial Nkore



Map 6 British East Africa 1902



Map 7 Location of principal Busoga kingdoms c. 1902

1 Prologue: survey and agenda

This book is about Empire and thus about power. It treats of one set of developments that was variously paralleled across large stretches of the expanding British, and indeed other Western, empires during much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the late twentieth century considerable attention was given to analysing the processes entailed in the decline and fall of the Western overseas empires during its middle decades. Here the focus is upon one example of the opposite end of that story – the initiation of colonial rule in a relatively confined region of eastern Africa around the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Already there are plenty of narrative accounts of this story, and it is no way the present intention to add to their number. Rather the concern here is to analyse how all that came about. As will be clear, the result will not be a blueprint for enquiries into all similar encounters elsewhere since so many of the critical circumstances differed from place to place. It is to be hoped, however, that the present study will provide something of a benchmark against which the consideration of corresponding occurrences in other places may be set.

The area in question lies astride the equator within the northern arc of great lakes 600 miles or so inland from the East African coast, large parts of which comprise the headwaters of the White Nile prior to its great journey northwards to Egypt and the Mediterranean. Here, in a good deal of fertile and well-watered country, there were in the late nineteenth century perhaps upwards of 2 million people living in some thirty and more hereditary rulerships¹ within which ‘the premise of inequality’, as it has been called,² governed relationships. Between 1890 and 1902 the area bounded by Lakes Kivu, Edward, George, Albert, Kyoga and Victoria was transformed into the southern core of the new British

¹ As will be elaborated in Ch. 6, p. 169, a precise number is difficult to specify because of the large numbers of tiny ones in Busoga. Thirty must serve as about the number of those of any great substance.

² J. Maquet, *The Premise of Inequality in Ruanda* (London, 1961).

colonial polity of 'Uganda'. Since, for analytical purposes, the time scales of the chapters which follow periodically overlap with each other, it may be helpful at the outset to outline some of the more salient developments which occurred as they have been conventionally understood, in a more strictly chronological order.³

There was a long history of rulerships, both in this region and to its immediate south, that was punctuated by their rise and fall, by numerous conflicts and some accommodations between them, and marked, as one would expect, by a series of regular as well as distinctive occurrences within them. It was not until the latter part of the eighteenth century that they first received intimations of the much wider world well beyond their confines. By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, 'Arab' traders from both the East African coast centred on Zanzibar and from Khartoum in the north began to reach them. As these energetically sought to procure both ivory and slaves and offered guns, cotton cloth and certain other manufactured goods in return, their advent not only significantly changed the regional economy by sucking some of the larger and in turn several of the smaller rulerships into the increasingly heavy demands of this external trade, but by bringing the first firearms to the region soon recast the character of local coercion and conflict.⁴ The Zanzibari traders, moreover, brought with them a new culture and religion – Islam – which in view of some distinctive developments within one of the larger kingdoms, Buganda, began to be espoused there by its ruler and his court. These years saw too the appearance of the first Europeans to come to the region, among them the British explorers, principally J.H. Speke and A.J. Grant in 1862–3; (the later) Sir Samuel Baker and his wife in 1863; and H.M. Stanley in 1875. From 1869 onwards, the Khartoumers' advance came to be greatly enlarged as the Egyptian government proceeded to appoint a succession of European officers to lead a campaign to create an 'Equatoria Province' in the lakes area to add to Egypt's existing dominion in the Sudan. In the course of the 1870s, the rulers of the two largest kingdoms, Bunyoro and Buganda, variously wrestled with this threat, till it was eventually reduced to a rump by being cut off from its base by the Mahdist revolt to the north. With that, Bunyoro's ruler, Omukama Kabalega, enhanced his efforts to reconquer those parts of his forebears' earlier

³ S.R. Karugire, *A Political History of Uganda* (Nairobi, 1980), Chs. 1–3, remains a valuable survey.

⁴ For an extensive study of all this, see R. Reid, *Political Power in Pre-Colonial Buganda: Economy, Society and Warfare in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 2002).

kingdom that had previously broken away, especially in Toro, the principal area to the south.

Meantime, following Stanley's visit to Buganda in 1875, during which its ruler, Kabaka Mutesa, encouraged him to prompt some Christian missionaries to come to his kingdom, some Anglican Protestants arrived at the Buganda court in 1877 and then some Roman Catholic White Fathers in 1879. Coming on top of the earlier embracing there of Islam, this created a deeply confusing situation which was not helped by Mutesa's reluctance to choose between four competing faiths (Buganda's indigenous pantheon of Gods, two rival versions of Christianity, and Islam), and soon led to some of his younger courtiers starting, by the early 1880s, to convert to each of the two Christian creeds. With the accession in 1884 of a new insecure ruler, Mwanga, their situation became exceedingly fraught as Mwanga first had numbers of them put to death; then enrolled the remnants that remained, along with a larger number of Muslim converts, in some new military formations he created; only, however, in mid 1888, out of a deepening paranoia, to seek to destroy all of them completely. With that, a tumultuous upheaval was unloosed in which the Muslims and Christians at his court first combined to expel him from his kingdom and take control of its governance, but then fell apart into three warring camps, first Muslims against Christians, then Protestants against Catholics – during which time, Mwanga was restored to his throne, though not to his former power.

It was just at this point that the first British colonial agents reached the kingdom. This followed upon the upsurge of the European partition of Africa from the early 1880s onwards, which in East Africa led to competing claims to the East African interior by both Germany and Britain. That rivalry was peaceably resolved by the two Anglo-German Agreements of 1886 and 1890 under which the southern half of the East African interior was decreed by them to be a German sphere of influence while the northern one became a British one. Responsibility for a British advance into the latter was thereupon devolved by the British government to a newly formed Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC). While at first being (ineffectually) beaten in reaching Buganda by a German agent, it was then agents of the IBEAC, principally Captain F.D. Lugard, who, accompanied by some Sudanese and other mercenaries, eventually entered Buganda in December 1890. Shortly afterwards Lugard secured a notional treaty of friendship with Mwanga, though without effectively establishing his dominance over him, and then embarked upon a further treaty-making journey to the west, with the intent of enlisting in his service

the remnants of the forces of the Egyptian Equatoria Province who were scattered there further on. Having largely accomplished that, he settled most of them in Toro to the west to act as buffers against the attempts of Bunyoro's ruler, Kabalega, to reconquer the area for his kingdom.

Prior to going westwards, Lugard had given military support to the Christians against the Muslims. On his return early in 1892, he found the two Christian parties edging towards open conflict with each other, in which, at the ensuing Battle of Mengo in February 1892, he very soon gave decisive support to the Protestants against the Catholics, who now had Mwanga at their head. In the aftermath he set about effecting a grudging reconciliation between both warring parties (in which the Muslims shared in a minor way as well) and thereby signalled the establishment of his dominance over the kingdom.

On his return from the west Lugard also found himself faced by very disconcerting orders from his superiors in the IBEAC to withdraw from the interior altogether, since the company was fast slipping into bankruptcy. In the event a succession of expedients was employed to keep the British presence in Buganda in being, whilst a protracted debate took place in Britain on whether the government should take over the governing role there that it had hoped to devolve upon the company. In the upshot an imperial British 'Protectorate' was eventually proclaimed over Buganda in 1894, and was then extended to its neighbouring regions two years later.

That proclamation was immediately followed, partly on orders from London, by a joint British-Baganda attack upon Buganda's principal rival, Bunyoro, which thereupon unleashed five years of immensely destructive warfare during which Bunyoro's ruler, Kabalega, long evaded capture. This served, however, to free Toro from Bunyoro's depredations and enabled the British to establish under their control a 'Toro Confederacy' made up of Toro 'proper' and several of its smaller mostly related neighbours, while, over the same period, British control was steadily extended as well over many of the Busoga rulerships to the east of Buganda, athwart the key British line of communications with the East African coast.

By the mid 1890s both the Anglican and Roman Catholic missions in Buganda were winning increasing numbers of converts, and before very long were confronted by the beginnings of mass movements. Following Lugard's settlement in 1892 (along with two sets of adjustments by 1894), their leading converts were becoming well entrenched, moreover, in the dominant chiefly positions they had thereby secured, and, while rebutting Mwanga's attempts to recover his original power, were

becoming increasingly attached to their mutually beneficial alliance with the British Protectorate administration.

By no means all of their countrymen shared, however, their gratification with this outcome, and when, in July 1897, Mwanga eventually fled from his capital to raise a revolt against both the British in his country and the Christian chiefs, he was soon joined in the southwest of his kingdom by a sizeable following. Two months later, three companies of the British administration's Sudanese mercenaries mutinied and, in variously establishing themselves along the first stretch of the Nile, posed for a while the most serious threat which the British position ever encountered. That, however, was saved because not all the Sudanese companies joined the mutiny, the Baganda Christian chiefs supported the British against both their own Kabaka and the mutineers, and reinforcements which included some Indian troops eventually arrived to put an end to both challenges together.

In the wake of these events, the British finally moved, in the later stages of a convoluted succession crisis, to take control of Buganda's southwestern neighbour, Nkore, and before long the smaller kingdoms bordering upon it, while also taking steps to reestablish their hold over Busoga, where it had been brought into question by the passage of the mutineers. At the same time in London these events led to the appointment of an experienced African administrator, Sir Harry Johnston, to bring some settled order to the country. Shortly after Johnston's arrival early in 1900, he found himself embroiled in some tangled negotiations with Buganda's Christian chiefs, out of which came the very extensive Uganda (properly Buganda) Agreement of 1900. That was then followed by briefer Agreements with Toro later that year and with Ankole (as the enlargement of Nkore was now called) in 1901. With these, and with their replications, albeit in less formal terms, in both Busoga and Bunyoro, the pattern of colonial government throughout the new polity of 'Uganda' was largely set for the next sixty years and more.

If, as is the intention here, we are to probe these and their accompanying events in a much more incisive manner than has been customary, it will be necessary both here and in the chapters which follow to lay hands on a large array of different issues. To that end, a beginning can be made by considering briefly the insights of a number of well established explanatory concepts of the British imperial story to see what bearing they may have upon the explorations which here ensue.

Back in 1961 Gallagher and Robinson famously advanced the notion of 'the official mind', which was principally aimed at rebutting the arguments that the extension of British rule into tropical Africa was

chiefly due to the influence over the making of British policy of business, philanthropic and/or imperialist interests.⁵ To the contrary, they argued, a small 'ruling circle' of hereditary ministerial 'aristocrats' and 'expert' senior Foreign Office officials all but monopolised the determination of British policy towards Africa in the light of their understanding of a century old tradition of upholding 'the national interest'.⁶ In the present case one can readily see 'the official mind' at work in the granting of the IBEAC's charter; in the negotiations which led to two Anglo-German Agreements; in the extensive debate about the fate of Buganda as the IBEAC slid ignominiously into bankruptcy; in the secret instructions, received by the British Commissioner in Buganda in 1894, to conduct an advance through Bunyoro towards the Upper Nile; in the dispatch of reinforcements to Uganda against the multiple threats to the British position there in the late 1890s;⁷ and in the appointment of Sir Harry Johnston in 1899 as Special Commissioner in Uganda. But, for all its importance, 'the official mind' had nothing to say about the Africans caught up in this story, nor anything substantial to suggest to its officers on the spot on how to go about establishing British control.

Fieldhouse then elaborated the 'peripheral' or 'excentric' thesis, which argued that it was upheavals at the imperial 'periphery' rather than initiatives from the imperial centre which were the primary propellants of colonial advance in these years.⁸ In the particular case of the British advance into the great lakes area of Eastern Africa in the 1890s, it has been persistently asserted that the 'peripheral' events which determined this move lay not in the lakes area itself but in Egypt, where in the aftermath of their occupation of the country back in 1882 the British had become fearful that, should some other European power gain control of 'the Upper Nile', they could by diverting its flow generate major disturbances in Egypt, and thus throttle Britain's crucial line of communications with its Indian empire.⁹ Chapter 4 below will relate, however, that rather more turned on events in Buganda between 1888 and 1893, upon the eventual establishment there of a British Protectorate, than arguments along these lines have hitherto allowed.

⁵ R. Robinson & J. Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians: The Climax of Imperialism in the Dark Continent* (London, 1961).

⁶ For a summary account of its genesis, see M. Duffy, 'World-Wide War and British Expansion, 1793–1815', in P.J. Marshall, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, Vol. II, *The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1998), Ch. 9.

⁷ See Ch 7.

⁸ D.K. Fieldhouse, *The Theory of Capitalist Imperialism* (London, 1967), pp. 193–4, and more generally his *Economics and Empire 1830–1914* (London, 1973).

⁹ E.g. Robinson & Gallagher, *Africa*, p. 327.

Fieldhouse's 'peripheral' thesis nevertheless secured reinforcement from J.S. Galbraith's related idea that events upon a 'turbulent frontier' could play a major role in propelling an imperial advance.¹⁰ In the present instance one can readily identify at least four occasions when a consideration of this kind applied: in the focusing of British attention upon Buganda between 1889 and 1894 because of the religio-political conflicts there; in the moves by British officers on the spot from 1891 onwards to succour the Toro area from the depredations of Kabalega's Bunyoro; in their efforts over the same period and beyond to strengthen their control over the turbulence afflicting the Busoga kingdoms to the east; and in their eventual advance in the later 1890s into Nkore (and their transfer of part of its territory to Buganda) in their ultimately successful moves to check the 'turbulence' Mwanga's revolt had created in the frontier areas lying between them.

Thereafter, two polarised sets of propositions were advanced. On the one hand, Ranger drew attention to the twin notions of 'primary resistance' and 'post-pacification revolt' which Africans mounted against the colonial advent.¹¹ Later it was to be argued that: 'Armed resistance was almost never "primary"'.¹² It was only turned to 'as a last resort'. In the present case the twin categories helpfully serve to distinguish Bunyoro's protracted 'resistance' to the British, from 1894 onwards, from the 'post-pacification revolt' which Buganda saw in the later 1890s.

Robinson then argued that, far from resisting colonial rule, many African leaders became 'collaborators' with the British.¹³ In the present case, several examples of this proposition were spelt out in an illuminating study by Steinhart of the western kingdoms of 'Uganda', where by tracing the careers of several such collaborating leaders its explanatory power can be readily demonstrated. Yet in the very title of his book, *Conflict and Collaboration*, there are preliminary indications of its limitations as an explanatory tool when taken on its own,¹⁴ while a brief glance

¹⁰ J.S. Galbraith, 'The "Turbulent Frontier" as a Factor in British Expansion', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 11 (1960), pp. 150-68; see also his *Reluctant Empire: British Policy on the South African Frontier, 1834-54* (Berkeley, 1963).

¹¹ T.O. Ranger, 'Connections between "Primary Resistance" Movements and Modern Mass Nationalism in East and Central Africa', *JAH*, 9, 3 (1968), pp. 437-53. Ranger took the phrase 'post-pacification revolt' from J. Iliffe.

¹² J. Lonsdale, 'The European Scramble and Conquest in African History', in R. Oliver & G.N. Sanderson, eds., *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. vi, *From 1870 to 1905* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 731.

¹³ R.E. Robinson, 'The Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism', in R. Owen & B. Sutcliffe, eds., *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (London, 1972).

¹⁴ E.I. Steinhart, *Conflict and Collaboration: The Kingdoms of Western Uganda 1890-1907* (Princeton, 1977).

at the overall story displays not only that the British were as frequently dependent upon their collaborators as they upon them, but that within the limits ultimately set by colonial power many a collaborator proved remarkably adept at holding his own with them.¹⁵

Lonsdale then advanced the notion that in the later nineteenth century Africa saw a 'revolution in power', which thereupon developed into 'a race for power'. In the present instance this serves to highlight two quite distinct but eventually intertwined developments. In the first place, the latter part of the nineteenth century saw for the first time the advent into the East African lakes area of many thousands of guns. Not only did they much enhance the power of those kingdoms that acquired them, as against their more vulnerable neighbours. In due course, their possession led to a radical reordering of relations of power within each of these kingdoms themselves. They were no match, however, for the new breech-loading rifles, and more particularly the new machine guns, Maxims and Hotchiss,¹⁶ with which the mercenary forces under British command came to be armed.¹⁷ The admixture of these two layered innovations lay close to the roots of so many of the major developments which thereupon occurred.

By contrast two further concepts (despite their evident value elsewhere) prove in the present case to be only marginally pertinent. During the middle years of the nineteenth century Sir John Kirk, Britain's Agent and Consul-General in Zanzibar (backed by British anti-slavery naval patrols), magisterially operated Britain's 'informal empire'¹⁸ along the East African coast and into the East African interior. His influence, however, only rarely stretched as far as its northern lakes, and thus 'informal empire' as an explanatory device has little to offer the present enquiry. Similarly, whilst the intriguing thesis about the role of 'gentlemanly capitalism' in the imperial expansion provides considerable insight into the run-up to the launch of the IBEAC, as soon as the

¹⁵ Lonsdale in 1985 avowed, 'These simplicities have long been discarded': Oliver & Sanderson, *Cambridge History*, vi, p. 728.

¹⁶ See Sanderson chapter in *ibid.*, p. 98.

¹⁷ Tellingly, British-led troops in 'Uganda' were first called the Uganda Rifles, and then, when incorporated along with other British-led East and Central African troops, the King's African Rifles: H. Moyse-Bartlett, *The King's African Rifles* (Aldershot, 1956), Ch. 5.

¹⁸ R. Robinson & J. Gallagher, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 6, 1 (1953), pp. 1–15 (they specifically mention Kirk's role in East Africa, p. 11, while then remarking that the granting of charters to such as the IBEAC 'marked the transition from informal to formal methods', p. 13). On Kirk more generally, see R. Coupland, *The Exploitation of East Africa 1856–1890* (London, 1939), *passim*. For his correspondence with Buganda, see, e.g., Kirk to Mutesa, 26 Nov., 9 Dec. 1879, ZA FO 1879.

company's failure to mobilise the necessary capital has been canvassed, the scholarly discussion of 'gentlemanly capitalism' ceases to illumine the present story.¹⁹

Preceding and then in parallel with these various propositions, there ran the long-running discussion of 'indirect rule'. The great historical depth, and considerable territorial extent, of its core device – the employment of subordinate administrations in the exercise of super-ordinate power – goes back in the British case to England's medieval empire, when sundry 'palatines' were granted jurisdictions that otherwise belonged to the King alone: Seneschels in Gascony, Lords Lieutenant in Ireland, Marcher Lords upon the Welsh border,²⁰ along with the classic case of the Palatine Bishop of Durham who, in the twelfth century, was granted governmental powers under the Crown across all of England's far north.²¹ Later there were similar royal grants of governmental powers to the Merchants of the Staple in Flanders in 1359, in Calais in 1363, and to the Merchant Adventurers in 1505. Thereafter these provided the precedents for the charters subsequently granted both to various trading companies (the East India Company in 1600, the Virginia Company in 1606, the Hudson Bay Company in 1670, the Royal African Company in 1672, and so on) and to those undertaking to establish English-peopled settlements in the Americas. To three of the latter – for the Caribbees, for Maryland and for Carolina – the jurisdictional privileges secured long before by the Bishop of Durham were quite explicitly granted.²² The line of descent was thus extraordinarily direct. In spite of the eventual demise of the last two of the earlier chartered companies (the East India Company in 1858 and the Hudson Bay Company in 1868), 'chartered' rule was nevertheless revived – for the British North Borneo Company in 1881, the Royal Niger Company in 1886, the IBEAC in 1888, and the British South Africa Company in 1889 (the first of which survived until the Second

¹⁹ P.J. Cain & A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, Vol. 1, *Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914* (London, 1993), pp. 387–91.

²⁰ This is the theme of F. Madden with D. Fieldhouse, eds., "*The Empire of the Bretaignes*", 1175–1688, *The Foundations of a Colonial System of Government*, (Westport, 1985) (see Preface, pp. xxiii–xxviii), and the subsequent volumes of their *Select Documents on the History of the British Empire and Commonwealth*. See also A.F. Madden, "'Not for Export': The Westminster Model of Government and British Colonial Practice", *JICH*, 8, 1 (1979), pp. 10–29, and 'Constitution-Making and Nationhood: The British Experience – an Overview', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Studies*, 36, 2 (1988), pp. 123–34.

²¹ "*Empire of the Bretaignes*", pp. 152ff.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 221, 223, 421.

World War) – making, by the end, for an all-but-continuous tradition extending over eight centuries.

Prior to this there had been the one innovation in the whole schema. As, in the second half of the eighteenth century, the English East India Company brought increasing areas of India under its control, so it established numerous ‘subsidiary alliances’ of one kind or another with a large number of Indian Princes. By these means the essential sinews of local government remained rooted in the traditional authority of the hereditary ruler. By contrast, however, with the English and later British cases where authority stemmed directly from the monarch, such a variant could not ensure that the interests of the superordinate power would be secured. Faced with this issue the Company, following upon its earlier practice of appointing commercial agents to Indian rulers’ courts, instituted the new office that, after much discussion, they eventually called ‘Resident’: resident overseer, that is, of the Company’s interests in the area.²³ Its supervisory essentials here and elsewhere took many forms. In many places in India, for example, where allegedly British ‘direct rule’ was to be found, indigenous landlords succeeded in establishing a similar relationship with the British to that of the Indian Princes (as is recounted in a masterly study tellingly entitled *The Limited Raj*).²⁴ Here the Resident’s role was readily performed by a much more prosaically named ‘District Officer’. Thereafter, the essentials of this system were applied by the British as they extended their dominion over the sultanates of Malaya and Zanzibar, over the emirates of the Persian Gulf and Northern Nigeria, in the very varied circumstances of Fiji, Egypt and Iraq, in several of the kingdoms and chieftaincies in South and West Africa, rather more problematically elsewhere in Africa too, and then in a significantly distinctive way in the Ugandan kingdoms.

By the 1990s a further raft of interpretive concepts was being offered, several of which warrant consideration at rather greater length. One of these canvassed the application to colonial situations of Gramscian notions of ‘hegemony’, which were concerned (as it was put) ‘to account for the predominance of a class achieved through the consent or acquiescence of other classes or groups’.²⁵ Several of the contributors to a symposium discussing these propositions doubted, however, whether they could usefully be applied to a colonial context, and for all their

²³ M.H. Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India. Residents and the Residency System 1764–1857* (Delhi, 1991). Also William Dalrymple, *White Mughals* (London, 2002).

²⁴ A.A. Yang, *The Limited Raj. Agrarian Relations in Colonial India, Saran District, 1793–1920* (Berkeley, 1998).

²⁵ D. Engels & S. Marks, eds., *Contesting Colonial Hegemony. State and Society in Africa and India* (London, 1994).

merits they do not appear to have much to offer the present enquiry. All the same, the term ‘hegemony’ in its more general non-Gramscian meaning of the assertion of power/dominance over subordinated others is a key concept in much that follows, and unless otherwise stated will be used in that sense hereafter.

The most formidable contribution to this further stage in the discussion came in two substantial volumes by the Comaroffs. Drawing principally upon British Christian missionary records from the nineteenth century for a protracted study of the southern Tswana upon the northern borders of South Africa, they regularly found themselves ‘drawn back to the colonization of their [the Tswana’s] consciousness and their consciousness of colonization’.²⁶ It is in no way possible to do any kind of justice here to this study. It offers important parallels to the Ugandan missionary story, though there were considerable differences too – beginning in Buganda with the previous advent of Muslim teachers, and amongst other things a much closer nexus between ‘church and state’. The Comaroffs’ main theme is nevertheless particularly pertinent in the present case to the political story (a matter which they do not themselves much discuss). As Chapter 11 will illustrate, the British could take very deliberate steps to reinforce ‘the colonisation of consciousness’ in the elite figures working with them, and there is not much doubt that ‘colonisation’ in this sense became very widespread. The Comaroffs’ chapter on the changes which occurred, under the impact of the missionaries, in Tswana dress²⁷ prompts, moreover, a reference to the quite distinctive dress which was developed for Ugandan men, following the alien advent, of a well-tailored full-length white Arab robe topped by a European-style jacket, and, for women, a one-piece dress with a voluminous skirt gathered at the waist by a scarf tied in the front – since both autochthonous styles are strikingly iconic of the relative autonomy Uganda’s peoples secured under colonial rule.

The Comaroffs, however, had their critics. Peel, on the basis of his penetrating study of African Christian evangelists in southern Nigeria, principally prior to the colonial advent,²⁸ upbraided them for not taking actual conversions to Christianity seriously enough.²⁹ Here the Uganda story lends strong support to his more general case – from the readiness

²⁶ J. & J. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution. Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, 2 vols. (Chicago, 1991, 1997).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Ch. 5.

²⁸ J.D.Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington, 2000).

²⁹ Peel’s review of *Of Revelation and Revolution*, Vol. I, in *JAH*, 33, 2 (1992), pp. 328–9, and his ‘For Who Hath Despised the Day of Small Things? Missionary Narratives and Historical Anthropology’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 37, 3, pp. 585–9.

of so many early Christian converts to accept martyrdom, through to the well recorded cases of actual saintly lives lived later on.³⁰ The Uganda story differs, however, from Peel's story of Christian evangelists being the first to call themselves 'Yoruba', who then created 'the very ethnic category "Yoruba" in its modern connotation',³¹ since the principal Ugandan kingdoms had long since developed their own corporate-identities. Like their Yoruba counterparts, many of their leaders did nevertheless hanker, in the late nineteenth century and thereafter, for what the Yoruba called *olagu*: 'sophistication', 'civilization', most literally 'enlightenment'.³²

Prior to the publication of the Comaroffs' first volume, discussion of indirect rule had resurfaced. In a notable study of some religious revivalist movements during the years of colonial rule in Central Africa, Karen Fields first endorsed Martin Kilson's description of British indirect rule in Africa as 'colonialism-on-the-cheap', and then added the resonant aphorism that this was a way of 'making black men with legitimate authority appendages of white men without it'. Whilst the former is certainly part of the story, it nevertheless left too much unsaid. Whilst the latter prompts the question of how it was that, in the absence of heavy handedness (which by implication she later allowed), did white men manage to exercise any authority at all? Some injection of the Comaroffs' 'colonization of consciousness' could perhaps fill the gap here.

Thereafter Fields embarked upon a lucid and extensive account of Lugard's expositions of 'Indirect Rule' and 'the Dual Mandate'. Here her leading statement that 'Indirect rule was a way of making the colonial state a consumer of power generated within the customary order' matches closely with the argument, later developed here, that British colonial rule in the Ugandan kingdoms drew extensively upon the traditional authority of their rulers and their chiefs.³³ The immediately following statement, however, that this meant that 'Real power issued from the ruled', went too far. For the sharp disparities between the tiny numbers of colonial administrators and their much more

³⁰ For example Anne Luck, *African Saint: The Story of Apolo Kivebulaya* (London, 1963), and Archbishop Jowani Luwum, murdered on General Amin's orders, whose effigy is amongst those of other twentieth-century Christian martyrs which have been placed on the west front of Westminster Abbey.

³¹ Peel, *Religious Encounter*, Ch. 10.

³² Ibid., p. 317; D.A. Low, *The Mind of Buganda* (London, 1971).

³³ Robinson, 'Non-European Foundations', in Owen & Sutcliffe, *Imperialism*, p. 133, put it thus: 'The substance of ruling authority had to a great extent to be extracted from their subjects.'

numerous local employees, let alone the very much larger populations in their districts, which she then carefully tabulated, and which she deployed in support of this argument, are no measure of the ultimate power which the colonial power latently and on occasion could actually dispose.³⁴ Her more measured argument that ‘The regimes built upon indirect rule were doubly articulated. One articulation made the African masses subject to customary rulers; the other made customary rulers subject to the Crown’s representatives’ is nevertheless fully consonant with the Uganda story.³⁵

Thereafter, in a no less notable study, Sara Berry traced the impact of indirect rule upon agrarian change in Africa in a chapter under the arresting title ‘Hegemony on a Shoestring’.³⁶ ‘Scarcity of money and manpower’, she argued, ‘obliged administrators to practice “indirect rule”’; ‘One obvious way was to use Africans both as employees and as local agents of colonial rule.’³⁷ Like Kilson’s and Fields’ ‘colonialism-on-the-cheap’ this points to an important part of the story. Yet there was always more to the institution of indirect rule than its fiscal or manpower value.³⁸ As has been outlined above, it had for a long time been the stock-in-trade of British government at a distance from the metropolis. As, moreover, an episode related in [Chapter 9](#) will indicate, even a run-of-the-mill British army officer could readily provide a sophisticated account of its *political*, as distinct from its fiscal or manpower, advantages. While at the very time that Lugard was busily formulating his doctrines,³⁹ the ultimate ideologue of the ‘Oudh’ school of British administrators in north India, Harcourt Butler, was likewise lauding the *political* merits of ruling ‘through the natural leaders of the people’ (as the term had it there).⁴⁰ There are other considerations too. As [Chapter 10](#) will show, the entrenchment of a distinct form of indirect rule in Uganda principally stemmed from the vociferous protests of Buganda’s leaders early in 1900 against the more ‘direct’ form of

³⁴ On which, see the latter part of [Ch. 7](#).

³⁵ K.E. Fields, *Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa* (Princeton, 1985), Ch. 1; Robinson, ‘Non-European Foundations’, in Owen & Sutcliffe, *Imperialism*, p. 121.

³⁶ S. Berry, *No Condition is Permanent. The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison, 1993), Ch. 2.

³⁷ ‘Native agency’ had been employed for a long time elsewhere in the British empire: e.g. B. Stein, *Thomas Munro. The Origins of the Colonial State and His Vision of Empire* (Delhi, 1989), especially pp. 290–1.

³⁸ E.g. J.D. Legge, *Britain in Fiji 1858–1880* (London, 1958), pp. 203–5.

³⁹ M. Perham, *Lugard – The Years of Authority, 1898–1945* (London, 1960), esp. Chs. 8–9.

⁴⁰ S.H. Butler, *Oudh Policy. The Policy of Sympathy* (Allahabad, 1906). See P. Reeves, *Landlords and Government in Uttar Pradesh. A Study of their Relations until Zamindari Abolition* (Bombay, 1991), Ch. 2; and, more generally, T.R. Metcalf, *Land, Landlords and the British Raj. Northern India in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, 1979).

colonial rule that Britain's Special Commissioner in Uganda, Sir Harry Johnston, seemed determined to foist upon them. Kilson's and Fields' pithy labels, and that of Berry, did not, that is, encompass the extent to which, within the ambit of superordinate colonial rule, the degree of autonomy indirect rule provided was variously sought, welcomed and even jealously guarded⁴¹ by many of its local beneficiaries.

Subsequently a major study by Colin Newbury, which spanned a great range of rulerships under colonial rule – in India, Africa, Malaya and the Pacific – extended the discussion considerably further by arguing that 'a model of relationships between rulers and ruled based on the status differences and the reciprocal advantages in the patron–client construct' would serve historical understanding better than the essentially administrative term 'indirect rule'.⁴² In doing so, he echoed Fields' arguments about the 'double articulation' in such regimes, which first 'joined customary rulers and their subjects' and then 'customary rulers to white officials'.⁴³ Whereupon Newbury proceeded to detail many of the numerous instances where relations between indigenous rulers and their subjects rested upon extensive patron–client linkages between them, while outlining the patron–client bonds which were occasionally to be discerned in some of the transactions between indigenous leaders and colonial officials. While this line of thinking has much to commend it, it needs, in the Uganda context, as Fallers argued in the 1950s, to be moderated by recognising that there at least patron–client relations coexisted with 'state and lineage' structures, not to mention the conflicts which arose between them.⁴⁴

In sum, many of the explanatory concepts that have been offered over the years provide important stimulus as one seeks to probe how it was that a colonial polity came into being. In most cases they do not greatly overlap with each other. Rather, by cutting in at different stages in the evolving story they draw attention to particular issues that warrant consideration in specifying the drama. Not all, it seems, are pertinent to the present case. A few make assertions which it does not bear out. Even they, however, do not lack for stimulus. None, however, provides

⁴¹ As, until the deportation of Kabaka Mutesa II in 1953, was the Uganda Agreement of 1900 by the Baganda.

⁴² C.W. Newbury, *Patrons, Clients & Empire. Chieftaincy and Over-rule in Asia, Africa and the Pacific* (Oxford, 2003). For a more summary account of the argument, see C. Newbury, 'Patrons, Clients and Empire: The Subordination of Indigenous Hierarchies in Asia and Africa', *Journal of World History*, 11 (2000), pp. 232–3.

⁴³ Fields, *Revival and Rebellion*, p. 51. Cf. Robinson's earlier version that 'Two connecting sets of linkages ... made up the collaborative mechanism': Robinson, 'Non-European Foundations', in Owen & Sutcliffe, *Imperialism*, p. 121.

⁴⁴ L.A. Fallers, *Bantu Bureaucracy* (Cambridge, 1956).

the near totality for the present study of one further formula that saw colonial rule 'as a hegemonic system featuring multiple forms of negotiation, complicity and resistance as well as various forms of violence and compulsion', rather than as a simple binary relationship of domination and subjugation,⁴⁵ though even that could do with something of the Comaroffs' 'colonization of consciousness'.

Before honing down on the Uganda story to trace out more particularly how that hegemony came to be established there in the first place, which is the principal intention here, it will be of service to consider some other examples of the processes by which colonial control came to be established to see if there are any common patterns to be discerned. Lonsdale correctly stated that: 'There were literally hundreds of European conquests of Africa, not one.' He provided, moreover, a penetrating survey of such cases.⁴⁶ Since, however, these conquests were contemporaneously not confined to Africa, and thus were constituent parts of a much wider story, it will be salutary to explore much further afield. Accordingly, it is proposed to review the course which the establishment of British colonial rule took in three quite arbitrarily chosen instances elsewhere – one in northwestern India, one in Southeast Asia and one in the Pacific, namely in the Punjab, Malaya and Fiji, in each of which British colonial rule was established prior to being so in Uganda – to see what that may have to offer.

First then, the Punjab. Despite the conquest by the British by the first decades of the nineteenth century of the greater part of India, following the Treaty of Amritsar of 1809 they proceeded to recognise for the next thirty years the independent sovereignty of the military-fiscal state of the Punjab under its notable Sikh ruler, Maharajah Ranjit Singh, and as a consequence very successfully entrenched the security of their north-western borderlands. On Ranjit Singh's death, however, in 1839 his court fell apart into a series of bitterly lethal internecine conflicts, which soon infected the Punjab's Sikh-led army as well. Fearful that this important border state might as a result descend into anarchy, the

⁴⁵ G. Blue, M. Bunton & R. Crozier, eds., *Colonialism and the Modern World: Selected Studies* (New York, 2002), p. 21. For the subsequent heyday of colonial rule, the formula requires an injection of Fields' arguments as outlined above, or as varied by Spear in saying: 'Colonial policy ... derived less from a common strategy or consent of the governed than from ongoing negotiations and compromises with Africans and among themselves': T. Spear, 'Neo-traditionalism and the Limits of Invention in British Colonial Africa', *JAH*, 44 (2003), p. 26.

⁴⁶ Lonsdale, 'The European Scramble', in Oliver & Sanderson, *Cambridge History*, vi, pp. 722–7.

British assembled a force upon its eastern border so as to invade it if that should occur. That only provoked, however, the Punjab's army into reasserting itself in defence of its country, whereupon the two sides slid into the First Anglo-Sikh War of 1845–6. Despite some early successes the Sikh-led army was soon decisively defeated. A British Resident supported by an armed British force was thereupon installed in the Punjab's capital, Lahore. By the Treaty of Bhyrowal of December 1846 he took powers 'to direct and control the duties of every department' of the Punjab's government, and promptly set about retrenching the Sikh-led army.

It was not long, however, before a clash between a local Sikh governor and some British officials escalated into a major revolt. That provided the British with the excuse they were now looking for to crush the Sikh dominion altogether; whereupon the Second Anglo-Sikh War of 1848–9 erupted. Twice the Sikh army inflicted serious defeats upon the British, only, however, to be once again overwhelmed itself. This time the British carried through the full annexation of the Punjab to their Indian empire,⁴⁷ abolished its office of Maharajah, and completely disbanded its Sikh-led army.

Astonishingly, however, just eight years later when, in 1857–8, so much of the British-led army in northern India mutinied, the British speedily summoned large numbers of the Punjab's former soldiery to their service and thereby won crucial assistance in their suppression of the mutiny. Already the Punjab had fallen under the control of the 'Punjab School' of British Indian administrators under the redoubtable Sir John Lawrence. Henceforward, soldiers from the Punjab found themselves in high demand by the British, and under the patronage of a number of leading Punjabi families soon developed into the greatly advantaged core of Britain's post-mutiny Indian army.⁴⁸

As all this was taking place, the Sultan of Perak in Malaya signed in 1874 the 'Pangkor Engagement' with a British representative, by which he undertook to accept a British Resident in his state whose advice would 'be asked and acted upon on all questions other than those touching Malay religion and culture'. Together with its four northern

⁴⁷ While granting that part of Ranjit Singh's dominion that lay in Kashmir to a turncoat Dogra notable who became its princely Maharajah.

⁴⁸ From a large literature, see J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab* (Cambridge, 1990); A.J. Major, *Return to Empire. Punjab under the Sikhs and British in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Delhi, 1996); P.H.M. van den Dungen, *The Punjab Tradition* (London, 1972); I. Ali, *The Punjab under Imperialism 1885–1947* (Princeton, 1988); D.A. Low, ed., *The Political Inheritance of Pakistan* (Basingstoke, 1991); Tan Tai Yong, *The Garrison State: Government, Military and Society in Colonial Punjab* (Delhi, 2004).

neighbours – the Malay states of Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu and Patani – Perak had been subordinated to the overlordship of Siam. In 1826, however, by a treaty between a British officer and the Siamese king, it was freed, along with its immediate neighbour Selangor, from Siamese domination, while in the same year the British aggregated their four trading settlements around the Malay coast – Penang, Province Wellesley, Melaka and Singapore – into a new entity, the Straits Settlements, of which in due course Singapore became the capital. For the next half-century, however, they resolutely refrained from extending their dominion not only over Perak and Selangor but over the adjacent Malay states of Pahang, Johor and the handful of small states north of Melaka.

During the course of several preceding centuries, tin had been variously mined in Malaya. With the advent of large numbers of Chinese migrants in the nineteenth century, tin mining there expanded greatly. In due course the much larger tax revenues this brought to the Malay states not only aggravated the inherent conflicts for leading positions at their apex, but became intertwined with major confrontations amongst the Chinese themselves. By the early 1870s this increasingly fraught situation led to a series of civil wars for control of the lucrative mining areas. That generated increasing demands by merchants in the Straits Settlements for British intervention so as to secure their growing trade and financial investments in the region. Such pressures were resisted in London. Eventually, however, along with some softening there, a new Governor of the Straits Settlements seized the opportunity of an appeal by a claimant in a succession conflict in Perak, Raja Muda Abdullah, to appoint a British Resident to Perak in return for British recognition of Abdullah's claims to the Sultanate. From that came the Pangkor Engagement of 20 January 1874. Later that same year another British Resident was foisted upon Selangor. This beginning was soon overtaken, however, by the murder in 1875 of the first British Resident in Perak, to which the British responded by speedily sending in a column of troops, exiling Abdullah and a number of other Perak chiefs, and executing two of those held principally responsible for the murder. They thereby signalled the advent of British hegemony on the Malayan mainland.

It was to be another decade, however, before British Residents were first appointed in the other Malay states. Not until 1885 was a Resident appointed in what, in 1889, became the new confederacy of Negri Sembilan, north of Melaka, while the first British Resident in Pahang was only appointed in 1888. There his actions soon provoked a rebellion – the Pahang War – which came to be seen as a prototype resistance struggle against the British, and was only finally suppressed