failure to engage with any of the scholarly debates to which such observations can be linked leaves their interpretation entirely up to the reader.

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A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO GANDA HISTORIOGRAPHY

doi:10.1017/S0021853708003848

Le royaume du Buganda au XIXe siècle: mutations politiques et religieuses d'un ancien état d'Afrique de l'Est. By HENRI MEDARD. Paris: Karthala; Nairobi: IFRA, 2007. Pp. 651. €39, paperback (ISBN 978-2-84586-845-8).

KEY WORDS: Uganda, kingdoms and states, precolonial.

This book has been a long time coming – or at least so it will seem to those who have known of Henri Medard's work on nineteenth-century Buganda over the past few years. It is the latest monograph to appear which belongs to a younger (if rapidly ageing) cohort of Uganda scholars working on the country since the early 1990s, including Mike Tuck, Holly Hanson, Shane Doyle and your reviewer. Most of the group have now seen their doctoral dissertations make the transition to book form; the publication of Medard's thesis has been eagerly anticipated by scholars of the region, and it is worth the wait. This is a big book, in both scope and objective; it is arguably the most comprehensive survey of Buganda's history since Semakula Kiwanuka's work of almost forty years ago. And no reader can be in doubt that this is precisely what Medard had in mind: it is an ambitious work, and has valid claims to being definitive, or something close to it. As it slowly gets going, this book has a corrective feel. The subject matter is, of course, pretty well-trodden ground now: the nature of the precolonial kingdom and its political make-up, its military and economic aspirations, the interjection of foreign influences. The latter were manifest in the shape, firstly, of coastal merchants, and then of European explorers, missionaries and, ultimately, the British colonial state. The story of the last quarter of the nineteenth century is the story of how the ever-adaptive and creative Ganda interacted with each of these. Medard exhaustively revisits these themes, and the depth of the research is often extraordinary: a glimpse at the bibliographical section reveals that the author has worked in a remarkable number of archives and pulled material and inspiration from an enormous range of sources, some well-known, others obscure. Likewise, the footnotes are often remarkable for the fact that they provide numerous sources in support of the smallest of points. Such referencing is almost excessive to this reviewer's taste, but no matter: the coverage is meticulous, and the visual aids to what is often dense prose are most welcome. In particular, the maps are excellent, presenting new data with wonderful clarity, and those on pp. 120–5 deserve particular mention, depicting communication and commerce in the most vivid manner. Students and academicians alike will find these extremely useful. Much germane data are also presented in appendices at the end of the book. While Buganda is at the centre of the study, light is shed on the surrounding region, and the study has much to say by way of comparison and contrast with neighbouring kingdoms. This is in fact one of the most compelling and original aspects of Medard's thesis: he argues in effect that Buganda can only be truly understood by examining the kingdom in its regional setting and by understanding the states and societies which surround it.

Readers having some acquaintance with the region might wonder what else is particularly *novel* about the argument; much of what is offered here modifies only slightly some now well-established theses. But this seems not to matter overly, so genuinely authoritative does the text feel. Criticism might be made of the book's length: at over 600 pages it is far too long, and it can be heavy-going for even the most avid student of Buganda. This is a book which would have benefited from the intervention of a more vigorous editor; certainly a British publisher would have blanched upon the arrival of such a manuscript on their desk. But, on the other hand, perhaps Medard is to be envied for having the time to produce such a *magnus opus*. Freed of the burden of Research Assessment Exercises and the hegemony of the market, perhaps more UK-based scholars could write books like this. That said, it is to be hoped that the author might consider producing, at some point in the future, a rather shorter version of this thesis in English, thus enabling a non-French-reading audience to gain access to what is an outstanding effort of interpretative synthesis. A major contribution to Ganda historiography, and indeed that of East Africa more broadly, Medard's book is essential reading for historians of both, and its appearance at last is most welcome.

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INDIAN SUB-IMPERIALISM IN BRITISH AFRICA

doi:10.1017/S002185370800385X

Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860–1920. By THOMAS R. METCALF. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007. Pp. xv + 264. $39.95 (ISBN 978-0-520-24946-2).

KEY WORDS: East Africa.

This book examines India's sub-imperial role in the acquisition and administration of British-controlled territories along the Indian Ocean littoral. Through a series of regional and thematic case studies, Thomas R. Metcalf demonstrates how exportable elements of the British Raj – its laws, architecture, military and labour – enabled 'British imperial conquest, control, and governance across a wide territory stretching from Africa to eastern Asia' (p. 1). His aim is twofold: to challenge the idea that Britain's empire was simply a series of vertical relationships between one metropole and several colonies by revealing a horizontal 'web' of imperial power linking colonies together; and to draw the attention of Indian Ocean historians to this period of British regional dominance. The apex of Indian sub-imperial expansion (1890–1920) coincided with the partition and settlement of East Africa, as well as the growth of Indian nationalism in both East and South Africa. While Metcalf only lightly accounts for subsequent nationalist politics generated by these South Asian communities, he does offer a useful guide to the expansion of British India's imperial machinery into Africa.

The opening chapter on colonial governance is the book's strongest. Metcalf traces the origin of the Indian codes within the Raj and their subsequent legal expansion into the Straits settlement, Malaya and East Africa. It was a gradual process – in Zanzibar, the Indian penal code was enacted in 1867, and further Indian Acts followed in 1884. Arthur Hardinge enacted the Indian codes for the mainland East African Protectorate in 1897 because he found them 'simpler than English laws' and therefore more suitable for administrators typically lacking in