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Colonial Buganda and the End of Empire: Political Thought and Historical Imagination in Africa by Jonathon L. Earle
(review)

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Colonial Buganda and the End of Empire: Political Thought and Historical Imagination in Africa. By Jonathon L. Earle (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2017) 271 pp. \$99.99

This carefully constructed and exhaustively researched account about the formation of the conflicting political beliefs held by four well-known influential colonial figures in the Buganda Kingdom of Uganda deepens our understanding of tensions within Ganda tradition—a culture that has often been misunderstood as homogeneous. In addition, these actors' beliefs show that both the Kingdom and its relations with Uganda contained political possibilities never realized. In three ways, Earle modifies conventional notions that academics regularly draw as sharp distinctions in explaining Africa's history and particularly that of Buganda. Instead, his broad purpose is to show, first, that the actors in question reconceptualized Western antinomies between sacred and secular perspectives; second, that they also rethought antinomies between forward and backward-looking perspectives; third, that they combined both reconsiderations, though in different ways. His narrower purpose is to re-examine historical issues that occurred shortly before and during British rule over Buganda.

Earle's use of interdisciplinary methods mostly involves joining insights taken by the intellectuals that he covers directly from European philosophical writings and from Christian and Muslim religious writings with conventional historical sources, primarily written, about precolonial and colonial Buganda. He opens by declaring his book "an intellectual history" (1). He joins the small group of historians who have traced the impact of both European political philosophies and religious texts on the thought of African public figures.

To account for the surprisingly dissimilar visions for Buganda found in the writings of Ignatius Musazi, Eridadi Mulira, Abu Mayanja, and Benedicto Kiwanuka, Earle examines the religious and Ganda beliefs held in their natal areas within Buganda, as well as their educations at home and abroad. He intends to show how the ideas that these four Ganda thinkers culled from books or from their own writings helped to form their mature views. His methods for treating his four subjects differ, at least partly because he could not locate comparable materials about each of them.

One of Earle's contributions to the study of African history is his use of insights discovered in the personal libraries of three of these four Ganda activists, not only from the books that they owned but even more precisely from their annotations and marginal notes in them. This innovative methodology allows him more closely to consider the influence of European literature, as well as the Bible or the Koran, on their intellectual thought and political practice. In addition, Earle relies on their own letters, newspaper articles, pamphlets, novels, and plays. In their writings, we see alternative, though never achieved, futures for the relationship between the Buganda Kingdom and Uganda.

Earle's most spectacular discovery was to locate Kiwanuka's library, which was hidden after his assassination. Earle's examination of his books and manuscripts allowed him to show "how Kiwanuka wove Europe's classical liberal histories with Catholic theology to recast Buganda's vernacular historiographies" (4). From Musazi's library, Earle found Biblical annotations and references showing how Emile Zola and Harold Laski had influenced him. Earle's discussion of Mulira, the most prolific writer among the four, concerns, among other topics, his pamphlets, which urged federalism as a solution for Buganda's place in Uganda. Earle also analyzes Mulira's novels and plays. In discussing Mayanja, Earle concentrates on his "logic of criticizing patriotism in Buganda . . . tied to a much longer history of trying to create political space for the kingdom's Muslim community" (170). In Earle's view, all four writers insisted that Buganda remain part of Uganda after independence, opposing those who wanted it to secede, though they differed on how the kingdom should relate to the country.

Earle's focus on Buganda leads him to place little value on the radical activism of Musazi and Mayanja (and the liberalism of Mulira) as central to their intellectual principles. The conventional view is that all three reversed their larger commitments as independence neared. In a book that concentrates mainly on the origin and development of ideas, Earle needed to show either that these activists always placed Buganda above radicalism or at least that they were not opportunists who simply changed their minds to protect their careers.

The fundamental contribution of this fine book lies in its demonstration of the different cosmopolitan political visions of these Ganda intellectuals in colonial Buganda. It encourages further investigation into contingent paths that neither Buganda nor Uganda took.

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Transforming Sudan: Decolonization, Economic Development, and State Formation. By Alden Young (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2018) 180 pp. \$99.99 cloth \$29.99 paper

The history of financial managers and state accounting might seem dry and daunting, and only marginally significant, but Young argues that from such apparently little things big political trends can stem. Of interest to readers of this journal is the way political, administrative, and, to a lesser extent, intellectual history and economics are interwoven.

The Sudan is well suited to plotting the intersection of quantitative and qualitative forces, having been a colony under Ottoman–Egyptian rule and later the Anglo–Egyptian Condominium until independence in 1956. Young focuses on the late colonial/early independence periods from the 1930s to 1960s and on colonial and Sudanese economists,