

of idol pop with Broadway productions, and the lack of awareness of the close – but shifting – relationship between live concerts and recordings in global pop since the 1960s. Let not these minor matters detract us, though: *K-pop Live* is essential reading, not least because it takes our understanding of K-pop into a new era, explaining what has become a global phenomenon as nobody else has done.

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AFRICA

RICHARD J. REID:

A History of Modern Uganda.

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The publication of this monograph on the history of modern Uganda represents the first attempt to write the country's national history in over thirty years. The author suggests that the interruption of national history writing on Uganda is linked both to a trend in Africanist scholarship which, perhaps due to disillusionment with the idea of the nation, has become more balkanized, and to the ideology of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) that came to power in 1986 under President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. The NRM has promoted a strong narrative according to which Uganda's past – marred by conflict among the different factions that proliferated during pre-colonial, colonial and de-colonial times – is to be cast aside as not having any bearing on the present promising condition. As a historian, whose concern is by definition the past, Reid's major contribution consists of narrating the history of Uganda over the *longue durée*, tracing the profound links between the country's present political and economic realities, and dynamics that have been unfolding since the fifteenth century. In elegant and flowing prose, Reid weaves together the multiple agencies of various regional, trans-regional and international players that propelled the Ugandan nation into being.

The book begins by addressing the challenge of writing the history of Uganda as a national entity, both in conversation with different trends in African historiography broadly, and with the wealth of history writing on Uganda specifically. In so doing, Reid pulls together a vast and varied assortment of secondary sources, piecing together a rich, detailed and compelling intellectual history of history writing in Uganda, which is in itself one of the book's most praiseworthy contributions (chapter 1).

Reid then narrates the events leading up to 1986, labelled "year zero", to signify the NRM's insistence on the new birth of a unified nation after years of civil war, beginning with General Idi Amin's coup in 1971 against the first government of Milton Obote, and continued through a succession of coups and counter coups between five successive regimes from 1979 to 1985 (chapter 2).

These contemporary happenings are then analysed in connection with Uganda's pre-colonial political history. The central argument of the book is that Uganda's modern history can be read as the violent struggle for hegemony mainly between the two southern Kingdoms of Bunyoro-Kitara and of Buganda, both of which trace their origins to the extensive and flourishing Kitara polity that was established in the fifteenth century under the Chwezi dynasty. The period of British rule (1894–

1962) is situated within this highly militarized struggle, in a historical continuum of expansions, alliances, hostilities, trade and religious conversions that bound together the neighbouring kingdoms of the South, the lineages of the North, tradesmen from the coast and the Sudan, missionaries, explorers and colonial officials over four-hundred years (chapter 3). The watershed event in Uganda's history is not the commencement of the British Protectorate in 1894, nor the signing of the Buganda Agreement in 1900 – which, spearheaded by Ganda elites dissident to royal authority, ensured that Buganda maintained important privileges as a constitutional monarchy province within the British Protectorate, though greatly reducing the powers of the king (*kabaka*) – but the arrival of foreign merchants at Mutesa I's court in 1844, which marked the beginning of a “commercial revolution”, characterized by the expansion of the export trades in slaves and ivory. Reid argues that this new economy – which the colonial economy importantly built on and innovated – latched on to pre-existing economic developments and trade networks, as well as on an extant system of unfree labour that was particularly prominent in Buganda (chapter 4), demonstrating that both politically and economically “the British were co-opted into local dynamics of long standing” (p. 157).

The book shows how Buganda's struggle for hegemony was constantly contrasted by the neighbouring southern kingdoms – such as those of Bunyoro, Toro, Ankole and Busoga – and the northern lineages – such as those of Alur, Lugbara, Kakwa, Madi, Acholi, Lango, Teso and Karamoja – encompassed in the territory that eventually became the Ugandan nation. The complex party politics of the 1950s and 1960s, which importantly came to be delineated along ethnic and regional lines, stands as testimony to this long history of regional contrasts, culminating in the short-lived alliance between the nationalist, leftist Uganda People's Congress (UPC) under Langi leader Milton Obote and the royalist, separationist *Kabaka Yekka* (the King alone) under Buganda's *Kabaka* Edward Mutesa, which led the country to independence in 1962 (chapter 5). Although decolonization politics also pitted Catholics against Protestants, traditional monarchists against modernist nationalists and pan Africanists, and communists against sectarians – thus breaking with notions of region or ethnicity as the epicentres of political unity, and promoting instead religious, ideological and doctrinal alliances across the nation – in reflecting upon the present situation Reid concludes that: “it has never been truer that one's life opportunities in modern Uganda depend very much on where, and to whom, one is born” (p. 267).

One of the persisting characteristics of Ugandan modern history, according to Reid, is the North–South divide, which has pre-colonial roots but was enhanced during the period of British rule, whereby lack of cash crop investments in the North served the broader interest of maintaining the area as a reservoir of cheap labour and army recruits for the benefit of the agriculturally and commercially developed South. While this thesis has been largely explored and is generally undisputed, reference to the work of Adam Branch (*Displacing Human Rights*, Oxford, 2011) would have provided a more nuanced picture of the North's political history. Branch's work brings attention to the large number of civil servants that were recruited in Acholi by the British, and thus to the specific type of privilege and inclusion from which the Acholi benefitted, which is essential to understanding the historical causes of the nation's longest conflict, the war in northern Uganda (1986–2009).

The reading of Uganda's modern history as Buganda's struggle for hegemony and the politics of resistance by the neighbouring Southern kingdoms and Northern lineages is extremely compelling and convincingly argued throughout the book. What raises questions is the plotting of this struggle in a historical

continuum that encompasses Uganda's colonial history and that sees the Ganda partnership with the British as marking one of the kingdom's most successful phases, comparable only to the level of dominance that it had achieved in the 1830s. In this regard, further elaboration of two points is important, also to curtail the risk of downplaying the profoundly unequal power relations of the Anglo-Ganda partnership: how to characterize political and economic hegemony in the absence of sovereignty – which Buganda lost when it signed the 1900 Agreement – and how to tell the history of a polity's loss of sovereignty without the historiographical notion of rupture, to which Reid prefers that of continuity.

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GENERAL

HYUN JIN KIM, FREDERIK JULIAAN VERVAET, and SELIM FERRUH ADALI (eds): *Eurasian Empires in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Contact and Exchange between the Graeco-Roman World, Inner Asia and China*.

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Spanning a wide geographical and chronological range, this volume has been constructed with a clear purpose in mind: to make a compelling case for comparative and interdisciplinary approaches to the study of Eurasian empires – approaches which, in the editors' opinion, should replace outmoded studies of such empires in isolation. Not all of the book's 11 essays examine the process of "contact and exchange" mentioned in the title, but each of them works with the others to promote what the editors call a "holistic, truly Eurasian perspective".

The first three papers focus on the interactions of different Eurasian empires. Hyun Jin Kim's article seeks to demonstrate that the Franks borrowed important aspects of their political system from the Inner Asian "quasi-feudal" model of the Huns (and, by extension, other Inner Asian polities such as the Xiongnu empire) rather than from Roman models. This enterprising thesis illustrates Kim's determination to undo the image of Inner Asian polities as politically and culturally "primitive". Jonathan Skaff provides a detailed analysis of the Tang dynasty's horse-breeding system and its relationship to Inner Asian horse supplies. Other scholars have demonstrated the Tang empire's ability to breed significant numbers of horses when it controlled frontier lands that were suitable for pasturage; Skaff adds new factors to this analysis, looking at climate, established patterns of exchange (both peaceful and violent) between China and Inner Asian peoples, and the ethnic diversity of persons staffing Tang horse-breeding farms, all in order to establish a richer picture of his topic. Selim Adali's essay discusses the political and cultural impact of the Cimmerians and Scythians on the Ancient Near East, noting both the spread of new military equipment and equine technologies brought by the Inner Asians as well as the ways in which their presence promoted the emergence of new powers that changed the region's geopolitical makeup.

The next four papers examine comparative topics rather than analyses of "contact and exchange". The first two form a diptych through which one can juxtapose the