

Material Cultures of Imperialism in Eastern Africa,  
c.1870–1920: A Study of Ethnographic Collecting and  
Display

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This thesis is submitted for the degree of PhD.

I, Alison Bennett, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

## **Abstract**

This dissertation examines the entangled relationship between ethnographic collecting and early British imperial expansion in present-day Uganda and neighbouring parts of Kenya. Between 1870 and 1920, thousands of objects from this region were accessioned by British museums and their colonial counterparts in eastern Africa. However, historians and curators alike know remarkably little about the contexts of their acquisition. Histories of the colonial period in Uganda and Kenya have rarely engaged with these crucial material sources, relying instead upon methodologies that privilege the textual and oral archive. Meanwhile in museum histories and displays, objects from eastern Africa are eclipsed by material culture from western Africa and Egypt.

By combining close object analysis with archival and visual material, and by drawing on theoretical approaches to material culture from anthropology, this thesis reassembles the rich and complex histories of this important material archive for the first time. In doing so, it reveals the significant material underpinnings of both imperial and counter-imperial activity in the region. Focusing on a variety of different collectors ranging from colonial officials to missionaries, local leaders and museums, it shows that collecting was a pivotal tool for mediating different encounters, relationships, identities, and power structures within colonial society. In the process, this thesis makes three important interventions. It offers original new perspectives on early British imperial history in eastern Africa, it contributes to our wider understanding of imperial collecting, and it develops our knowledge of the colonial histories of museums and their collections.

## Impact Statement

When research for this dissertation first began in September 2014, a YouGov UK poll had recently affirmed the continued disparity among the British public about the legacies of empire. Fifty-nine percent of respondents felt that the British Empire was something to be proud of, nineteen percent believed that it was something to be ashamed of, and twenty-three percent didn't know what to think of it. This contested and deeply sensitive history continues to mediate relations between Britain and African countries, and its legacy still permeates public institutions and debates. An extremely valuable, yet largely ignored (quasi) public record of this past exists in museums across Britain, Uganda, and Kenya. By documenting, contextualizing, and making this record more visible, the research generated by this thesis was intended to have a broad impact, contributing new knowledge about the British Empire in eastern Africa to academic historians, museum professionals, and the wider public alike. The thesis has addressed these aims in a number of specific ways.

In addition to offering a new object-centred research methodology for historians of imperialism in Uganda and Kenya, the research findings of this thesis have served as the basis for a range of scholarly conference papers and journal articles on empire and Africa more broadly. Its sources and case-studies have been incorporated into undergraduate course content, and have provided material for object-based teaching, widening participation initiatives, and school outreach activities. The thesis has contributed to the scholarly output of museums by revealing the provenance of many objects acquired by British, Ugandan, and Kenyan museums during the colonial era. It has also connected collections across multiple geographical and institutional sites. Finally, the thesis has made a social impact by providing important new content for

public engagement initiatives including museum tours and blog posts which have made these rich sources and histories more widely accessible.

## Contents

Acknowledgments	6
Abbreviations	8
Glossary	9
List of Figures	11
Note on Terminology	13
Introduction	18
1. From Exploration to Treaty-Making and Administration: Collecting and the Makings of Colonial Officialdom	56
2. Collecting, Conversion, and Colonization: Problematizing Missionaries in Uganda	111
3. Eastern African Collectors and Donors: A Reassessment of Subjects and Objects	143
4. Unpacking the Collections at The British Museum and Uganda Museum	186
Conclusion	226
Appendixes	237
Bibliography	249

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I would like to thank staff at the British Museum, National Museums Scotland, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (University of Cambridge), Pitt-Rivers Museum (University of Oxford), Uganda Museum, and National Museums of Kenya. In particular I am grateful to Julie Hudson, Jim Hamill, Sarah Worden, Rachel Hand, Nicholas Crowe, Abiti Nelson, Kiprop Lagat and Joseph Mutangah for not only allowing me access to the collections and archives at these institutions, but also for the pivotal insights that they afforded through co-discussion and object handling. I would also like to thank Wartson Atukwatse for his help, enthusiasm and accommodation at the Uganda Society Library in Kampala, as well as staff at the Uganda National Archives, Kenya National Archives, and British Institute of Eastern Africa.

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## Abbreviations

BM	British Museum
CAS	Colonial Administration Service
CMS	Church Missionary Society
IBEAC	Imperial British East Africa Company
JRAI	<i>Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute</i>
LMS	London Missionary Society
MAA	Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology
NMS	National Museums Scotland
RAI	Royal Anthropological Institute
TNA	The National Archives

## Glossary

<i>Acholi</i>	Generic term used to describe the people of Acholiland
<i>Acholiland</i>	Region in present-day Northern Uganda
<i>(A)Kamba</i>	Generic term used to describe the people of Ukambani
<i>Ankole</i>	Former kingdom in south-western Uganda also known as Nkore
<i>Athiani</i>	Kamba hunting leaders
<i>Banyankole</i>	People of Ankole
<i>(Ba)Ganda</i>	Generic term used to describe the people of Buganda
<i>Buganda</i>	Region and Kingdom in the south-central area of present-day Uganda
<i>Bunyoro</i>	Kingdom in present-day western Uganda
<i>Enkejje</i>	Fish found in the lakes surrounding Buganda
<i>Kabaka</i>	King of Buganda
<i>Katikkiro</i>	Prime Minister of Buganda
<i>Kibuuka</i>	God of War (Buganda)
<i>Kiganda</i>	Customs of the Baganda
<i>Kikamba</i>	Customs of the Akamba
<i>Lubaale (plur. –balubaale)</i>	Deity (Buganda)
<i>Luganda</i>	The language of the Baganda
<i>Lukikko</i>	Parliament (Buganda)
<i>Luo</i>	Generic term used to describe the people of

	Luoland in western Kenya and eastern Uganda
<i>Luwaalo</i>	Tax (Buganda)
<i>Maasai</i>	Pastoralist tribe of Kenya and northern Tanzania
<i>Mayembe (Sing: Jembe)</i>	Fetishes (Buganda)
<i>Mizimu</i>	Ghosts (Buganda)
<i>Mkamba</i>	Citizen/subject of Ukamba
<i>Muganda</i>	Citizen/subject of Buganda
<i>Mukasa</i>	The head <i>Lubaale</i>
<i>Nandi</i>	Generic term used to describe the people of Nandi County
<i>Nnamasole</i>	Queen mother (Buganda)
<i>Nsiriba</i>	Amulets (Buganda)
<i>(O)Mugabe</i>	King of Ankole
<i>(O)Mukama</i>	King of Bunyoro
<i>Rwot (plur.–Rwodi)</i>	Acholi Chief
<i>Ukambani</i>	Region in present-day Kenya. Home to majority of the Kamba population

## List of Figures and Tables

1.1	‘A Muhima’, Harry Johnston, <i>The Uganda Protectorate</i>	75
1.2	‘Kavirondo Men & their Adornments’, Harry Johnston, <i>The Uganda Protectorate</i>	76
1.3	A selection of Acholi, Lango and Alur headwear, British Museum	89
1.4	Maasai Head-dress, British Museum	92
1.5	Masai head-dress, British Museum entry slip, 9 December, 1885	92
1.6	Image of ‘Masai Warrior’ in Harry Johnston, <i>The Kilimanjaro Expedition</i>	94
1.7	‘Masai Warrior’ in Joseph Thomson, <i>Through Masai Land</i>	94
1.8	Kamba chain-maker’s outfit, National Museums Scotland	103
1.9	Wooden pyriform snuff bottle (Kamba), National Museums Scotland	104
1.10	‘Cattle Brands etc.’, C. W. Hobley, <i>Ethnology of A-Kamba</i>	106
1.11	Composite stool of wood inlaid with brass and iron wire and iron chain	107
2.1	Relics of <i>Kibuuka</i> , Royal Anthropological Institute, London	128
2.2	Umbilical cords, John Roscoe Collection, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology	130
2.3	Three Wakamba cupping instruments of horn, National Museums Scotland	137
2.4	Image of caesarean in Uganda with knife and instruments in Background, Wellcome Collection	139
3.1	Sacrificial Victim’s Drinking Vessel, British Museum	143
3.2	A vignette full-face portrait of Nakatshupi, the sister of chief	

	Ruyonga, Pitt Rivers Museum	154
3.3	A full length portrait of two women wrapped in bark-cloth, Pitt-Rivers Museum	154
3.4	‘Mandara’s Left Ear’, Harry Johnsnton, <i>The Kilimanjaro Expedition</i>	159
3.5	Ham Mukasa and Apolo Kagawa in London, Cambridge University, Royal Commonwealth Society Library	
3.6	‘Charms Brought to England by the Katikiro and the Rev. E. Millar, Cambridge University Library	171
3.7	A selection of Kagawa’s objects now in the British Museum	173
3.8	Perfumed butter for anointing royal personages, Pitt Rivers Museum	181
3.9	‘Bunyoro: Crowns worn by past kings’, John Roscoe, <i>The Batikara</i>	182
3.10	‘Bunyoro: Crowns worn by past kings’, John Roscoe, <i>The Batikara</i>	182
3.11	‘King in his ancient robes with chiefs of the Sacred Guild’, John Roscoe, <i>The Batikara</i>	183
4.1	Tobacco pipe associated with <i>Kabaka Muteesa</i>	196
4.2	British Museum, plan of the upper floor, <i>A Guide to the Exhibition Galleries of the British Museum, 1888</i>	198
4.3	One of the British Museum’s Ethnography Galleries, 1908	205
4.4	Lugard’s Fort, the original site of the Uganda Museum	215
4.5	Plan of Uganda Museum, Uganda National Archives	217
4.6	‘The Museum, Uganda’ in <i>Farmer’s Journey, Nairobi</i>	221

## **Note on Terminology**

### **Anthropology**

In its broadest sense, ‘anthropology’ in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was an emerging academic discipline that incorporated ethnography, primate evolution, archaeology, linguistics, and folklore.<sup>1</sup> This thesis uses the term predominantly in relation to its ethnographic and ethnological branches, but also notes that the meanings, approaches, and purposes of ‘anthropology’ were hotly debated among various institutions, societies, and practitioners, and that it was thus also a problematic term during this period.

### **Collecting**

The term ‘collecting’ denotes a range of activities and materials. In this thesis, I refer to ‘collecting’ specifically in relation to the acquisition of ethnographic material culture unless stated otherwise. Other forms of collecting included the collation of language, natural history specimens, zoology and human bodies.

### **Eastern Africa**

Unless specified, I use the term ‘eastern Africa’ interchangeably with, and as a short hand for ‘Uganda and Kenya’, and do not include Tanzania, southern Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Mozambique, or Burundi. I use the term ‘British East Africa’ to denote the colonial definition of Kenya as a political entity.

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Alan Shelton, ‘Museum Ethnography: An Imperial Science’, in Elizabeth Hallam and Brian V. Street (eds.), *Cultural Encounters: Representing Otherness* (London, 2000), p. 171.

## **Ethnography**

As a branch of anthropology, the current Royal Anthropological Institute's 'Glossary of Words' describes ethnography as 'the recording and analysis of a culture or society, usually based on participant-observation and resulting in a written account of a people, place or institution'.<sup>2</sup> In the nineteenth century, ethnographic 'data' from different cultures and societies fed the theories of armchair ethnologists such as James Cowles Prichard (1786–1848) and later social evolutionists such as James George Frazer (1854–1941). Whereas ethnologists and later social evolutionists *compared* ethnographic data drawn from different peoples and places to forge overarching theories and patterns, ethnographers focused on the creation and analysis of that data for *individual* cultures and societies (such as the Baganda). Ethnographic 'data' took many forms, such as questionnaires, travel accounts and object collections, though the methods and purposes of 'ethnography' were often vague and contradictory. This thesis uses the term 'ethnography' in its broadest sense and includes (but is certainly not limited to) written ethnographical accounts. Its main use of the term 'ethnography' relates to the collection and examination of material culture, which was far more popular as an anthropological activity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries than it was during the remainder of the twentieth century. Between 1880 and 1920, anthropologists and museums used ethnographic objects as sources of information about past and present human societies. This thesis seeks to understand the distinct contribution that ethnographic objects made to anthropological and colonial knowledge about eastern Africa, but also how they worked in combination with ethnographic texts and other visual sources.

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<sup>2</sup> The Royal Anthropological Institute, *Glossary of Terms* at <https://www.discoveranthropology.org.uk/about-anthropology/glossaryofterms.html>, accessed 17 January, 2018.

## **Material**

The term ‘material’ is used here as shorthand for ‘material culture’ rather than ‘materialism’ in the Marxian sense.

## **Primitive**

Words such as ‘primitive’ and ‘savage’ consistently emerge in colonial texts, often in juxtaposition to the supposedly ‘modern’ characteristics displayed by Europeans. As with other racialized words, this thesis recognises the sensitive nature of these terms and actively seeks to problematize them.

## **Tribe**

Although the term ‘tribe’ is in common use today by peoples in eastern Africa as a positive self-referential term this thesis acknowledges that those people categorised as members of a tribe during the colonial period may not have necessarily identified themselves in such a way. ‘Tribe’, and other words underpinned by colonial categorisations were, and continue to be, loaded terms. References to tribes in this thesis are made with these issues in mind and are used in relation to the terminology within the primary source material. Where possible, this thesis uses objects and other sources to complicate these terms.

## **Uganda and Kenya**

During the colonial period, geographical boundaries were fixed on paper, and continued to be re-fixed throughout the process of Kenya and Uganda becoming colonial, and then nation states in, respectively, 1962 and 1963. The geopolitical regions of Uganda and Kenya as we know them today might be said to have been delineated on paper in 1894 and 1895 when they became British protectorates. However, the hundreds of maps



in the National Archives at Kew that span the breadth of this period testify to the fact that these boundaries continued to shift as sites of contestation, as did the internal boundaries and definitions of kingdoms, tribes, and clans.<sup>3</sup> Unless specified, this thesis uses these as neutral terms, but it does so in the knowledge of their colonial underpinnings. A key aim of this thesis is to understand how material culture contributed to these changing conceptions of group identity, whether as a nation, a kingdom, a tribe, a clan, or any other unit of association. ‘Kenya’ is generally used for consistency rather than ‘British East Africa’ but the latter will be used in direct quotations. It is important to note too, that when colonial and museum records use the term ‘Uganda’, it is often the case that they refer only to Buganda, a kingdom that attracted overwhelming attention from the British, and which continues to be one of the dominant groups in Uganda today. Where it is possible to point out that the term ‘Uganda’ has been used to mean ‘Buganda’, this has been done.

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<sup>3</sup> Richard Reid engages with the problem of defining ‘Uganda’, and provides some useful maps to illustrate the geopolitical changes to the country in Richard J. Reid, *A History of Modern Uganda* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. xii–xix and pp. 1–9.

## Introduction

This thesis uses ethnographic museum collections from present-day Uganda and Kenya to examine the material underpinnings of early British imperialism in eastern Africa between 1870 and 1920. Britain's distinct interest in and interaction with the material cultures of these two particular regions is manifest in the thousands of objects registered by British and colonial museums by the turn of the twentieth century, yet historians and curators alike know remarkably little about their provenance. The presence of these objects across multiple institutions prompts several questions. Who collected these items? How did they acquire them? Why did they do so? Moreover, what new insights can the histories of these objects provide about the imperial contexts in which they were acquired and displayed? The most consistent donors of this material before 1920 were colonial officials and missionaries, however, the names of Ugandan elites (including those of kings and chiefs) are also visible among their annals.<sup>4</sup> These collectors acquired their material via multiple contexts that ranged from gift exchanges to purchase, barter and violent extraction. Their reasons for collecting were shaped by personal, occupational, and imperial motives. These objects, therefore, harbour essential new insights into a variety of actors, relations, and activities in Uganda's and Kenya's early imperial landscapes, and illustrate that collecting was a key practice of empire.

By tracing the histories of their collection and display, this thesis argues that material culture played a pivotal, but underacknowledged role in multiple areas of

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<sup>4</sup> These groups and individuals were not the only collectors of Ugandan and Kenyan material culture in this period. Privately financed expeditions such as those led by Percy Powell Cotton (1866–1940) and William and Katherine Scoresby Routledge (1859–1939; 1866–1935) also provided valuable material for museum collections. Percy Powell-Cotton formed his own museum in Birchington. This collection contains valuable material that is underexploited and requires much further research. William and Katherine Scoresby-Routledge gave an extensive collection of Kikuyu and Kamba objects to the British Museum. These collectors, however, while deploying imperial structures to gain access to material objects, were not themselves cogs in the imperial machine, and accordingly, are not examined in detail.

colonial life. In the operations of colonial officials, missionaries, local elites, and civic institutions like museums, the exchange, acquisition, and display of material culture were important cultural strategies for navigating the early decades of imperial expansion. They helped to bring relationships into being, forged new identities, created and disseminated knowledge, and carved new forms of power (both real and imagined). However, histories of collecting and display also complicate our understanding of empire in Uganda and Kenya. They expose instances of violent power and colonial cultural hegemony at the same time as they reveal tensions, fractures, and cultural weaknesses among imperial groups and institutions. Collecting was not just a tool of British agents, but also of local elites, and they too used it to both empower themselves and to disempower others.

By providing a better understanding of these objects and their biographies, this thesis contributes to three key fields of research.<sup>5</sup> First, it draws upon previous approaches to the history of colonial collecting and enriches them with new insights from the Ugandan and Kenyan context. This expanding field of research, has, until now, overlooked Uganda and Kenya, focusing overwhelmingly on Asia, the Pacific, North America, and West Africa. Scholars have analyzed collecting in these regions from a rich variety of perspectives over the past two decades, finding fruitful ground for explorations of colonial encounter, knowledge production, and representation. However, the applicability of these insights to other colonial regions still requires close examination. By incorporating these two key eastern African sites of empire into the discussion, this dissertation widens the scope of the investigation, identifying elements that might be identified as broader trends of imperial collecting, and others that were peculiar to eastern Africa, Uganda, and Kenya.

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<sup>5</sup> This dissertation does not focus on the cultural and social aspects of the manufacture of material culture. This is a rich field of study, but requires more research. See for example John D. Giblin and Kigongo Remigius, 'The Social and Symbolic Context of the Royal Potters of Buganda', *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*, 47:1 (2012), pp. 64–80.

Second, it uses these insights to re-examine existing narratives about the early period of British imperialism in Uganda and Kenya and offer new windows from a material perspective. Historians have written extensively about the events of this time, but previous research has relied predominantly on textual and oral sources. There have been few explorations of the material dimensions of the ‘colonial moment’ in these regions. Historians have focused predominantly on the pre-colonial period. As a result, scholars have missed a significant aspect of imperial and counter-imperial activity; one that was enacted through the material world. A material culture approach, based on the history of ethnographic collecting, illuminates objects as pivotal pieces of the toolkit used by elite British, Ugandan, and Kenyan actors to secure positions of power in the unfolding imperial system in eastern Africa, as well as in British metropolitan society.

Finally, this dissertation contributes to our understanding of the non-European histories of museums. It adds to our knowledge of eastern African collections in British museums, which until now have received scant attention, often eclipsed in collecting and museum histories by material from western Africa and Egypt. It also offers the first comprehensive study of the early Uganda Museum, arguing that its foundation provided an essential testing ground for a variety of key imperial processes, relations, and identities. Amid growing pressure on European museums to acknowledge the full spectrum and significance of their imperial pasts, it offers significant new evidence for multiple institutional histories, ranging from instances of imperial violence to the assertion of non-European cultural power.

## Histories of Colonial Collecting

Since the Renaissance, Europeans have assembled and studied non-European objects for information about the wider world and their position within it.<sup>6</sup> In the eighteenth century, British imperial encounters in North America, the Pacific, and South Asia added new dimensions to established collecting practices and contributed to the growth of public museums. Over the past thirty years, a growing field of scholars has documented different aspects of this rich history, spanning a wide range of topics and geographical locations.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the predominant focus on the early-modern period, a broader historiography of collecting now exists that reaches right up to the post-colonial period.<sup>8</sup> Objects from Africa began to flow into British museums in the nineteenth century but have received comparatively little attention compared to other locations. This dissertation builds on the small number of key works that have addressed this topic. Annie Coombes' *Reinventing Africa* remains the principal text on the history of collecting in Africa, though its key focus is on the impact of collecting in the British metropole rather than in Africa itself.<sup>9</sup> Helen Tilley and Robert Gordon have offered valuable insights into the history of imperial anthropology and science in Africa, though

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<sup>6</sup> Susan M. Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London, 1995). For a detailed history of collecting from the Renaissance onwards, see Arthur MacGregor, *Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, CT, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> For an account of collecting in North America and the Atlantic world, and its links to the emergence of the British Museum, see James Delbourgo, *Collecting the World: Hans Sloane and the Origins of the British Museum* (London, 2017). For the Pacific, see Neil Chambers, 'Joseph Banks, the British Museum and Collections in the Age of Empire' in R.G.W. Anderson, M.L. Caygill, A.G. MacGregor, and L. Syson (eds), *Enlightening the British: Knowledge, Discovery and the Museum in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 2003), pp. 99–112. For South Asia and Egypt (considered part of the 'Eastern' world in the eighteenth century), see Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture and Conquest in the East, 1750–1850* (New York, NY, 2005).

<sup>8</sup> Claire Wintle, 'Decolonising the Museum: The Case of the Imperial and Commonwealth Institutes', *Museum & Society*, 11:2 (2013), pp. 185–201.

<sup>9</sup> Annie E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London, 1994).

less on the history of ethnographic collecting.<sup>10</sup> Other scholars of collecting in Africa, such as William Fagg, John Mack, and Zachary Kingdon have produced important works on western and central Africa.<sup>11</sup> Sarah Longair's work on the Swahili coast, however, has directed much-needed attention to eastern Africa and offers an important foundation for this dissertation.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, a large gap still surrounds the history of collecting in other eastern African regions including Uganda and Kenya. This dissertation serves to bridge part of that lacuna.

It also engages with the broader field of collecting history to illuminate the importance of different aspects of the collecting process for a study of imperialism in eastern Africa. For example, following Mary Louise Pratt's postcolonial explanation of the colonial encounter as a 'contact-zone' several authors have examined the moment of exchange and collection for the details that they reveal about the idiosyncrasies of cross-cultural colonial encounters.<sup>13</sup> The 'tangible object' argues Claire Wintle, 'offers a means to track not only networks of cross-cultural exchange but also the forging of social relationships, individual and collective identities across time and space'.<sup>14</sup> Such analyses have offered new windows on the agencies and voices of indigenous actors, and also revealed important examples of cross-cultural collaboration. Work by scholars such as Simon Schaffer, Lissa Roberts, Kapil Raj, and James Delbourgo, for example, asserts the importance of examining the moments of exchange and encounter during

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<sup>10</sup> Helen Tilley and R.J. Gordon, (eds.), *Ordering Africa: Anthropology, European imperialism and the politics of knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> William Fagg, *Nigerian Images* (London, 1973); Paula Girshick Ben-Amos, *The Art of Benin* (London, 1995); Zachary Kingdon, *Ethnographic Collecting and African Agency in Early Colonial West Africa: A Study of Trans-Imperial Cultural Flows* (forthcoming, 2019); John Mack, *Emil Torday and the Art of the Congo* (London, 1990).

<sup>12</sup> Sarah Longair, 'Recovering and Reframing the Regalia of the Mwinyi Mkuu in British Colonial Zanzibar', *Museum History Journal* 3:2 (Fall, 2010), pp.155–57; Sarah Longair, *Cracks in the Dome: Fractured Histories of Empire in the Zanzibar Museum, 1897–1964* (Farnham, 2015); see also Prita Meier, 'Objects on the Edge: Swahili Coast Logics of Display', *African Arts* 42:4 (Winter 2009), pp. 8–23.

<sup>13</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London, 1992); Wintle, *Colonial Collecting*, p. 2; Emma Martin, *Beyond the Collector: Locating Tibetan Networks of Collecting and Connoisseurship in Charles Bell's 'List of Curios'* (forthcoming, 2019).

<sup>14</sup> Wintle, *Colonial Collecting*, pp. 2–3.

the collecting process, exploring how knowledge was produced and challenged in these contexts.<sup>15</sup> Their work demonstrates that the European collecting field was a cross-cultural space of physical work and epistemological knowledge production. In his seminal work on the history of collecting, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government*, Nicholas Thomas pioneered this form of study in reaction to what he saw as anthropology's overwhelming preoccupation with difference.<sup>16</sup> By studying the political and cultural dynamics of colonial encounters through collecting and exchange processes such as gift exchanges, Thomas reconfigured these relations as contingent and shared or 'entangled' histories (between colonized and colonizer, but also between humans and objects) and emphasized the variety of forces underpinning collecting.

Since the publication of Thomas' work, further research by Chris Gosden and Chantal Knowles in Papua New Guinea, Nicholas Thomas and Chris Wingfield in the Pacific, Claire Wintle in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Christina Riggs in Egypt has encouraged greater recognition of how local leaders, dealers, makers, and consumers directed the practice of European ethnographic collecting in the colonies, a domain which has traditionally been attributed to white European males.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, other scholars have also illuminated critical examples of imperial violence, both subtle and overt, through the history of colonial collecting.<sup>18</sup> Together, these studies all

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<sup>15</sup> Simon Schaffer, Lissa Roberts, Kapil Raj and James Delbourgo (eds.), *The Brokered World: Go-betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770-1820* (Sagamore Beach, MA, 2009); Shino Konishi, Maria Nugent, and Tiffany Shellam (eds.), *Indigenous Intermediaries* (Canberra, 2015). Kapil Raj, *Relocating Modern Science: Circulation and the Construction of Knowledge in South Asia and Europe, 1650-1900* (New York, NY, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Cambridge, 1994).

<sup>17</sup> Chris Gosden and Chantal Knowles, *Collecting Colonialism: Material Culture and Colonial Change* (Oxford: Berg, 2001); Thomas, *Entangled Objects*; Chris Wingfield, Karen Jacobs and Chantal Knowles (eds.), *Trophies, Relics and Curios? Missionary Heritage from Africa and the Pacific* (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2015); Wintle, *Colonial Collecting*; Christina Riggs, "Shouldering the Past: Photography, Archaeology, and Collective Effort at the Tomb of Tutankhamun," *History of Science* 553 (2017), pp. 336-363.

<sup>18</sup> On the collection of human remains, see Paul Turnbull, 'Murdered for Science? Anthropological Collecting and Colonial Violence in Late Nineteenth Century Australia' in Paul Turnbull, *Science, Museums and Collecting the Indigenous Dead in Colonial Australia* (Cham, 2017). Histories of punitive expeditions in Africa are still vastly understudied. For a brief overview of the looting of Maqdalla (1868) and Kumase (1873-4) see Tim Barringer, *The South Kensington Museum and the*

contribute new insights into the complex nature of power in colonial relations and encounters.

Crucially, however, Thomas argued that ‘only localized theories and historically specific accounts can provide much insight into the varied articulations of colonizing and counter-colonial representations and practices’.<sup>19</sup> In response, this thesis contributes to the larger body of work on colonial collecting with a detailed study of the eastern African context. What is particularly striking about the history of collecting in this region is the group of charismatic and powerful local elites who were central figures in a larger collecting network consisting of missionaries, colonial officials, and museum curators. The individuals among this group had differing, yet deeply entangled interests in collecting. While the political interconnectedness of many of these figures has been documented by historians of eastern African studies, the importance of collecting in bringing them together has been overlooked. Thus, this thesis augments not only our understanding of eastern African political history, but also the findings of historians of collecting like Gosden, Knowles and Wingfield in its acknowledgement and interrogation of the role of local elites in the collecting process.

### **Collecting and Imperial Power in Uganda and Kenya**

The history of ethnographic object collecting has not yet been considered seriously in any imperial history of Uganda or Kenya. Archaeologists and a small number of historians have added to our understanding of the material cultures of pre-colonial Uganda. However, there has been much less interest in the role of the material world in

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*Imperial Project* (London, 1998) pp. 21–22. For the South Asian context, see M. Finn, 'Material Turns in British History: I: Loot', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 28 (2018), pp. 5-32.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture*, p. ix.



the colonial period beyond quantitative economic studies.<sup>20</sup> From the older, geopolitical works on British state-formation and policy in the 1960s, to African nationalist works in the 1970s, and more recent post-colonial studies from the 1990s, texts and oral histories have continued to be the predominant source of information for histories of Uganda in the colonial period. Drawing on insights from the material turn in studies of other formerly colonized regions, this thesis demonstrates that material culture can be used productively to build upon, complement, and rethink several key themes in Uganda's imperial historiography as well.

Scholars of Uganda's pre-colonial period have been much more active in examining the significance of the material world in social and economic life, warfare, politics, and cosmology. Archaeologists have offered the greatest contributions, although as Andrew Reid has recently noted, there is still much more scope for archaeologists to contribute insights into the significance of material culture in the colonial period.<sup>21</sup> Among historians, Richard Reid produced the first significant research into the relationship between craft, craftsmen, and power in early- to mid-nineteenth century Buganda. This economic and social history explored the significance of the production and consumption of specific materials in the pre-colonial period, such as bark cloth, metals (including iron, copper, and brass), and pottery. Iron, for example, was closely linked to pre-colonial forms of power, particularly through its association with war, tax, and agriculture, as well as Buganda's founding myths and the rituals surrounding the *Kabaka* (King).<sup>22</sup> Reid also began to interrogate the

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<sup>20</sup> This literature focuses largely on specific materials from Buganda. See Cyril Ehrlich, 'Cotton and the Uganda Economy, 1903–1909', *Uganda Journal*, 21 (1957), pp. 162–175; Christopher Wrigley, 'The Changing Economic Structure of Buganda', in Lloyd A. Fallers (ed.), *The King's Men: Leadership and Status in Buganda on the Eve of Independence* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 16–63; W. Senteza Kajubi, 'Coffee and Prosperity in Buganda: Some Aspects of Economic and Social Change', *Uganda Journal*, 22 (1965), pp. 135–4.

<sup>21</sup> Andrew Reid, 'Constructing History in Uganda', *The Journal of African History*, 57:2 (July 2016), p. 196. See also Giblin and Remigius, 'The Social and Symbolic Context'.

<sup>22</sup> Richard J. Reid, *Political Power in Pre-Colonial Buganda* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 77–79; and Andrew Reid, 'Buganda: Unearthing an African Kingdom', *Archaeology International*, 7 (2003/2004), p. 42.

relationship between craft, power and gender, using objects to re-think the position of women in Ganda society, through their involvement in the production and sale of crafts.<sup>23</sup>

Reid developed this material focus through a subsequent book on the history of war in pre-colonial eastern Africa that brought objects to the fore and demonstrated how they made war (and peace) as both vehicles of bodily massacre and symbols of power and diplomacy. In this work, Reid further developed the importance of iron, both as a key practical material in the production of weaponry, and as a symbol of power. He also detailed how patterns, shapes, and colours used on items such as shields were important markers of identity, illustrating that war was also a site of aesthetic representation.<sup>24</sup> Though focused on the pre-colonial period, Reid also traces how economic and social relationships with the material world began to change as Arab and European influences began to penetrate the region.<sup>25</sup> His research offers important grounding for further interrogation of how material culture was subsequently (mis)understood and (mis)appropriated by later colonial collectors. However, since the publication of these studies in 2002 and 2007, very few scholars have developed these leads.

Venny Nakazibwe offers an important exception, tracing the changing cultural, social, political and economic history of one particular material, bark cloth, from late eighteenth-century Buganda to the early twenty-first century.<sup>26</sup> Nakazibwe argues that bark cloth was a symbol of Kiganda power and a vehicle of economic prosperity in the pre-colonial period, but over time it has been ‘contingent on the changing dynamics of

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<sup>23</sup> Reid, *Political Power*, p. 89.

<sup>24</sup> Richard J. Reid, *War in Pre-Colonial Eastern Africa* (London, 2007), pp. 201–203.

<sup>25</sup> Reid, *Political Power*, pp. 70–88.

<sup>26</sup> Venny Nakazibwe, ‘Bark-Cloth of the Baganda People of Southern Uganda: A Record of Continuity and Change from the Late Eighteenth Century to the Early Twenty-First Century’ (PhD dissertation, Middlesex University, 2005).

social, economic, cultural and political structures'.<sup>27</sup> Nakazibwe offers a detailed examination of how bark cloth became a potent material for British missionaries, who believed that it supported 'primitive' Kiganda practices and beliefs around deities and divination. Given its use in embellishing shrines, preserving ritual objects, and providing a backdrop for the veneration of deities, 'the missionaries, hence, took every opportunity to discourage the usage of bark-cloth', which was 'mystified as a "satanic" fabric'.<sup>28</sup> The royal status of bark cloth was, however, reignited with the coronation of Kabaka Muwenda Mutebi II in 1993.<sup>29</sup> This study emphasizes the changing social, political, and economic roles that certain objects or materials have played in the production of power over a *longue durée*.

With these exceptions, eastern African imperial histories with a material culture focus remain a rarity. The bias towards historical documents reflects not only the preponderant tendency of British imperial history-writing, but also the considerable outpouring of historical, political, religious, and polemical texts by Buganda's own newly-literate and often Protestant elite from the late nineteenth century which has provided an incredibly rich body of material for historians to work with.<sup>30</sup> This field of analysis includes reassessments of king lists by Christopher Wrigley, translations of political documents by D.A. Low, analyses of religious writings by J.A. Rowe, and, more recently, studies of polemical texts by Jonathan Earle.<sup>31</sup> Rowe argued that Ugandan Protestant leaders understood the ability to read and write as the spiritual key to the Christian religion, but also suggested that it provided political and social

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 141–142.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>30</sup> Jonathon L. Earle, *Colonial Buganda and the End of Empire: Political Thought and Historical Imagination in Africa* (Cambridge, 2017).

<sup>31</sup> D.A. Low, *The Mind of Buganda: Documents of the Modern History of an African Kingdom* (London, 1971); Christopher Wrigley, *Kingship and State: The Buganda Dynasty* (Cambridge, 1996); J.A. Rowe, 'Myth, Memoir and Moral Admonition: Luganda Historical Writing, 1893–1969', *Uganda Journal*, 33 (1969), pp. 17–40; Earle, *Colonial Buganda*.

advancement.<sup>32</sup> Earle, also notes that ‘social historians of Africa tend to emphasize the public, political utility of text—rendering reading and literacy social processes of personal self-positioning’.<sup>33</sup> Karin Barber similarly suggests that reading and writing provided novel opportunities for self-representation and personhood, ‘new ways of being social, and new ways of relating to the world of officialdom’.<sup>34</sup> Derek Peterson arrives at similar conclusions through his examination of the political underpinnings of the reading activities of twentieth-century Kikuyu intellectuals.<sup>35</sup>

Many of the individuals studied in this dissertation (both British and African) produced ethnographical, historical, and travel texts that have had an enduring legacy as windows on both the colonial and pre-colonial pasts and are still key points of departure and debate for countless researchers today. However, historians have not yet considered the dual nature of their ethnographic activities which included the collection and analysis of objects as much as the production of texts. This thesis suggests that material culture also played a vital role in efforts at elite ‘self-positioning’. Rich material legacies of that past still survive and provide important supplements and counterpoints to these textual traces of imperial change, but much more research is required to understand their comparative significance fully.

In the wider imperial historiography, objects have come to occupy increasingly significant positions beyond studies of economic exploitation and mass consumption. As Claire Wintle notes, ‘the tangible “object” has been conceived of by some as fundamental to postcolonial critique, increasingly occupying a central space in the emerging literature on colonial identities, imperial networks, and cross-cultural

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<sup>32</sup> Rowe, ‘Myth, Memoir and Moral Admonition’, p. 19.

<sup>33</sup> Jonathan L. Earle, ‘Political Theologies in Late Colonial Buganda’ (PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2012), p. 55.

<sup>34</sup> Karin Barber, ‘Introduction: Hidden Innovators in Africa’, in Karin Barber (ed.), in *Africa’s Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self* (Bloomington, IN, 2006), p. 7.

<sup>35</sup> Derek R. Peterson, *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the Work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya* (Portsmouth, NH, 2004).

exchange'.<sup>36</sup> Within the so-called 'new' imperial histories, attention to the cultural realm has revealed the existence of multiple, relational and at times contradictory identities, projects, practices, and forms of resistance in the operation of the British Empire.<sup>37</sup> Scholars such as Wintle have added to this cultural history project by choosing not to limit their research to textual analysis, and demonstrating that imperialism was also partly a series of material practices (including collecting).

An example of this approach to 'new' imperial history in eastern Africa is provided by Sarah Longair, who, as part of her wider work on colonial museums in Zanzibar and the Indian Ocean, has examined the entanglements between empire and objects from the Swahili coast.<sup>38</sup> Longair demonstrates the changing roles of objects in shaping a range of diplomatic and political processes and interactions in this area during the era of colonisation. She describes this as 'the colonial moment' of these objects' lives, the 'period when an object's trajectory is influenced by the forces of imperialism or how an object itself might determine the actions of figures in colonial settings'.<sup>39</sup> In doing so, Longair, like Wintle and others, has not just re-read the colonial archive, but also discovered and read an entirely different archive. Doing so, they argue, offers essential insights into non-verbal forms of encounter and communication, and thus actors that are not as prominent in, or are indeed absent from, colonial texts.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Wintle, *Colonial Collecting*, p. 2; P. van Dommelen, 'Colonial Matters: Material Culture and Postcolonial Theory in Colonial Situations', in Chris Tilley, Webb Keane, Susanne Küchler, Mike Rowlands, and Patricia Spyer (eds.), *Handbook of Material Culture* (London, 2005), p. 113.

<sup>37</sup> For Darwin's analysis of, and source-based approach to eastern Africa, see John Darwin, *The Empire Project* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 127–30. For a critique of Darwin's focus on geopolitics, and an overview of the alternate broad scope of the 'new' imperial histories, see Bill Schwarz, 'Unsentimental Education: John Darwin's Empire', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 43:1 (2015), pp. 125–144. For an important and early example of the 'new' imperial histories approach to eastern Africa, see Dane Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890–1939* (Durham, NC, 1987) which uses a broad range of archival sources.

<sup>38</sup> Sarah Longair, 'The "Colonial Moment" in the Lives of Objects from the Swahili Coast' in Prita Meier and Allyson Purpura (eds.), *Worlds on the Horizon: Swahili Arts across the Indian Ocean* (Champaign, IL, 2018), pp. 130–45.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>40</sup> Leonie Hannan and Sarah Longair, *History through Material Culture* (Manchester, 2017), p. 31.

In his most recent overview of imperial historiography, Dane Kennedy predicts that the future state of the field seems to lie in strategies that ‘integrate the material, cultural, and epistemological dimensions of imperialism into a post-postcolonial synthesis’.<sup>41</sup> This thesis takes a position at the intersection of these discussions and new directions.

## **Histories of Museums**

This dissertation also engages with the rich field of museum histories. One of its key focal points revolves around the idea of the museum as an agent of imperial power. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, much of the work on museum histories embedded Foucauldian approaches into their analytical frameworks. The idea of the museum as a site of discipline and power, particularly during the period of imperialism, has been a key point of interest for authors such as Tony Bennett.<sup>42</sup> More recently, Fiona Cameron, Nelia Dias, Ben Dibley, Rodney Harrison, Ira Jacknis and Conal McCarthy have refined and applied these ideas to a variety of different geographical locations and institutions.<sup>43</sup> Yet while museums were undoubtedly entangled in the history of imperial expansion, other historians such as John Mackenzie, Kate Hill, Sarah Longair, and John McAleer suggest that this line of thought ascribes too much power to the museum. They question how pervasive museums’ power actually was, by deconstructing funding restrictions and other difficulties in their day-to-day

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<sup>41</sup> Dane Kennedy, *The Imperial History Wars: Debating the British Empire* (London, 2018), p. 55.

<sup>42</sup> Tim J. Barringer and Tom Flynn (eds.), *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum* (London, 1998); Tony Bennett, ‘Anthropology, Collecting and Colonial Governmentalities’, *History and Anthropology*, 25:2 (2014), pp. 137–149; Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, ‘The Museum in the Disciplinary Society’, in Susan M. Pearce (ed.), *Museum Studies in Material Culture* (Leicester, 1989), pp. 61–72.

<sup>43</sup> Tony Bennett, Fiona Cameron Nelia Dias, Ben Dibley, Rodney Harrison, Ira Jacknis, and Conal McCarthy (eds.), *Collecting, Ordering, Governing: Anthropology, Museums, and Liberal Government* (Durham, NC, 2017).

functioning.<sup>44</sup> On museum collections from Africa, Annie Coombes argues that museums did not promote a single image or message. Their attempts at doing so were often contradictory and changed according to the wider political and social events of any given time, thus further problematizing Foucauldian and postcolonial interpretations of colonial-era museums.<sup>45</sup> The two case studies examined in chapter four of this dissertation accord with these more recent lines of thought, suggesting that for all their attempts at cultural and political order, the realities of maintaining both a national and a colonial museum (financially and bureaucratically) made the imposition of disciplinary power by European imperial elites difficult.

This study also adds to our knowledge of colonial museums, particularly those in eastern Africa. As Sarah Longair has noted, ‘while there are several studies of colonial museums elsewhere in Africa, in particular South Africa, detailed histories of museums in British East Africa are scarce’.<sup>46</sup> Responding to this dearth of knowledge, it offers the first comprehensive study of the foundation of Uganda Museum, arguing that its foundation offered a key testing ground for other imperial power structures, schemes, and identities, as well as an informal site for political debate between members of the colonial government itself, and also with local elites. Previously unexplored archives reveal a rich and complex history surrounding its foundation, contributing to our understanding of the role of Ugandan actors in the planning of this institution.

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<sup>44</sup> John MacKenzie, *Museums and Empire: Natural History, Human Cultures and Colonial Identities* (Manchester, 2009); Kate Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums, 1850–1914* (Aldershot, 2005), p. 6; John McAleer and Sarah Longair (eds.), *Curating Empire: Museums and the British Imperial Experience* (Manchester, 2012).

<sup>45</sup> Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> Sarah Longair, ‘A Gracious Temple of Learning’: The Museum and Colonial Culture in Zanzibar, 1900–1945’, (PhD dissertation, Birkbeck University, 2012), p. 25. See also Claude Arduin and E. N. Arinze (eds.), *Museums and History in West Africa* (Oxford, 2000); Mark Crinson, ‘Nation-Building, Collecting and the Politics of Display: The National Museum, Ghana’, *Journal of the History of Collections*, 13:4 (2002), pp. 231–50; McAleer and Longair, *Curating Empire*.

Finally, although efforts encouraging museums to reveal more details about their imperial pasts have a long post-colonial history, these calls have accelerated in the past five years from multiple areas of society including academia, the British public sphere, diaspora groups, and curators. This dissertation offers a small contribution to this movement by providing insights into a region that scholars have previously overlooked, but one that has a complex history of colonial collecting and requires much deeper interrogation.

### **Sources and Methodology**

To understand the significance of collecting in Uganda and Kenya, this thesis adopts a multi-layered source approach that utilizes objects, texts and visual materials to counter (as far as is possible) the fragmented nature of collecting histories. It uses interrelated components of collecting as insertion points: the *objects* themselves, which were physical symbols of (and, following Bruno Latour, participants in) imperial encounters and relationships; the *people* who collected, used, gifted and imbued these objects with meaning; and the *institutions* that re-appropriated the objects and presented them to the British public.<sup>47</sup>

The collections themselves have formed the starting point for investigating each chapter. These are housed across multiple museum repositories in various geographical locations. The focus here is largely on national collections in the British Museum and National Museums Scotland, and university collections at the Pitt-Rivers Museum (University of Oxford), and the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (University of Cambridge). Additionally, the thesis also examines the history and collections of

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<sup>47</sup> Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-network-theory* (Oxford, 2005). I follow up on Latour's concept of objects as active agents in social networks later on in this introduction.



National Museums of Kenya and Uganda Museum. Assessing this spectrum of repositories creates a broad geographical reach that extends beyond the British metropole and allows for a comparative approach. However, this list is not exhaustive, and there are important collections still to be analyzed in smaller regional museums and private collections.

Another important part of this dissertation's methodology has been the physical viewing and handling of objects. This examination process has revealed important information about how an object might have been produced, used, circulated or reconfigured through its weight, size, colouring, markings, breakages, and materials. Such inspections reveal information about local materials and trade items, but also cultural aesthetics, values, and skill.<sup>48</sup> Additional items such as former exhibition labels and packaging have provided different clues about object biographies and whether (and if so, how) they were displayed in the museum context.

The museum buildings themselves have also served as key sites of information. The external architecture of the British Museum, for example, with its Greek-revival columns and pediment depicting 'The Rise of Civilisation', provides an insight into its involvement in social evolutionary narratives about race and culture and its self-image as a temple of learning and order.<sup>49</sup> In Uganda (see chapter 4), the national museum has moved from its first site, though that building, also in the Greek revival style, still stands on Kampala Hill. Despite its exterior grandeur, old plans of the original museum illustrate the limited space available to display the objects, and later archives illuminate structural issues that continually disrupted displays.

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<sup>48</sup> Tilley et al. (eds), *Handbook of Material Culture*, p. 5. For a discussion of eastern African aesthetics of everyday objects see Jeremy Coote, 'Art: Eastern Africa' in John Middleton (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Africa South of the Sahara, Vol. 1* (New York, NY, 1997), pp. 120–132. Coote suggests that doing so can illuminate how other people once saw the world. His study of pastoral groups in eastern Africa, for example, demonstrates how the aesthetics of everyday objects reveal the immense value attributed to cattle through their use of cattle colours.

<sup>49</sup> Marjorie L. Caygill and Christopher Date, *Building the British Museum* (London, 1999), p. 42. Carla Yanni, *Nature's Museums: Victorian Science and the Architecture of Display* (Baltimore, MD, 1999).

Museum archives harbour other important sources, including gallery guides, inventories, letters between keepers and donors, acquisition records, trustee reports, curatorial notebooks, exhibition brochures, display labels and photographs. These sources enable us to understand what objects museums accepted and rejected, and what was chosen for display during different time periods. At the British Museum, despite being one of the world's largest repositories for African objects, late nineteenth-century records offer little evidence of strategic collecting. These records also illuminate objects that eluded neat categorizations, though generally in these early years objects that might be described as trophies and curios were evidently popular for display purposes. As social anthropology gained momentum, however, records reveal that the museum actively sought objects from different 'tribes', and particularly from donors who had spent significant time 'in the field'. At the Uganda Museum, meanwhile, records reveal that the colonial state officials administering the early Museum set out specifically to acquire charms and fetishes, partly as a means of removing them from public use, and partly to display them as curios for public audiences. As discussed in chapter four, by the 1920s when the colonial economy was more fully developed, the primary function of the objects lay with practical education and thus the museum sought examples of agricultural manufacture and natural history items.

It is also important to note that despite the sheer volume of records available, museum archives are often fragmented and partial.<sup>50</sup> Not only are museum records for eastern African objects patchy regarding the colonial contexts of their collection, it is often impossible to follow the full trajectory of an object once it entered the museum. This methodological problem limits what can be said analytically about the changing

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<sup>50</sup> I am thankful for the insights of Jack Maurice Obonyo, Curator of Abasuba Community Peace Museum (ACPM) who visited the British Museum in 2014 and provided information about many of the Kenyan and Ugandan objects in its collections. In 2006, the British Museum also invited Kiprop Lagat to survey its collections. His insights, published in Kiprop Lagat and Julie Hudson (eds.), *Hazina: Traditions, Trade and Transitions in Eastern Africa* (Nairobi, 2006) have also been immensely valuable for this study.

values and uses attached to objects, and how they affected human thought and behaviour. Thus, this thesis demonstrates an awareness that the analytical potential of objects as historical sources cannot always be fully realized.

The next layer of analysis relates to the collectors themselves. Private papers, memoirs, journal contributions, newspaper cuttings, correspondence, travel literature, and diaries are all critical sources of information. This literature helps to explain how objects were acquired and from whom. They also indicate the value that collectors ascribed to certain objects. These sources offer essential insights into the power relations involved in the acquisition of objects (from the perspective of the collector). As chapter one illustrates, sometimes these offer insights into instances of violence; at other times, the collector offers an insight into their own vulnerability when refused an object.

Photographic evidence also captures images of collected objects in the wider colonial visual economy of Ugandan and Kenyan culture. From the mid-nineteenth century, photography provided an important mode for circulating images, information, and discourse about colonized peoples. Elizabeth Edwards' persuasive argument that photographs are part of the 'ecosystem' of museums has encouraged me to seek out the role of photographs in the museum's treatments of objects from Uganda and Kenya.<sup>51</sup> In doing so, I have found that in the British Museum some images were photographed for its guidebooks. These important images not only offered visual access to these objects for a wider audience but represented a very specific way of presenting the material culture of Uganda and Kenya as scientific specimens. It has been interesting to compare these images with others from popular culture, particularly in the case of the Maasai (see chapter two) order to better understand the images that the wider public

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<sup>51</sup> Edwards and Morton, *Photographs, Museums, Collections*, p. 16.

received about eastern African material culture, and how this was made and remade over time.

Photographs commissioned by museums simply pictured the objects themselves, isolated in the photographic frame against a plain background to emphasize their technological structure. The colonial official Harry Johnston (1858–1927) and the missionary John Roscoe (1861–1932) used the photographs of their objects (taken by the museums they donated them to) in their own publications. Edwards has also alerted us to how ‘scientific’ photographs of non-European objects at this time were ‘closely related to those of race, gender and the anthropologized body’ and when positioned on the body were an often ‘an extension of the concept of “type”, expressing distinguishable, identifiable characteristics and thus the reality of the subject’s otherness, primitiveness, or anthropological worth, establishing the subject’s position in relation to the viewers and reaffirming the natural order in the latter’s eyes’.<sup>52</sup>

As field observation became increasingly popular in the early twentieth century, the photographic archive of Uganda and Kenya also began to include people making and using objects often with a background of empty wilderness, a key trope of the ‘imaginative geography of empire’ as photographic historian James Ryan has described it.<sup>53</sup> Some photographs from Uganda and Kenya show objects on human bodies. In the 1860s, anthropometric photography became a popular ‘scientific’ tool for emphasizing racial differentiation through measurements and close-up profile images of different human ‘types’.<sup>54</sup> In the photographic collections of Johnston, for example, we find images of individuals categorized as a ‘typical native type’, which may have been useful for both anthropological and administrative purposes, but were, of course,

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<sup>52</sup> Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford, 2001), p. 63; and Elizabeth Edwards, ‘Photographic “types”: The pursuit of method’ in *Visual Anthropology* 3: 2–3 (1990), p. 242.

<sup>53</sup> James Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire* (Chicago, 1997), p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> Edwards and Morton, *Photographs, Museums, Collections*, p.116.

generalizing tropes. Objects were a key if often forgotten component of these anthropometric images. Not only did the human sitters within their frame become ‘passive objects of study’, but objects, which were also often present in these profiles, became scientific specimens and markers of cultural and racial differentiation. It is no surprise, therefore, that Pitt-Rivers was a member of the Anthropometric Committee alongside Francis Galton, illustrating perceived links between race, material culture and character.<sup>55</sup>

Another classic photographic style exhibited by officials and missionaries in the region was the so-called ‘trophy’ formation in which groups of objects were assembled in carefully curated positions to project the power of the owner over indigenous culture. However, we find that even local collectors such as the *Katikkiro* (Prime Minister) of Buganda, Apolo Kaggwa (1864–1927) who is examined in chapter three, were conscious of the power of the camera. During his visit to London, Kaggwa sat for a *carte de visite* photograph which drew admiration from the British press partly because of his dress and accessories.<sup>56</sup> This image-bank thus lends meaning and context to the object collections studied. It also serves to refine the arguments of the dissertation by illustrating how different figures used photography to boost the value of their collections, to alter them, to circulate them, and for Kaggwa, to create his own image of himself.

The thesis has also exploited private papers at the Royal Commonwealth Society Library (University of Cambridge), the Bodleian Library (University of Oxford), the British Library and the Church Missionary Society Archives (University of Birmingham). These papers sometimes include references to objects sent to curators or family members, and occasionally refer to collecting. Records at institutions

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>56</sup> 23 June 1902, *Dundee Evening Post*, p.2, The British Newspaper Archive.

including the Royal Anthropological Institute, the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew provide valuable information on the networks of metropolitan institutions involved in collecting in Uganda. These institutions often helped to fund collecting expeditions. The Uganda Society Library provided an important mine of information about material and collecting networks within Uganda's colonial society. Other textual sources utilized by this thesis include official colonial records held in Britain, Uganda and Kenya. Government papers illuminate the State's interest (or more often lack of interest) in anthropological collecting and museums. By combining this wide variety of sources, it has been possible to piece together the biographies of objects and to gain insights into multiple aspects of the collecting process, though these are not always complete views.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Certain themes running throughout the chapters of this thesis have gained greater depth of meaning when understood in relation to particular conceptual theories around the study of material culture. These theoretical frameworks are woven into each individual chapter in relation to specific case studies, but here I offer a summary of the key aspects of the theories that have influenced this dissertation. Anthropology and its articulation with imperialism looms large in this context.

Late Victorian anthropologists actively used objects collected from colonized territories to trace global historical trajectories and understand the past and present lives of societies under imperial rule.<sup>57</sup> By the 1920s, however, the emergence of functionalist anthropology and its emphasis on the observation of human social

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<sup>57</sup> George W. Stocking, Jr, *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture* (Madison, WI, 1985).

relations ‘in the field’ led newly professionalized anthropologists to focus more squarely on social relations rather than objects. In Bronislaw Malinowski’s and Marcel Mauss’ field observations of gift-giving and exchange in the Pacific, for example, social bonds of obligation and power, and the human relationships formed around the ‘spirit’ of such exchanges, interested them more than the objects being exchanged. Objects were now treated as by-products.<sup>58</sup> Mauss and Malinowski argued that the forms of exchange found in the Pacific were no less sophisticated than those of European capitalist societies, which represented a wider shift within anthropology away from the colonial context in which it had emerged as a discipline, and the negative connotations of measuring material cultures according to evolutionary systems. As a direct consequence, ethnographic museums experienced something of an identity crisis throughout the twentieth century.<sup>59</sup> Historical enquiries into their collections were subsequently confined largely to museums themselves, and even then, such enquiries tended to overlook those from eastern Africa.<sup>60</sup>

Object-centred study re-emerged in the late 1970s and 1980s as various disciplines, including history, shifted their gaze to the consumption of material culture. Interactions between humans and objects, and indeed between objects themselves, were reformulated as sites worthy of study.<sup>61</sup> Scholars have debated the nature of these relationships, with rich and lively debate articulating both the ways in which humans act upon objects by injecting them with social and cultural meaning, and how objects

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<sup>58</sup> Malinowski did collect objects. In fact, he acquired 584 objects for the British Museum, mostly from the Trobriand Islands. However, Gavin Lucas argues that he, like other professional anthropologists at the time, paid them little academic interest. Gavin Lucas, ‘Fieldwork and Collecting’ in Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies* (Oxford, 2010), p. 229. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (London, 2002); and Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (London, 1922).

<sup>59</sup> Clare Harris and Michael O’Hanlon, ‘The Future of the Ethnographic Museum’, *Anthropology Today*, 29:1 (2013), p. 9.

<sup>60</sup> The collections acquired from the British plunder of Benin in 1897 have been a major preoccupation of museum scholarship on Africa. See for example William Fagg, *Nigerian Images* (London, 1973); and Paula Girshick Ben-Amos, *The Art of Benin* (London, 1995). More recent work on collecting in West Africa can be viewed in the forthcoming work: Zachary Kingdon, *Ethnographic Collecting*.

<sup>61</sup> Hicks and Beaudry, *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, pp. 1–2.

act upon human lives and relations.<sup>62</sup> Much of this discussion is rooted in the earlier work of anthropologists Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood. Building on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the relationship between taste and environment, Douglas and Isherwood shifted historians' attention towards everyday consumption in the 'modern' world, noting the changing meanings that humans attach to objects as they are circulated, consumed, and recontextualized.<sup>63</sup>

That objects are invested with new meanings as they weave in and out of different economic and social contexts was a key argument developed further in the influential volume edited by Arjun Appadurai in 1986, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Social Perspective*.<sup>64</sup> Igor Kopytoff's essay in this volume posited a 'cultural biography of things' as a framework for analysis through which to chart these changes, or rather their 'classifications and reclassifications into culturally constituted categories'.<sup>65</sup> Historians of colonial collecting have found this to be a valuable approach. For example, in her rich biography of objects from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (now resident in Royal Pavilion and Museum, Brighton and Hove), Claire Wintle not only reveals the 'efficacy, importance and complexity of objects' by employing this methodology, but also unveils a host of otherwise unheard voices.<sup>66</sup>

This dissertation also finds elements of Kopytoff's concept of 'Object Biography' a helpful framework for thinking about the different ways in which certain objects were used and valued as they moved in and out of commoditization.<sup>67</sup> Objects from Uganda and Kenya found their way to museum collections via very different

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<sup>62</sup> Hannan and Longair, 'Approaches to the Material World' in Hannan and Longair, *History through Material Culture*, pp. 15–42.

<sup>63</sup> Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption* (New York, 1979).

<sup>64</sup> Arjun Appadurai, 'Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value', in Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 5.

<sup>65</sup> Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process', in Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, p. 68.

<sup>66</sup> Wintle, *Colonial Collecting*, p. 7.

<sup>67</sup> Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things'.



routes. These sat on a spectrum that ranged from violent extraction, or loot at one end to an exchange economy that included gift exchange at the other. Why were some items used in diplomacy while others were considered objects of loot or utility? What was their role before they arrived at the museum and why did this change? Objects from Uganda and Kenya harboured different meanings and elicited different reactions for the parties on either side of their exchange.

At the same time, there are limitations to working within the framework of 'object biography' and of writing object biographies and fully understanding regimes of value in the sense that Kopytoff meant, when working with colonial collections. Kopytoff was working with a specific set of African objects but not colonial ones, which, because they were often dispersed among institutions, tend to have a much more fragmentary nature and contain lapses in their life cycle. Wintle's application of 'object biography' involved a small subset of objects that had rich documentation. In Uganda and Kenya, the fractured archival thread sometimes makes it difficult to apply this methodology. Nevertheless, aspects of its application are useful in certain instances, as will be explained in the chapter outline.

Another issue with the 'object biography' approach is that it does not take account of the materiality of things. Building on Douglas and Isherwood and reacting to the parallel development of structuralist studies of language, Daniel Miller argued that objects, like language, had communicative powers in representing the self and constructing social relations in the 'modern' capitalist world. Thus, he sought to break down the long-held distinction between commodities as features of the 'modern' world, and gifts as features of 'primitive' society.<sup>68</sup> Recent re-examinations of the concept of

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<sup>68</sup> Daniel Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 85–98 and pp. 154–55. Following this, consumption became a major preoccupation among historians. James G. Carrier, for example, has explored the commodification of gifts since the eighteenth century, again complicating the assumed dichotomy between gifts and commodities. James G. Carrier, *Gifts and Commodities: Exchange and Western Capitalism since 1700* (London, 1995).

the gift provide an important case-in-point. Mauss overlooked the object-ness of gifts, choosing instead to focus on gifting processes as interpersonal acts. Gifts, he argued, were primarily significant because they possessed the ability to create bonds of obligation, and thus affect relations of power.<sup>69</sup> In thinking about the dynamics of imperial encounters, Nicholas Thomas, meanwhile, argues that we should also consider the materiality of things and their role in directing human behaviour.<sup>70</sup> In colonial Kenya and Uganda, the type, form, and materials of the gifts were also central to the dynamics and outcomes of such exchange.

Breaking down the subject-object divide, other scholars such as Pierre Bourdieu, Bruno Latour, and Alfred Gell went further, suggesting that objects themselves are active agents, working constantly with humans (and other objects) to shape human thoughts, actions, and relations, and are indeed required for ‘the social’ to emerge and to be maintained. Bourdieu’s focus was everyday objects and how they interact through spatial arrangements in domestic settings.<sup>71</sup> Latour’s early work concerned the agency of objects in scientific knowledge production.<sup>72</sup> Historians have been influenced increasingly by the idea of networks between humans and non-humans, and that agency is shared between humans and the material world they inhabit. Just as humans apply meaning and value to objects, objects influence human life.<sup>73</sup> Meanwhile, Gell was particularly interested in the agency of artefacts and art, illuminating how the ‘art-ness’ and individual style of an object (e.g. patterns, materials, and pigments) affect behaviour.<sup>74</sup> Gell referred to the ‘enchanted’ technologies of

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<sup>69</sup> Mauss, *The Gift*, p. 16.

<sup>70</sup> Thomas’s *Entangled Objects* is an important example that highlights the importance of the historical specificity of ‘colonial gifts’, p. 16.

<sup>71</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, 1977).

<sup>72</sup> Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts* (London, 1979).

<sup>73</sup> Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social*.

<sup>74</sup> Alfred Gell, ‘The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology’ in Jeremy Coote and Anthony Shelton (eds.), *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 40–65.

objects when discussing how they engage the senses.<sup>75</sup> The relationship between materiality and emotions has since grown into a rich field of study that considers how objects produce and represent feeling, particularly through sensory encounter. This approach has been picked up most clearly in studies of religious practice and the supernatural agency of objects, mainly in the Western world.<sup>76</sup> It can also be relevant to studies of politics, warfare, and ideology, but historians have generally neglected these areas. Together, these approaches have added essential dimensions to the debates established in the era of Marcel Mauss. This rich vein of literature has provided an important theoretical framework for historians seeking to take a material perspective in their work.<sup>77</sup> This thesis will also draw upon its insights to demonstrate the centrality of the material world to colonial activities and relations in Uganda and Kenya.

It also draws on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of 'distinction' as a framework for understanding how colonial officials, missionaries, and arguably some Ugandan and Kenyan elites used the material cultures of Uganda and Kenya to accumulate and deploy 'distinction'.<sup>78</sup> Using Bourdieu's approach, several historians such as Maya Jasanoff have employed 'distinction' theory productively to examine colonial collecting as a form of gentlemanly self-fashioning.<sup>79</sup> In linking the concept of self-fashioning to the larger framework of imperialism that allowed collecting to occur in the first place, Jasanoff, in her exploration of collecting in South Asia, explains that imperial collectors 'neither can nor should be divorced from the larger mechanisms of imperial expansion – war, trade, power... but their stories supplement the macro-

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<sup>75</sup> Gell, 'The Technology of Enchantment' p. 44.

<sup>76</sup> John Kieschnick, 'Material Culture' in John Corrigan (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Emotion* (Oxford, 2008), p. 230.

<sup>77</sup> Karen Harvey (ed.), *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources* (London, 2009); and Hannan and Longair, *History through Material Culture*.

<sup>78</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London, 1984).

<sup>79</sup> See also Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980). More recently, historians have disrupted the rigid dichotomy between the amateur and professional in scientific circles of the long nineteenth century. See for example, Amara Thornton, *Archaeologists in Print: Publishing for the People* (London, 2018).

historical narrative'.<sup>80</sup> This argument is also relevant to collectors in Uganda and Kenya. Although the collectors are divided into 'groups', this is partly to understand how collecting affected the aims of their wider institution in empire and to reveal disruptions within them.

According to Bourdieu, the decisions and actions that people deploy are the result of the unique combination of the 'habitus' and 'field' in which they work.<sup>81</sup> The 'habitus' itself constitutes the lived experiences of a person (which are themselves linked to their social and economic position) and the particular forms of knowledge, social norms, and practices that they receive through their education.<sup>82</sup> The 'habitus' of these actors simultaneously supports tacit knowledge, understanding, and access to certain 'fields' or 'social universes' which themselves reinforce particular outlooks and social practices through their repetition. People who inhabit similar 'fields' develop similar outlooks and therefore also develop similar practical approaches to the world. Through the 'habitus' and 'field', individuals also acquire 'cultural capital' though they have to adapt to new situations in order to continue building it. Bourdieu distinguishes between three states of 'cultural capital': an embodied state, an objectified state, and an institutionalized state. The first constitutes knowledge in the form of connoisseurship or artistic taste. The second includes material objects such as paintings, collectables, or in this case, ethnographic objects. The third involves some sort of institutional association, such as a university or a museum.<sup>83</sup> 'Cultural capital' can in turn be drawn upon and converted to gain new types of power, including political and economic power 'which have the appearances of being natural dispositions'.<sup>84</sup> Bourdieu uses these

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<sup>80</sup> Maya Jasanoff, 'Collectors of Empire: Objects, Conquests and Imperial Self-fashioning', *Past and Present*, 184:1 (2004), p. 111.

<sup>81</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. xxi.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxiv.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

concepts to describe how social hierarchies, and dominant political, social and economic structures are maintained.

Bourdieu based his explanations on observations of the Kabyle community in rural Algeria, but colonial historians have also demonstrated how Bourdieu's concepts of 'distinction' can be helpful in explaining the decisions of European policy-makers in the colonial period. Peter Jackson, for example, has used Bourdieu's concepts of 'habitus' and the 'field' as a conceptual framework to examine the actions of officials working at the French Foreign Ministry in the interwar period.<sup>85</sup> This thesis also draws upon these concepts in order to elucidate the actions of colonial officials in Uganda and Kenya, adding a material culture perspective to the analysis.

We should also consider that these collectors sat within a broader spectrum of distinction among other colonial regions. As Bourdieu notes, there exists a 'socially recognized hierarchy of the arts, and within each of them, genres, schools, or periods, corresponds a social hierarchy of the consumers'.<sup>86</sup> One interesting example that can be applied here is that of Quex House in Birchington. Quex was the home of the prolific collector, Major Percy Powell-Cotton (1866–1940). Cotton travelled all over the world collecting material culture, but it is notable that his African objects were housed in an adjoining Museum whereas items from Asia and the Middle East were consumed and used specifically in the decoration of the home.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Peter Jackson, 'Pierre Bourdieu, the "Cultural Turn" and International History', *Review of International Studies*, 34:1 (January 2008), p. 168.

<sup>86</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, Xxv.

<sup>87</sup> Alison Bennett, 'Quex Park', *The East India Company at Home 1757–1857*  
<http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/eicah/files/2014/08/Quex-House-PDF-Final-20.08.14.pdf> accessed 07.02.17

## **Geographical scope**

The geographical focus of this thesis is fluid, in part because of the nature of colonial and pre-colonial boundaries. This thesis could not attempt to survey all the Kenyan and Ugandan objects that reside in museum collections, nor plot their exact geographical origins. The mobility of objects also often makes it difficult to discern objects' points of origin fully. Therefore, this thesis aims to shine a spotlight on a small number of collections and objects, most of which have been chosen because of the rich documentation that accompanies them. Its collections are thus drawn from the following groups: the Baganda, the Banyoro, the Acholi, the Luo, the Luyia, the Kamba, the Kikuyu, the Maasai, and the Nandi. In past studies, Baganda, Maasai, Kikuyu, and Luo have received an overwhelming amount of attention. By including groups like the Baganda, this thesis acknowledges that most of its analysis lies in elite politics and the centre of power. However, by including more marginalized groups such as the Acholi and the Kamba, I hope to go some way towards remedying this bias. The coast of Kenya, which has a long and complex history of external interactions, is not generally included, because of the great amount of attention that Swahili material culture has already received in other studies.<sup>88</sup> However, many collected objects and their constituent materials travelled to and from the coast.

## **Themes**

This approach also speaks to wider discussions about imperial careers and gender. Individual agency and networks of collaboration are common themes running through

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<sup>88</sup> See for example Prita Meier, 'Objects on the Edge: Swahili Coast Logics of Display', *African Arts* 42:4 (Winter 2009), pp. 8–23; Longair, 'Recovering and Reframing', pp.155–57; Longair, *Cracks in the Dome*.

the thesis. Many of the collectors examined were ambitious individuals whose personal and professional interests lay beyond their immediate occupation and the agendas associated with their occupational group. Several colonial officials, for example, considered themselves to be scientists, ethnologists, linguists, naturalists, photographers, and hunters just as much as administrators, and many privately deplored the ignorance of the imperial state (or metropole) in such matters. Likewise, missionaries often utilised the research opportunities presented by empire to gain influence and even build subsequent careers in science and anthropology. These ambitions jostled with their dedication to the evangelical project. These histories accordingly complement the approach of David Lambert and Alan Lester, who frame the mobility of ‘imperial careers’ predominantly in geographical terms.<sup>89</sup> Building on this methodology, Chris Jeppesen notes that ‘geographic mobility facilitated the domination of a variety of attractive career opportunities across imperial spaces’.<sup>90</sup> Mobility was an important factor in the decision to join the Colonial Administrative Service, but was also marked by a ‘contradictory mix of structure and uncertainty’.<sup>91</sup> Jeppesen’s focus is on the different career choices offered within the Colonial Service itself. This thesis adds to this argument by illustrating that empire also provided potential opportunities for career change, or at least the opportunity to move between different spheres of interest.<sup>92</sup> Some attempts to cross occupational boundaries and penetrate the realms of anthropology, science, and connoisseurship were successful, and others were not.<sup>93</sup> Thus, although the study of collecting can add greater nuance to

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<sup>89</sup> David Lambert and Alan Lester (eds.), *Colonial Lives across the British Empire: Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2006).

<sup>90</sup> Christopher Jeppesen, ‘Making a Career in the British Empire, c.1900-1960’ (PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2013), p. 28.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>92</sup> Lambert and Lester, *Colonial Lives*, pp. 1–32.

<sup>93</sup> Claire Wintle has explored one notable success story: Richard Carnac Temple, Chief Commissioner of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. He successfully used collecting and domestic display to define his career as a colonial leader, as well as his reputation as an upper-class propertied man, and to penetrate and rise through the ranks of metropolitan anthropology. Claire Wintle, ‘Career Development: Domestic Display as Imperial, Anthropological, and Social Trophy’, *Victorian Studies*, 50:2 (January 2008), pp.

our understanding of the imperial projects of missionaries and the colonial service, it can also serve to disrupt these group narratives when studied at the individual level, while illuminating other common themes that stretch across different groups.

A further dominant theme running throughout the thesis revolves around the gender of collecting. The majority of collectors were male and many of them also actively acquired objects that represented masculine identities. By type, most objects collected by colonial officials were spears, bows, arrows, and shields, which, to them, represented martial masculine cultures of authority, though to their original owners they may have held different or multiple symbolic meanings. Heavily influenced by the social anthropologist James George Fraser (1854–1951), the missionary John Roscoe overwhelmingly sought objects that he considered to represent dynastic masculine authority, as did Kaggwa and different Ugandan kings. Meanwhile, Felkin, a medical missionary, was predisposed to collect objects relating to the female body and childbirth (something that he could have had a significant impact on compared to other health issues), as well as items from women within the Ganda court.

Although female collectors and objects associated with British, Ugandan, and Kenyan women are considerably fewer among museum collections, they are still present. These collectors and their objects provide greater insight into people and societal spheres that texts from the period do not always document. It was not uncommon for wives to accompany their husbands on official or missionary postings by the late nineteenth century, although they are typically absent from subsequent memoirs. Often, female collectors are listed in museum records alongside their husbands as a collecting team, as was the case with Rev. and Mrs Fisher (dates unknown).<sup>94</sup> Ruth Fisher also wrote books on the history of the Bunyoro, though these

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279–88.

<sup>94</sup> Rev., and Mrs A. B. Fisher Collection, Af1983,31.1–76, British Museum



works, like her collecting, are barely acknowledged in the secondary literature.<sup>95</sup> A small number of female collectors travelled alone. A friend of Stanley, and one of the first women to be appointed a fellow of the Geographical Society, Mary French Sheldon (1847–1936) narrated her experiences of travel and collecting in her 1892 publication ‘Customs Among the Natives of East Africa, from Teita to Kilimegalia, with Special Reference to Their Women and Children’ for the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, and *Sultan to Sultan: Adventures among the Masai and other tribes of East Africa* in 1892.<sup>96</sup> Tracey Jean Boisseau describes French Sheldon’s ‘gender-blending strategies’, describing her solo participation in a ‘masculine’ expedition, while also writing about women and domestic spaces.<sup>97</sup> Ugandan queens and princesses also had a role in the gifting cultures of the royal courts, and controlled access to certain ceremonial objects. The first female curators at Uganda Museum and Nairobi National Museum did not arrive until the 1960s, but Sarah Longair notes that Ailsa Nicol Smith (1908–1967), appointed curator of the Zanzibar Museum in 1936, provides an important example of the struggles faced by women seeking to penetrate the spheres of collecting, museums, and colonial careers in this period.<sup>98</sup>

## Chapter Outline

The first three chapters of this thesis are designed to demonstrate how, why, and by whom objects were collected. Each of these chapters is structured around a particular group (namely colonial officials, missionaries, and local leaders) to illustrate how these

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<sup>95</sup> Ruth B. Fisher, *Twilight Tales of the Black Baganda* (London, 1911).

<sup>96</sup> Mary French Sheldon, ‘Customs Among the Natives of East Africa, from Teita to Kilimegalia, with Special Reference to Their Women and Children’, *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 21 (1892), pp. 358-390; *Sultan to Sultan: Adventures among the Masai and Other Tribes of East Africa* (Boston: MA, 1892).

<sup>97</sup> Tracey Jean Boisseau, ‘Introduction’ in French Sheldon, *Sultan to Sultan*, p. 29.

<sup>98</sup> Sarah Longair, ‘The Experience of a “Lady Curator”: Negotiating Curatorial Challenges in the Zanzibar Museum’ in McAleer and Longair, *Curating Empire*, pp. 122–144.

different parties and their individual members deployed objects for different purposes. This is not an exhaustive account of their collecting activities nor of collecting as a wider practice, which of course involved countless other non-elite actors.<sup>99</sup> Instead, the examples selected for each chapter include specific objects and collections that in one way or another impacted the aims, ideals and projects of these respective communities and their work within the wider imperial framework. The final chapter moves our gaze from the field to the museum, and charts how the meaning, function, and legacy of these Ugandan and Kenyan objects changed in their new setting.

Chapter one explores the collecting activities associated with colonial officialdom, from the earliest explorers working on behalf of the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) to later officials working for the Colonial Administrative Service (CAS). The chapter examines the collections of some of some key ‘men on the spot’ including Sir Harry Johnston (1858–1927), Sir Frederick Jackson (1860–1929), Sir Charles Delme-Radcliffe (1864–1937), Charles William Hobley (1867–1947) and Sir Alfred Claud Hollis (1874–1961). These individuals all played essential roles in British state expansion across eastern Africa as treaty-makers, cartographers, military officials, administrators, and governors. They also acquired some of the largest collections of ethnographic material in this period from the Maasai, Luo, Kamba, Nandi, and Acholi, among other groups.

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<sup>99</sup> Local assistants, porters, and headmen were also crucial to the collecting process. This topic requires much more research, but future work could be based on the following works: Alice Stevenson, Emma Libonati and Alice Williams have demonstrated that Flinders Petrie’s local Egyptian workforce were key to shaping the assemblages of ancient Egyptian objects sent back to Britain. Alice Stevenson, Emma Libonati and Alice Williams, “‘A Selection of Minor Antiquities’: A Multi-Sited View on Collections from Excavations in Egypt”, *World Archaeology*, 48:2 (2016), p. 287. A small number of works have also explored the history of portage in East Africa, though none have specifically considered its role in collecting and colonial knowledge production. See R. J. Cummings, ‘Aspects of Human Portage with Special Reference to the Akamba of Kenya: Toward an Economic History, 1820–1920’ (PhD dissertation, University of California, 1975); Stephen Rockel, ‘Wage Labour and the Culture of Portage in Nineteenth-Century Tanzania: The Central Caravan Routes’, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 15:2 (1995), pp. 14–24; and Donald Simpson, *Dark Companions: The African Contribution to the European Exploration of East Africa* (London, 1975). Felix Driver has also demonstrated the collaborative nature of expeditions in mid nineteenth-century India: Felix Driver, ‘Intermediaries and the Archive of Exploration’ in Konishi et al. (eds), *Indigenous Intermediaries*, pp. 11–17.

Their collecting provides a lens through which to reconceptualize the material underpinnings of not only higher administrative forms of colonial governance (using objects in diplomacy and official classification), but also the material interactions, exchanges, performances and practices of their lived world ‘in the field’ through their collecting. Details of these experiences are often lost in the narratives of metropolitan high politics, diplomacy, economics, militarism, and more recently post-colonial concepts of governance, with which officials are traditionally associated. Recovering them allows us to gain a fuller picture of the makings of imperial officialdom.

For officials, early collecting created essential opportunities for diplomacy, while later stages of the collecting process afforded evidence with which to organize the ‘collected’ population into clearly-defined groups. Although they had different aims and outcomes, both the Maasai and Kamba collections examined in this chapter illustrate that between 1880 and 1920, authoritative male African identities were being collected, overturned, and re-cultivated by officials who used their material culture to fit them into a neat framework of tribal organization and utility. This chapter uses these collections to illuminate, unpick, and question those stereotypes.

However, the colonial state offered little in the way of sustained interest, support or guidance to its officials on the ground in Uganda and Kenya, unless their collecting in some way benefited its strategic aims at any given moment. For those individual officials left to collect on their own, methods and levels of success varied. Whereas some British collectors acquired objects through overtly violent means such as looting during military expeditions, others faced barriers created by secrecy and a lack of understanding of local cultural norms of sociability. At other times, objects served to facilitate relationships, as in the case of gift-exchange, but even then, the power relations that developed through such encounters were tempered by the gift and how it was received.

Chapter two examines the collecting activities of Protestant missionaries posted to Uganda in the period 1870–1920. It focuses on two of the most active missionary collectors in the region during the colonial period, Dr Robert William Felkin (1853–1926) and Rev. John Roscoe. It considers the relationship between these collections, their evangelical duties, and missionary rhetoric, but it also explores the ambitions and experiences of individual missionaries, which were often more complex than this. Empire offered missionaries opportunities to participate in new social and cultural networks, and the production of new forms of scientific knowledge. The multi-layered networks that missionaries built with local elites and scientific circles in Britain attest to the complex regimes of value that led to and were bound up in the collection of these items. Felkin and Roscoe built cultural capital through their accumulation and deployment of specific African objects, which allowed them to acquire academic recognition, and eventually new occupations within the metropolitan scientific sphere. Drawing on previous work, this chapter argues that a study of missionary collecting in Uganda complicates our understanding of the missionary as a ‘cultural imperialist’.<sup>100</sup> Relatively little work on missionary collecting has been conducted for the histories of eastern Africa, which this chapter seeks to remedy. It argues that to fully appreciate missionary life, we must understand that missionaries engaged multiple strategies and interests, which included the deployment of (and engagement with) a world of material ‘things’ to multiple ends.

Chapter three examines how different Ugandan and Kenyan elites participated in collecting and used the accumulation, giving, and exchange of objects as a method for negotiating the social and political boundaries of imperialism and shaping notions of the past. It explores the collecting and gifting activities of various actors including,

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<sup>100</sup> For a critical discussion of missionaries as ‘cultural imperialists’ see Andrew Porter, ‘“Cultural Imperialism” and Protestant Missionary Enterprise, 1780–1914’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 25:3 (1997), pp. 367–391.

but not limited to Apolo Kaggwa, ‘Mandara of Moshi’, Mbaguta (*Katikkiro* of Ankole), and Duhaga II (*Mukama*/King of Bunyoro). Analysis of the material significances of the objects given by Ugandan and Kenyan leaders provides important insights into the multiple meanings of these gifts, which may otherwise be difficult to identify or retrieve in written colonial sources. Gifting enabled local leaders to fashion a self-image through their own auto-ethnographies, and the gifts that they amassed from European imperialists enabled them to form ethnographic collections and categorizations of their own. Viewing gifts as both physical objects and interpersonal acts thus provides new perspectives on the affective interactions and strategic methods enacted by Europeans and Ugandans in colonial relations.

In the museum archive, evidence about the Europeans who transferred their objects from the colonies to European museums often overshadows evidence of indigenous collectors and donors. Apolo Kaggwa not only gave a collection of objects to Uganda Museum: he also travelled to Britain and gave his objects directly to various museums and individuals. Kaggwa’s collection therefore allows us to re-insert the history of African collecting by Africans into the history of European collecting of African material culture. It uses objects to reinterpret dominant texts and narratives of the colonial archive and the colonial museum. This chapter also speaks to the spatial contingencies of gift-giving, transnational networks of power, methods of self-representation, and the cultural creation of historical memory and identity in Uganda. Kaggwa’s historical and political writings have received substantial attention within Ugandan Studies, but his engagement in the material world of collecting and gifting has yet to be explored.<sup>101</sup> This chapter argues that this played a key but unacknowledged role in Kaggwa’s and other leaders’ broader political strategies, and that objects

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<sup>101</sup> Key examples include Wrigley, *Kingship and State*, and Rowe, ‘Myth, Memoir and Moral Admonition’.

served as sites of political praxis for both the governed and governing. These collections shed light on the interactions between the material and political worlds of Ugandan and Kenyan elites, and between local leaders and the imperial state.

However, these agents should not be treated as representative of ‘Ugandan’ thinkers and leaders in any straightforward way. They were elite figures who had many layers of assistance in collecting objects and histories. Furthermore, there were many other British elites in Uganda at that time who had differing ideas about and approaches to Ugandan identity. Kaggwa’s institutionalization of southern Ugandan history, and its royalist focus forced other activists to contest his narrative.<sup>102</sup> The problem of Kaggwa’s dominance is partially addressed here through the inclusion of other political leaders who used gifting as a strategic tool in shaping images of themselves and the British. Although this shared practice did not necessarily bring these communities together, it demonstrates how elites from a variety of regions deployed similar strategies when navigating the European encounter. At the same time, while these examples of gift-exchange illustrate a degree of cooperation, other members of the population resented the intrusion of British collecting, striving to hide objects and information.

Chapter four shifts attention from the politics of collecting ‘in the field’ to museums as sites of scientific study and public display of Ugandan and Kenyan culture. Using the British Museum (established 1753, with eastern African objects acquired from the 1860s) and Uganda Museum (established 1908) as its foci, it examines the cultural and political deployment of eastern African collections by museums, and explores their links to different imperial processes during the early decades of British rule. Its focus moves from objects of ‘curiosity’ used to bolster notions of imperial

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<sup>102</sup> Earle provides a detailed study of different dissenting intellectuals in Uganda. Earle, *Colonial Buganda*.

superiority in the late nineteenth century to ethnographical ‘specimens’ deployed as sources of ‘tribal’ history in the twentieth century. Each institution contained distinctive actors, objects and circumstances that informed its direction. Binding their histories together, however, were similar desires to contribute to the imperial project. At the same time, these institutions suffered to varying degrees with competition for display space and research resources from other geographical regions, incomplete collections, financial difficulties, institutional bureaucracies, differing approaches from curators, and temperamental support from the British government. At times, these issues prevented the dissemination of any coherent discourse about the collections from Uganda and Kenya. Their desires and tensions complicate wider historiographical debates about the discursive power of cultural imperialism.

As the Conclusion argues, together, these chapters demonstrate that early collecting in Uganda and Kenya emerged through a diverse group of people and institutions. It was deeply entangled in both the wider imperial landscape but also the particular projects of these groups. Collecting also served the personal interests and ambitions of individuals among them. Across all of these spheres, collecting provided opportunities for transmitting power and status, building connections, and forging personal, group, and national identities. Yet none of these processes were straightforward, static, or universal.

## I

### **From Exploration to Treaty-Making and Administration: Collecting and the Making of Colonial Officialdom**

This chapter offers an original reading of colonial officials in Uganda and Kenya, linking their collecting to both their professional duties and to their personal lives in Africa and Britain. It has two overarching aims. The first is to demonstrate that material culture played a central role in multiple areas of colonial officials' work in Uganda and Kenya in the early decades of this period, from exploration, to early diplomacy and treaty-making, and then in subsequent approaches to administration. The second is to problematize the concept of colonial officialdom as a unified and hegemonic force, by using the history of collecting to illuminate the disagreements between the metropolitan state and its 'men on the spot'. It also demonstrates that officials also used the opportunities for collecting that were afforded by their colonial careers to develop their own personal sense of cultural distinction in both Africa and Britain.

Previous historical treatment of officials has developed from an early geo-diplomatic and strategic focus of the 'men on the spot' paradigm, to later cultural studies that linked officials' efforts at anthropological knowledge acquisition with colonial governmentality (or in some cases, ruptures in colonial governmentality). Examining officials' ethnographic collecting reveals more nuanced insights into these histories, illuminating the social power and material efficacy of objects in the experiences, understandings, and decision-making of officials. Official collecting sheds new light on the interactions between the material and political worlds in Uganda and Kenya, between local people and the imperial state, and between different elements of colonial officialdom itself. More specifically, Anglo-German imperial rivalry, British/African diplomacy, colonial violence, and the production of gendered



stereotypes are aspects of colonialism illuminated by attending to officials' collecting habits in this chapter.

### **Colonial Officials in Imperial Historiography**

Colonial officials have long occupied a central position in histories of British imperialism in Africa. In the 1960s, Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher flagged the central importance of the actions of so-called 'men on the spot' through their arguments about the role of politics of the periphery in metropolitan strategies.<sup>103</sup> However, the majority of their sources, which were drawn from the Foreign Office, are awash with high politics and strategizing, offering little mention of colonial officials' day-to-day experiences and contact with local figures on the ground.<sup>104</sup> A genre of colony-specific studies reflected this approach, including key works on the establishment of imperial rule in Kenya and Uganda that were similarly framed by official metropolitan sources and heavily Eurocentric perspectives.<sup>105</sup>

It is important to note that Robinson later acknowledged that cultural collaboration and sub-imperialism were important components of empire.<sup>106</sup> In doing so, he acknowledged that imperial power was exercised in many ways. In many respects, Robinson and Gallagher paved the way for more refined arguments about the interconnectedness of metropolitan and colonial social relations which emerged in 'new' Imperial histories. However, their approach still embraced a certain

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<sup>103</sup> Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (London, 1961).

<sup>104</sup> For an example of their use of Foreign Office sources in relation to Uganda, see their Chapter XI: 'Uganda, the Rout of Liberalism', in Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, pp. 307–339.

<sup>105</sup> These include G.H. Mungeam, *British Rule in Kenya 1895–1912: The Establishment of Administration in the East Africa Protectorate* (Oxford, 1966); and Bruce Berman, *Administration and Politics in Colonial Kenya* (New Haven, CO, 1974).

<sup>106</sup> Ronald Robinson, 'Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration' in Roger Owen and Robert B. Sutcliffe (eds.), *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (Harlow, 1972), pp. 117–142.

methodological conservatism in which Foreign Office texts featured as the central source of analysis.<sup>107</sup>

The textual output of officials has continued to provide the primary source underpinning the more recent studies of Anthony Kirk-Greene. He explored various aspects of the Colonial Services, ranging from traditional studies of its structures and organization, to more cultural approaches of its collective ideologies around class, gender, and race, as well as the subjective experiences of individuals ‘in the field’.<sup>108</sup> In doing so, Kirk-Greene laid important foundations for drawing the Colonial Service into cultural interpretations of British imperialism, both abroad and in Britain.<sup>109</sup>

Kirk-Greene briefly touched upon the anthropological activities that officials engaged in during their leisure time.<sup>110</sup> However, the relationship between statecraft and anthropology has been the subject of a larger (and again exclusively text-based) historiography in post-colonial studies.<sup>111</sup> This area of study examined the construction of colonial administrative power in relation to the production of colonial knowledge, through anthropological research and other means.<sup>112</sup> Moving away from the politico-strategic focus of Robinson and Gallagher, these studies began to focus more on questions of culture and power. Inspired initially by Foucauldian concepts of government and its multifarious techniques for governing, authors such as James C.

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<sup>107</sup> Stephen Howe, (ed.), *The New Imperial Histories Reader* (London, 2009), p. 7.

<sup>108</sup> Christopher Jeppesen, ‘*Making a Career in the British Empire c.1900-1960*’, PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge (Cambridge, 2013), p. 11. Anthony Kirk-Greene, *A Biographical Dictionary of the British Colonial Service 1939-1966* (London, 1991); *On Crown Service: A History of HM Colonial and Overseas Civil Services, 1837-1997* (London, 1999); *Britain’s Imperial Administrators, 1858-1966* (Basingstoke, 2000); *Symbol of Authority: The British District Officer in Africa* (London, 2006). For earlier studies about the social backgrounds of colonial officials see L.H. Gann and Peter Duignan, *The Rulers of British Africa, 1870-1914* (London, 1978); Charles Chenevix-Trench, *The Men who Ruled Kenya: The Kenya Administration, 1892-1963* (London, 1993).

<sup>109</sup> Jeppesen, ‘*Making a Career*’, p. 11.

<sup>110</sup> Kirk-Greene, *Symbol of Authority*, p. 174.

<sup>111</sup> Helen Tilley and Robert J. Gordon (eds.), *Ordering Africa: Anthropology, European Imperialism, and the Politics of Knowledge* (Manchester, 2007), p. 1. See also Helen Tilley, *Africa as a Living Laboratory: Empire, Development and the Problem of Scientific Knowledge, 1870-1950* (Chicago, 2011).

<sup>112</sup> Tony Ballantyne, ‘Colonial Knowledge’, in S.E. Stockwell (ed.), *The British Empire: Themes and Perspectives* (Malden, MA, 2008), p. 177.

Scott and Patrick Joyce used ‘colonial governmentality’ as an umbrella term for multiple methods of indirect state control, of which anthropological knowledge production was described as one form.<sup>113</sup> Bernard Cohn’s study of ‘investigative modalities’ saw the collection, classification and use of information (particularly surveys) by governments in India as central to the arrangement and organisation of people, places and things.<sup>114</sup> More recent engagements with Foucault can be found in the work of authors such as Tony Bennett and Rodney Harrison, who examine anthropology as a ‘liberal discipline’.<sup>115</sup>

Although this approach has been very productive for South Asian history, it has until recently been less robustly developed for eastern African history.<sup>116</sup> One recent exception can be found in Helen Tilley and Robert Gordon’s work, which has offered the most significant contribution to the debate with detailed evidence of a wide variety of scientific research projects and methods being conducted by colonial officials in this period. Tilley argues that despite its fractured, contingent, and often limited real-life effects on colonial policies, ‘ethnographic knowledge was nonetheless central to the construction of colonial states’ through the very process of its production.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Scott explored the particularities of colonial governmentality in Sri Lanka, while Joyce extended Foucault’s approach to the British Raj and its multiple material and socio-technical practices of knowledge and state power. David Scott, ‘Colonial Governmentality’ *Social Text*, 43 (1995), pp. 191–220, and James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State* (London, 1998); Patrick Joyce, ‘History and Governmentality’ *Análise Social*, 49:212 (2014), pp. 752–756.

<sup>114</sup> Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, NJ, 1996), p. 5.

<sup>115</sup> Tony Bennett, Fiona Cameron Nelia Dias, Ben Dibley, Rodney Harrison, Ira Jacknis, and Conal McCarthy (eds.), *Collecting, Ordering, Governing: Anthropology, Museums, and Liberal Government* (Durham, NC, 2017).

<sup>116</sup> Ballantyne, ‘Colonial Knowledge’, p. 185.

<sup>117</sup> Tilley and Gordon, *Ordering Africa*, p. 7. See also Megan Vaughan, *Curing their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness* (Stanford, CA, 1991), pp. 8–12 which links Western biomedical narratives about eastern African illness to forms of colonial power and expansion. For wider literature on Africa and scientific technologies of power and expansion, see Daniel R. Hedrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century*, (Oxford, 1981); Robert Stafford, ‘Scientific Exploration and Empire’, in Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 294–319; Felix Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (Oxford, 1999). For western Africa Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley, CA, 2001).

In eastern Africa, Katherine Luongo demonstrates that despite administrators' best attempts to research and understand witchcraft and local customary laws surrounding it during the early twentieth century, the colonial state was unwilling to integrate local forms of juridical violence against witchcraft perpetrators into its own version of law and order.<sup>118</sup> Luongo suggests that competing notions of law, justice, and anthropological knowledge 'collided in an uncomfortable nexus' that caused ruptures in colonial control rather than bolstering colonial hegemony by sparking 'virulent debates in Kenya and the metropole over what constituted justice, law, and order'.<sup>119</sup>

Paul Ocozbek offers another recent study into the colonial state's (mis)understandings and (mis)appropriations of anthropological knowledge, this time surrounding age, gender, and initiation in colonial Kenya, through which it sought to meet the labour demands of settlers and strengthen state authority.<sup>120</sup> Ocozbek examined the creation of a corpus of information about age and gender by officials in Kenya, and argued that, while this information was incomplete, it was 'a formidable instrument of statecraft' and also subsequent Kenyan movements against the colonial state.<sup>121</sup> In their separate explorations of these particular cultural topics, both authors examined the ethnographic texts of the administrator Charles William Hobley (1867–1947). However, neither considered his vast collection of ethnographic objects within their analysis. In fact, the object-collecting activities of colonial officials have not yet been considered at all in the historiographies of Uganda and Kenya. Had Luongo and

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<sup>118</sup> Katherine Luongo, *Witchcraft and Colonial Rule in Kenya, 1900-1950* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 4.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 76 and 102. See a similar argument made in Bruce Berman, *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya: The Dialectic of Domination* (Athens, OH, 1991).

<sup>120</sup> Paul Ocozbek, *An Uncertain Age: The Politics of Manhood in Kenya* (Athens, OH, 2017). Here Ocozbek builds on an earlier study about state intervention in female circumcision in relation to the colonial labour market in Susan Pederson, 'National Bodies, Unspeakable Acts: The Sexual Politics of Colonial Policy-making', *The Journal of Modern History*, 63:4 (December, 1991), pp. 647-680.

<sup>121</sup> Ocozbek, *An Uncertain Age*, p. 17.

Ocobock done so, they would have found a wealth of material relating to the Kamba, age, masculinity and initiation that might enrich their insights further.

Colonial officialdom in Uganda and Kenya produced a much broader legacy of historical material than is often realised. Of all the groups studied in this thesis, officials produced the most expansive and organised archives, which range from company and state records, maps, published memoirs and private papers, to anthropological writings, and photographs. They also produced a rich material legacy, which can be found in museums, homes, and stately houses across Britain.<sup>122</sup>

By examining the histories of these objects and incorporating them into our frame, this chapter argues that we can begin to see the work of colonial strategizing and diplomacy, structures of colonial officialdom, concepts of race and gender, and administration, as examined by the authors above, more richly. The metropolitan state demonstrated little interest in supporting its employees with funds or training for understanding the material cultures of the societies that they were governing, despite their continued pleas. Notwithstanding this official indifference in the metropole, officials on the spot still chose to be acquisitive collectors. These disparities in thinking between different elements of colonial officialdom, in many ways confirm some of the arguments put forward by Robinson and Gallagher, and challenge others posed by Scott, Joyce, and Cohn.<sup>123</sup>

Complementing Robinson and Gallagher's emphasis on the primacy of geo-diplomacy, collecting expeditions were a key feature of Anglo-German rivalry and provided important opportunities for officials to spy on each other. Objects also offer

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<sup>122</sup> Sarah Longair and Christopher Jeppesen presented new research on African material of culture now resident in the homes of former colonial officials at the North American Conference on British Studies on 11 November 2016 in a paper entitled 'The Elephant in the Room: Objects of Colonial Memory'.

<sup>123</sup> As Michael Collins notes, 'The "official mind" had to react to and take into account different 'peripheries', but it was still the main agent of historical change'. Michael Collins, 'Nation, State, and Agency: Evolving Historiographies of African Decolonization' in Andrew W.M. Smith and Chris Jeppesen (eds.), *Britain, France, and the Decolonization of Africa: Future Imperfect?* (London, 2017), p. 24.

important insights into the diplomacy between British officials and local elites. Upon further investigation of many items in museum records described as ‘gifts’, we find that these objects played vital roles in the diplomatic encounters between officials and local elites. As colonial gifts, these supposedly ‘pre-modern’ objects served as important sites of ‘modern’ political praxis in early imperial diplomacy for both colonizer and colonized. Conversely, some of these objects are linked to instances of colonial violence and discipline. If we are to fully understand the nature of political relations in the region at this time, we must therefore acknowledge that strategic deployment of the world of material things in multiple ways was a key feature.

Finally, an examination of the anthropological activities of officials in Uganda and Kenya reveals that while many produced (now relatively well-known) texts, they were also collecting material information at the same time. Paying attention to these objects reveals, amongst many other things, vital new insights into how authoritative male African identities were being collected, overturned, and re-cultivated by officials during these early decades of imperial administration through the material world. Pedro Aires Oliviera, Bruno Cardoso Reis, and Patrick Finney recently noted that the operations of state elites can be understood much more richly by examining material culture in the same framework as diplomacy and colonial politics and administration.<sup>124</sup> Attending to the collecting habits of colonial officials can offer productive contributions to an array of historiographical approaches towards them, whether cultural, political, or military.

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<sup>124</sup> Pedro Aires Oliviera, Bruno Cardoso Reis, and Patrick Finney, ‘The Cultural Turn in International History’, *The International History Review*, 40:3 (2018), p. 574.

## Collecting and the Making of Colonial Officialdom in Uganda and Kenya

When Charles Dundas (1884–1956) arrived in Moshi District near Kilimanjaro in 1914, he prepared to lead his first tour as the new District Commissioner. The purpose of the tour was to assert himself as a new figure of authority among the local population and elite, and to acquaint himself with the area that he was now to govern. When Dundas reflected on this important event in his memoir decades later, he regretted that he was ill-equipped to comprehend his material and cultural surroundings:

Everything around me was strange... nominally, I supposed, I was to be the leader of the expedition, but, in-fact, I was the led... I could understand nothing of what was said around me... I had no idea of the right conduct in contact with the primitive people... at one camp a chief brought a present of a goat and in my ignorance, I wondered what was the correct thing to do... not knowing what better to do I motioned the potentate to a chair and gave him a cigarette, but it was manifest that he did not know the uses of either of these articles.<sup>125</sup>

Written in Dundas's typical literary style, employing humour and self-deprecation, this extract recounts the more difficult aspects of his colonial experience. The historian Anthony Kirk-Greene has highlighted the ambiguities of the 'first tour' and offered similar examples of the fear of incompetency expressed by many new recruits during this event.<sup>126</sup> Dundas' account offers a deeper perspective by illuminating the complex cultural and material worlds in which he and many other administrators and officials found themselves when they first arrived in their posts. In this context, the chief's presentation of a goat alerts us to the important role of gift exchange in political encounters on the ground, and to the communicative role of objects when language skills were manifestly insufficient. Yet Dundas' fumbled return of a processed 'modern' commodity, a cigarette (itself a product of imperial economic exploitation as

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<sup>125</sup> Charles Dundas, *African Crossroads* (London, 1955), pp. 11–12.

<sup>126</sup> Anthony Kirk-Greene, *Symbol of Authority, The British District Officer in Africa* (London, 2006), pp. 60–93.

explained later in the chapter) illustrates the complexity of such exchanges for both officials and local people. Moreover, this experience represented the broader lack of cultural knowledge held by new officials about the societies that they were to govern, and their reliance upon local informants.

Kirk-Greene suggests that ‘before the war the deliberate training of new cadets was taken quite seriously by several colonial governments’, and he signals a three-week course offered by the Uganda Protectorate in administrative affairs as an example.<sup>127</sup> The state paid far less attention, however, to managing the cross-cultural challenges that new recruits would also face. Keenly aware of his lack of training and cultural understanding, Dundas soon began to engage in discussions with other officials about the material cultures of the communities now under his jurisdiction.<sup>128</sup> He also wrote several anthropological texts on the subject and acquired and studied objects that are now in the British Museum.<sup>129</sup> Details of these experiences are often lost in the narratives of metropolitan high politics, economics, and militarism. A material-culture focus, however, offers alternative windows on these highly complex situations, as Dundas’s example illustrates.

Dundas’s experience raises three key questions that this chapter will explore in greater detail. The first concerns the relationship between knowledge acquisition and the hegemony of the colonial state. In Kenya, Dundas’s lack of knowledge and training about the material culture he was entering, combined with evidence of ambivalence to ethnography in the records of the IBEAC and the Foreign Office, suggest a distinct lack of interest in collecting in Kenya and Uganda at the highest echelons of governance

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<sup>127</sup> Kirk-Greene, *Symbol of Authority*, p. 88.

<sup>128</sup> Letters from Dundas to Charles Hobley discussing the material cultures of the communities under their jurisdiction can be found in the Hobley Papers at the Royal Anthropological Institute, MS27.9;20;22;33;41;48;51;54.

<sup>129</sup> Charles Dundas, ‘History of Kitui’, *JRAI*, 43 (July–December, 1913), pp. 480–549; *Kilimanjaro and its People: A History of the Wachagga, Their Laws, Customs and Legends, Together with Some Account of the Highest Mountain in Africa* (London, 1924).



(barring a few exceptional cases) and a gap between metropolitan leaders and officials on the ground. This section will thus demonstrate that concepts of colonial governmentality and hegemony are complicated by the history of collecting in Kenya and Uganda. By studying a variety of alternative sources, it is possible to begin to understand more about the role played by the material world of objects in governing and daily life.

The second line of enquiry considers how officials went about obtaining their collections. Sir Harry Johnston, Sir Frederick Jackson, Sir Charles Delmé-Radcliffe, and Charles William Hobley acquired some of the largest collections of ethnographic material from Kenya and Uganda in this period. Their diaries, letters, publications, and museum correspondence illustrate the mechanisms through which their material (now located in a variety of museums across Britain and Kenya) was assembled, and the role played by local people in exchanges, access, and collecting decisions. Here we find a broad spectrum of methods and power relations. At one end were examples of violent subordination through looting and plunder. At the other end were peaceful, but no less political, gift exchanges like that described by Dundas. Although the capture and display of war loot reflected cultural control and sporting masculinity, gift exchanges involved a quite different set of power relations with local leaders that set the tone for future relations and mediated the access and knowledge offered to officials by their local counterparts. The acquisition and representation of objects created effective but complex sites of political praxis for both coloniser and colonised. One example from Charles Delmé-Radcliffe's time in Acholiland will be used to demonstrate some of these points, and they are illuminated further in chapter three of this thesis, which specifically explores the agencies of Kenyan and Ugandan figures in such exchanges. To summarize, the first two sections of this chapter problematize concepts of imperial hegemony, at least at the point of collection.

The third line of enquiry examines the type of material that officials collected and how they used that material in their administrative outlooks and decisions. It focuses on the early Maasai and Kamba collections produced by officials (approximately 1880–1910), which are richly documented. Maasai material was collected by all of the officials examined in this chapter. Like Thomas Spear, Richard Waller, Lotte Hughes, and others, I argue that this preponderance reflects a complex early fascination with Maasai warrior-hood among officials, which at the same time many believed to be a barrier to imperial strategy and rule.<sup>130</sup> Depictions of their material culture contributed to a timeless Maasai stereotype. This stereotype had political implications and was used to justify the removal of the Maasai to enclosed reserves. Later, this approach transmogrified into a very specific tourist gaze.<sup>131</sup> These objects enrich our understanding of how longstanding images were produced and illustrate that while the colonial state was not necessarily interested in the actual collecting processes of its officials and administrators, its regimes of power built on stereotypes that emerged from these collections when it saw it would benefit from doing so.

Kamba collections offer an interesting counterpoint to the Maasai case. The Kamba were presented as martial tribes during the First World War, were much less represented in the wider colonial literature, and still often only feature in military histories.<sup>132</sup> However, they occupy a much larger place in the museum collections of colonial officials. Rather than reinforcing the martial stereotype that has traditionally

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<sup>130</sup> Thomas Spear and Richard Waller (eds.), *Being Maasai: Ethnicity and Identity in East Africa* (Oxford, 1993); Lotte Hughes, “Beautiful Beasts” and Brave Warriors: The Longevity of a Maasai Stereotype’ in Lola Romanucci-Ross, George A. De Vos, and Takeyuki Tsuda (eds.), *Ethnic Identity: Problems and Prospects for the Twenty-First Century* (Lanham, MD, 2006), pp. 264–294.

<sup>131</sup> Edward Bruner and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, ‘Maasai on the Lawn: Tourist Realism in East Africa’, *Cultural Anthropology* 9:4 (1994), pp. 435–470.

<sup>132</sup> See, for example, Myles Osborne, *Ethnicity and Empire in Kenya: Loyalty and Martial Race among the Kamba, c.1800 to the Present* (New York, NY, 2014); Charles Amone, ‘Reasons for the British Choice of the Acholi as the Martial Race of Uganda, 1862 to 1962’ *Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2:2 (May, 2014), pp. 72–77.

been associated with the Kamba since the First World War, these collections offer different perspectives on pre-colonial masculine authority through objects linked to blacksmiths, elders, and hunters. The collection of these objects represents Hobley's early attempts to understand, order, and classify Kamba society. They also illustrate how images and classifications of tribes could shift according to changing political and economic contexts and allow us to question later stereotypes. Although they had different aims and outcomes, both the Maasai and Kamba collections illustrate that between 1880 and 1920, authoritative male African identities were being collected, overturned, and re-cultivated by officials. This chapter uses these collections to illuminate, unpick, and question those stereotypes.

Although this chapter does not focus on them, it is worth noting that the Luo, Kikuyu, and Nandi are also heavily present in the Kenyan collections acquired by these officials, indicating that the southern and south-western regions were the most common sites of collecting. The collections follow British political and trading interests, which were centred around the main route of exploration, commerce and rail, from Mombasa to Kisumu on the shores of Lake Victoria. Many of the objects acquired by officials were therefore entangled in a broader history of exploration, commerce and political state expansion. In Uganda, officials also collected in the Kingdoms of Buganda and Ankole. Less material was collected from Bunyoro in the late nineteenth century. Britain's relationship with this kingdom was much more hostile and violent, compared to Buganda and Ankole with whom they signed treaties at the beginning of the twentieth century. The bias towards the dynastic cultures corresponds with the preponderant emphasis in colonial literature, which is similarly heavily skewed towards these

places.<sup>133</sup> The preponderance of Acholi material in the collections of colonial officials offers an important opportunity to shed new light on this group and their history.

In summary, the collecting activities of administrators in Kenya and Uganda did not fundamentally shape the governing practices and decisions of either the British East Africa Company Directors or the Foreign and Commonwealth Offices in Whitehall in this period.<sup>134</sup> However, they do offer an important window on how imperial agents operated on the ground. Tracing the histories of their collected objects and material lives reveals stories of both violence and negotiation with local people. Officials' collections demonstrate a desire to know more about the material cultures of the people they were governing and reflect a specific interest in (or at least level of access to) masculine authority. For this group, the collection of material culture contributed to their own identity and status, as well as that of those they were governing. However, their collections do not always fit neatly with imperial discourses, and even have the potential to offer different narratives of African authority, creativity, and skill in the face of imperial subordination.

### **The Collectors, their Careers, and Cultural Distinction**

Before examining the collecting activities of colonial officials, it is important to first note that the term 'colonial official' is used here as a shorthand to describe a group of individuals and institutional bodies that all worked on behalf of either the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) prior to 1895 or the British colonial state thereafter. The collectors studied in this chapter played a variety of different roles and

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<sup>133</sup> For Buganda, the earliest classic texts of Uganda's kingdoms include R.F. Burton, *The Lake Regions of Central Africa, Two volumes* (London, 1860) and J.H. Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* (London, 1863).

<sup>134</sup> In the later period of colonial rule after the 1920s, functionalist fieldwork, colonial policy-making, and questions of development began to intersect more closely through figures such as Lord Lugard and Margery Perham. Foks, 'Bronislaw Malinowski', p. 38.

titles as treaty-makers, cartographers, military officials, administrators, and governors. Sir Frederick Jackson and Charles William Hobley both worked for the IBEAC before joining the colonial administration. Sir Harry Johnston served as an explorer and later diplomat on behalf of the Foreign Office in Kenya and Uganda. Sir Charles Delmé-Radcliffe was attached to the King's African Rifles in Acholiland. Officers' position and role affected the type of contact and relationship forged with the local community, and in turn the type of access and interest they might have in local material cultures.<sup>135</sup> Geography also mattered. In many regions in the north of Uganda such as Lango district, Acholiland, and Karamoja, military forces took on governing and administrative responsibilities until 1921.<sup>136</sup> The ways in which objects were collected by colonial officials in different regions appears to correspond with the type of political relationship that these regions had with Britain. For instance, in Buganda, a kingdom in which the British believed familiar system of governance existed suited to indirect rule, we find that many objects were gifted between Jackson and local leaders. However, in Acholiland, where the British believed that they found no familiar leadership, they governed with military force, and we find suggestions that many objects were acquired by Delmé-Radcliffe during moments of military suppression and re-moulding of local forms of leadership.<sup>137</sup> The group described here as 'colonial officials' was thus made up of a variety of different individuals who often collected objects in ways that were dependent on their role, rank, and location.

Collecting was a key element of their professional duties, but these men also sought cultural 'Distinction' (as described by Bourdieu) through their collecting and

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<sup>135</sup> For a more detailed explanation of the different roles within the British colonial civil services see Jeppesen, 'Making a Career', and Kirk-Greene, *A Biographical Dictionary*. In relation to eastern Africa, see Mungeam, *British Rule in Kenya*, and Gann and Peter Duignan, *The Rulers of British Africa*. Claire Wintle notes the differences in the collecting practices of officials in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands based on their different professional and social statuses. Claire Wintle, *Colonial Collecting and Display: Encounters with Material Culture from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands* (Oxford, 2013), p. 79.

<sup>136</sup> Richard J. Reid, *A History of Modern Uganda* (Cambridge, 2017), p. 290.

<sup>137</sup> Reid, *A History of Modern Uganda*, p. 292.

other cultural and scientific pursuits. All were all drawn from relatively similar educational backgrounds, held multiple interests, hobbies, and specialisms, and successfully entered middle-class imperial and metropolitan networks, partly through their careers and partly through their cultural networks and achievements.<sup>138</sup> Harry Johnston's obituary, for example, reveals that, although upward social mobility began with entry into the CAS, one's reputation was bolstered by cultural interests, and particularly a legacy of collecting.<sup>139</sup> These individuals were not typical of Colonial Services in eastern Africa. Christopher Jeppesen notes that few recruits had been to one of the leading public schools and even fewer to university.<sup>140</sup> As Richard Meinertzhagen, a Lieutenant in the King's African Rifles and an Old Harrovian, exclaimed at the time: 'Few of them have any education, and many do not pretend to be members of the educated class'.<sup>141</sup>

Harry Johnston was educated at Stockwell Grammar School and King's College London before training as an artist.<sup>142</sup> He led scientific expeditions to eastern Africa and was involved in the securing of IBEAC trading treaties with local leaders and mapping newly-discovered parts of Uganda and Kenya, before being employed by the

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<sup>138</sup> P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins argue that 'shared values, nurtured by a common education and religion' provided the blueprint for a 'gentlemanly enterprise' that was 'strongly personal, and was sustained by a social network which, in turn, was held together by the leisure needed to cultivate it'. P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas I. The Old Colonial System, 1688-1850', *The Economic History Review*, 39:4 (November, 1986), pp. 508-509. See also J.A. Mangan, 'The Education of an Elite Imperial Administration: The Sudan Political Service and the British Public-School System', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 15:4 (1982), pp. 671-699. Claire Wintle demonstrates how collecting could play a key role in career development and the formation of social networks and reputations. Claire Wintle, 'Career Development: Domestic Display as Imperial, Anthropological and Social Trophy', *Victorian Studies*, 50:2 (2008), pp. 279-288. Looking further back in time, Margot Finn and Kate Smith's recent edited collection about the Indian possessions brought home by East India Company men illustrates the extent to which their display shaped the houses, lives and reputations of their residents. Margot Finn and Kate Smith (eds.), *The East India Company at Home, 1757-1857* (London, 2018).

<sup>139</sup> F. R. Cana and Alfred Sharpe, 'Obituary: Sir Harry H. Johnston, G. C. M. G., K. C. B.', *The Geographical Journal*, 70:4 (October, 1927), pp. 414-416.

<sup>140</sup> Jeppesen, 'Making a Career', p. 59.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Sir Harry H. Johnston, *The Story of My Life* (Indianapolis, IN, 1923), p. 7.

CAS.<sup>143</sup> He became the first Commissioner of Nyasaland in 1891 and played a key role in the formulation of the 1900 Buganda Agreement.<sup>144</sup> Johnston's collections are broad and consist of ethnographic, zoological, botanical and natural history specimens. In the earlier part of his career, he acquired some important material from the Maasai. When he returned in 1902, he made significant collections across Uganda, particularly in Ankole and Buganda. He donated over four hundred ethnographic objects to the British Museum, over a hundred to the Royal Scottish Museum, and zoological material to Cambridge University's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA) and the British Museum (now in the collection of the Natural History Museum).<sup>145</sup>

Frederick Jackson grew up in North Yorkshire and studied at the University of Cambridge.<sup>146</sup> His first experience of Africa was as a big-game hunter. He then joined the Imperial British East Africa Company in 1888 and began exploring and negotiating on behalf of the firm. During an expedition in 1889 he forged a treaty with *Kabaka* (King) Mwanga that allowed the IBEAC to bring Uganda into its sphere of influence. Jackson held several significant government posts, including Acting Commissioner and Governor of the Uganda Protectorate, and Deputy Commissioner and Lieutenant Governor of the East Africa Protectorate. He was an active President and Founder of the East Africa and Uganda Natural History Society, which later became Nairobi National Museum. Jackson left a collection of 460 items that formed the nucleus of the museum's later ethnographic collection. He also donated a significant collection to the

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<sup>143</sup> H. H. Johnston, *The Kilimanjaro Expedition: A Record of Scientific Exploration in Eastern Equatorial Africa and a General Description of the Natural History, Languages, and Commerce of the Kilima-njaro District* (London, 1886).

<sup>144</sup> James A. Casada, *Sir Harry Hamilton Johnston: A Bio-Bibliographical Study* (Basel, 1977), pp. 21-23. See also Sir Harry Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate: An Attempt to Give Some Description of the Physical Geography, Botany, Zoology, Anthropology, Languages and History of the Territories under British Protection in East Central Africa, Two Volumes* (London, 1902).

<sup>145</sup> See John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (Manchester, 1997), p. 38 for discussion of the zoological and natural history collections of Johnston and Jackson, among others.

<sup>146</sup> Robert M. Maxon and Thomas P. Ofkansy, *Historical Dictionary of Kenya* (Plymouth, 2014), p. 145. See also Sir Frederick John Jackson, *Early Days in East Africa* (London, 1930).

Bagshawe Museum near his home in Batley, which was transferred to the Pitt-Rivers Museum in 1966. Jackson never wrote about his interests in ethnography, but did publish on his collection of birds.<sup>147</sup>

Charles Delmé-Radcliffe was attached to the King's African Rifles in Uganda between 1886 and 1902 and was a senior military officer and civil administrator of the Nile Province in Uganda. He founded the government station of Nimule, now in South Sudan, and produced systematic surveys of Madi, Acholi and Lango territories, where he also formed an important collection.<sup>148</sup> Like Jackson, he rarely discussed his collecting, and his private papers were of a purely military nature.<sup>149</sup> However, his reports to the Royal Geographical Society are more revealing, as this chapter will later show.<sup>150</sup>

Finally, Charles William Hobley, the son of an Indian Civil Servant, studied Engineering at the University of Birmingham.<sup>151</sup> He worked for the IBEAC as a geologist before transferring to the colonial government. He served in several administrative roles in Nyanza and Ukamba Provinces, administering the Maasai, Luo, Kikuyu and Kamba. Hobley played an active role in the East Africa and Uganda Natural History Society. He created his own museum but sold part of it to the Royal Scottish Museum. The remainder was given to the British Museum on his death in 1947. He published widely in anthropological journals on a variety of topics and wrote two anthropological books on the Kavirondo and the Kamba.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Sir Frederick John Jackson, completed by W. L. Sclater, *The Birds of Kenya Colony and the Uganda Protectorate* (London, 1938).

<sup>148</sup> Harry Johnston, 'Major Delmé-Radcliffe's Map of the Nile Province of the Uganda Protectorate', *The Geographical Journal*, 21:2 (February, 1903), pp. 162-164.

<sup>149</sup> Private Papers of Brigadier General Sir Charles Delmé-Radcliffe, CVO GB62, Imperial War Museum,  
<sup>150</sup> Charles Delmé-Radcliffe, 'Surveys and Studies in Uganda', *The Geographical Journal* 26:5 (1905), pp. 481-87.

<sup>151</sup> A.T. Matson and Thomas P. Ofcansky, A Bio-Bibliography of C.W. Hobley, *History in Africa*, 8 (1981), p. 253.

<sup>152</sup> See, for example, Charles William Hobley 'Anthropological Studies in Kavirondo and Nandi', *JRAI*, 33 (1903), pp. 325-359; *Ethnology of A-Kamba and Other East African Tribes* (Cambridge, 1910); *Eastern Uganda: An Ethnological Study* (London, 1902); *Bantu Beliefs and Magic: With Particular*



Many of these individuals, particularly Johnston and Hobley, were polymaths with multiple careers, identities and interests. They considered themselves scientists, ethnologists, linguists, naturalists, photographers, and hunters as much as administrators. Collecting formed an important feature of their cultural repertoires. Johnston claimed that he only found himself promoting British interests in Africa at the end of the nineteenth century through his ‘insatiable preoccupation with the languages and habits of primitive man’.<sup>153</sup> The salary of governmental work, he later proclaimed, had enabled him to fulfil his ambitions for extensive research into Africa’s natural history, art, anthropology, anthropometry, zoology and languages and inspired him to lead the Kilimanjaro Expedition. It was these self-proclamations that led to Francis Collingwood’s assessment of Johnston in the late 1950s as an ‘untraditional empire builder’; a man less devoted to ‘extending red on the map’ than indulging his interests in gentlemanly research.<sup>154</sup> Johnston published widely throughout his lifetime. Books such as *Pioneers of Empire* (1912–1914) and *The Story of My Life* (1923) bolstered his position in the British imperial imagination with its appetite for tales of exploration and exoticism by powerful men.<sup>155</sup> Others such as *The Kilimanjaro Expedition. A record of scientific exploration in Eastern Equatorial Africa* (1885), *The Uganda Protectorate* (1902), and *A Comparative Study of the Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages* (1919) reflected Johnston’s wide-ranging interests. He also published in specialist journals, which secured his position in academic circles in addition to political and social ones.

Johnston’s photographs also offer important material evidence of official collecting. Johnston gave over a thousand photographs to the Royal Geographic

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*Reference to Kikuyu and Kamba Tribes of Kenya Colony Together With Some Reflections on East Africa After the War*, first published 1922, (London, 1967).

<sup>153</sup> Frances Collingwood, ‘Portrait of an Empire-BUILDER’, in *Geographical Magazine*, 31 (1958–9), pp. 93–106.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>155</sup> Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire, and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London, 1994).

Society, and several feature in his 1902 book *The Uganda Protectorate*.<sup>156</sup> Many of these are anthropometric-style portraits of individuals wearing adornments, often in front of an exotic or barren landscape. Photographs such as figures 1.1 and 1.2 carefully weave racial, material and natural elements to form a particular final image, illustrating how collectors used objects in conjunction with other interests to form an ethnographic gaze and method of classification.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Harry Johnston, *Photographs of East Africa, the USA and the Caribbean*, RGS230083, Royal Geographical Society.

<sup>157</sup> Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate, Volume I*, p. 389.



**Figure 1.1** 'A Muhima', Harry Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate, Volume II* (1902), p. 211.



**Figure 1.2 'Kavirondo Men and their Adornments', Harry Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate, Volume II* (1902), p. 732.**

## Collecting Motivations: Colonial State Policy or Individual Initiative?

From the earliest explorations of mainland Kenya and Uganda, officials received few strategic directives from metropolitan British government about the acquisition of African objects and knowledge. In the case of the Directors of the IBEAC, there were internal policy contradictions, for while publicly some were keen to contribute to the image of the Company as a pioneer of exploration, civilisation and commerce (seen, for example, in William MacKinnon's involvement in the 1890 *Stanley and Africa Exhibition*), Company records reveal that in its day-to-day running, directors preferred employees to stick to their main tasks.<sup>158</sup> Correspondence with new employees clearly outlined the Company's aims in eastern Africa and the primary roles of the employee: to open up a caravan route and regular postal service between the capital of Emin Pasha's province in the north and Mombasa; to survey and map other routes through the country; to determine the best line for a cheap railway; to establish trading stations; and to enter into friendly commercial relations with 'tribes', inducing chiefs or headmen to place themselves under the Company's protection.<sup>159</sup>

Frederick Jackson's terms of employment declared similar aims to those listed above, but also noted that he should 'indirectly obtain as much information as possible of the general level and features of the country'.<sup>160</sup> Company expedition reports often included fairly detailed information on longitude and latitude, the state of paths, roads, communications and water and food supplies, the trade goods most preferred by locals, and occasionally other observations about supposed racial and

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<sup>158</sup> The Chairman of the British South Africa Company and the Duke of Fife sat alongside MacKinnon on the organising committee. Such events were designed to engage public opinion and support of trade, commerce and the civilising mission in East Africa. Annie Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London, 1994), p. 68.

<sup>159</sup> Letter 11 October 1888, MS 1/IBEA/1/1A/17, Mackinnon *Papers*, SOAS.

<sup>160</sup> Jackson, *Early Days*, p. 143

cultural characteristics.<sup>161</sup> Directors, of course, required information and intelligence in order to plan the activities of the Company, but their correspondence suggests that they only desired information that *they* felt specifically benefitted the Company. In a private letter to another employee, Jackson deplored the ignorance and simplicity of the ‘dear old Directors, in their arm chairs’.<sup>162</sup> However, some curt responses in the Company archives to reports that were deemed undesirable or a waste of Company time suggest that these reports were partly for the surveillance of the employees themselves. One of Lugard’s reports was clearly not suitable for the Directors, who remarked that they hoped Lugard was attending fully to the most important matter at hand, which was ‘the development of the natural resources of the country’.<sup>163</sup> At a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, which heard an account of the collecting and scientific work conducted during an expedition led by Jackson, Thomas Fowell Buxton (a Director of the Company), who was in the audience, exclaimed, ‘We are glad to know that they have brought home birds of such value, but those who had charge of the expedition will feel that the objects of the expedition are the first consideration, and the collection of birds will always occupy a secondary place’.<sup>164</sup>

There are interesting contrasts to be made here with different periods and regions of the Empire. The East India Company had not only organised the Indian displays at international exhibitions in London (1851) and Paris (1855), but in 1791 had already formed its own museum at the Company's headquarters in Leadenhall Street. When Company rule ended in 1858, the India Office in Whitehall assumed oversight

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<sup>161</sup> In a report from Gulu-Gulu in Ukamba Country in Kenya, Jackson described the Wakamba as ‘of the bush type’ who carried bows and arrows and wore copper ornaments but very little cloth. They had ‘active, well-shaped heads and intelligent faces’, they were ‘careless and unreliable, but amiably disposed’. Report of Gulu-Gulu, 17 November 1888, PP MS 1/IBEA/1/1A/27, Mackinnon Papers, SOAS.

<sup>162</sup> Letter dated 28.8.91, Diary and letters of Ernest Gedge, RCMS 113/37/1/2, Cambridge University Library: Royal Commonwealth Society Library.

<sup>163</sup> Letter from F.D.A Vincent to Captain F.D. Lugard, 10 July 1890, PP MS 1/IBEA/1/1B/132, Mackinnon Papers, SOAS.

<sup>164</sup> E.G. Ravenstein, ‘Messrs. Jackson and Gedge's Journey to Uganda via Masai-Land’ *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography*, 13:4 (April, 1891), p. 207.

of this museum. Indian textiles showed skill, manual dexterity and industry. Objects plundered from Indian leaders were also popular, such as the golden throne of Maharaja Ranjit Singh taken by force in 1849, and ‘Tipu’s Tiger’.<sup>165</sup> Later commentators such as Joseph Hooker would complain about the lack of classification and information provided by collectors, but these objects and the museum still provided an important vehicle for both Company and State to promote their agenda, amongst other things.<sup>166</sup>

Yet ‘men on the spot’ like Jackson found little support for collecting when power shifted to the British state from the IBEAC. In contrast, Germany was enthusiastic about the formation of its national collections and encouraged officials to collect ethnographic material with financial backing.<sup>167</sup> In the British Empire, however, Government support of object-based anthropology developed unevenly across different territories. In some colonial territories such as Sudan, collecting was actively supported by the metropolitan State.<sup>168</sup> The Sudanese government hired their first anthropologists in 1908.<sup>169</sup> However, a memorandum submitted to the Colonial Office in 1914 by Professor James George Frazer, advocating a Government Anthropologist for Central and East Africa, was rejected.<sup>170</sup> In 1909, a concerned network of administrators, MPs, and anthropologists gathered to urge the Government to support a new Imperial Bureau of Anthropology within the Royal Anthropological Institute that would address the

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<sup>165</sup> Throne chair, 2518 (IS), V&A; ‘Tipu’s Tiger’, 2545 (IS), V&A. See also Susan Stronge, *Tipu’s Tiger* (London, 2009) and Sadiah Qureshi, ‘Tipu’s Tiger and Images of India, 1799-2010’, in John McAleer and Sarah Longair *Curating Empire*, pp. 207–224.

<sup>166</sup> See a forthcoming book, Arthur MacGregor, *Company Curiosities: Nature, Culture, and the East India Company 1600–1874* (London, 2018).

<sup>167</sup> German expenditure was estimated at £10,000 annually. ‘Anthropology and the Empire: Deputation to Mr. Asquith’, *Man*, 9 (1909), pp. 85–87.

<sup>168</sup> Zoe Cormack has explored the collecting of colonial officials and the State in South Sudan, particularly the work of Romolo Gessi, an Italian who served in the Ottoman-Egyptian Government of Sudan and as Governor of Bahr el Ghazal from 1874–1881. See Zoe Cormack, ‘‘An Infinity of Curious Things’: Unpacking Collections in Italy’, South Sudan Museum Network <<https://southsudanmuseumnetwork.com/2017/06/23/an-infinity-of-curious-things/>> accessed 12.01.2018.

<sup>169</sup> The creation of this post was supported by the Governor, Reginald Wingate. See Douglas Johnson, ‘From Political Intelligence to Colonial Anthropology: Ethnography in the Sudan Intelligence Reports and Sudan Notes and Records’ in Tilley and Gordon, *Ordering Africa*, p. 313.

<sup>170</sup> Frazer had suggested Reverend John Roscoe as a candidate. CO 323/648/59, Colonial Office Archives, National Archives, Kew.

issues of cultural incomprehension that Dundas had experienced by allowing all employees of the CAS to take a course in ethnology.<sup>171</sup> The deputation consisted of people of ‘high standing’ who recognised similar issues across the Empire, including the ambitious Harry Johnston.<sup>172</sup> Hoping to stir governmental ambitions and anxieties, the group cited the great developments that had been made by European rivals in trade and knowledge. Germany, they argued, had spent large sums promoting its administration’s study of ethnology and attention to material culture. Those efforts, they argued, clearly translated into the success of its trade.<sup>173</sup> The example of travelling bags and holdalls in India was used to demonstrate the positive link between the anthropological study of material culture and trade. English firms had been ousted by the Germans who avoided the use of leather thanks to prior ethnographic knowledge of local material culture and customs.<sup>174</sup> Nevertheless, the petition was rejected.

In terms of colonial museums, a small grant from the Uganda Protectorate had allowed the opening of a Colonial Museum in Uganda in 1908, but the Governor declined invitations for Uganda to participate in exhibitions at Nakuru in 1908 and an Imperial and International Exhibition in Hoima in 1909.<sup>175</sup> Internally, the first major exhibition in Uganda appears to have been the Lango Show in 1935. Uganda also participated in the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley Park in London between April and October 1924, taking up 3,000 square feet. This was less than the area devoted to Kenya, but more than Zanzibar and Somaliland, and the same as Sudan, Tanganyika and Nyasaland. However, these were overshadowed by the 19,000 square feet allotted

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<sup>171</sup> ‘Bureau of Anthropology’, *JRAI*, 38 (July–December, 1908), pp. 489–492.

<sup>172</sup> Other members included the MPs S.H. Butcher and Thomas Hart Davies; Sir Richard Temple, an Indian official and authority on Indian ethnology; Sir Edward T. Candy, a judge of the Indian High Court; Professor William Ridgeway from the Archaeology Department at the University of Cambridge; and other well-connected individuals.

<sup>173</sup> ‘Anthropology and the Empire’, *Man*, pp. 85–87.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup> Letter 9 Dec 1908, Uganda Produce and Manufactures at Nakuru Show, A44/351, Uganda National Archives; and Letter 29 December 1908 from Acting Chief Secretary to Secretary to the Colonial Committee for the Franco-British Exhibition of Science Arts and Industries Government, A42/ 647, Uganda National Archives.



to Nigeria.<sup>176</sup> Support for anthropological collecting came much later in Kenya. In 1913, requests from the East Africa and Uganda Natural History Society for a curator were repeatedly rejected.<sup>177</sup> It was only in 1929 that the Colonial Government set aside land for an official museum and requested that provincial commissioners coordinate ‘the collection of articles of ethnological value or interest for the Ethnological Section of the Coryndon Memorial Museum’.<sup>178</sup> Officials and administrators therefore received little in the way of a long-term strategic support for the acquisition of objects and knowledge from within the formal structure of colonial governance.<sup>179</sup>

The metropolitan state did, however, latch on to scientific and cultural collecting projects organised by non-governmental institutions when they were deemed beneficial. Formally organised expeditions had increased throughout the course of the nineteenth century as they began to provide valuable knowledge for the economic and trade interests of colonial infrastructures. Often, these expeditions were multi-disciplinary and funded by bodies such as the Royal Society, the Royal Anthropological Institute, the Royal Geographical Society, and the British Association for the Advancement of Science to share the burden of cost. In 1884, Harry Johnston was commissioned to lead an expedition to Mount Kilimanjaro on behalf of the Royal

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<sup>176</sup> Austin Harrison, *The British Empire Exhibition* (London, 1924), p. 8, British Empire Exhibition, A46/1440, Uganda National Archives.

<sup>177</sup> Letter from the Secretariat, Nairobi, East Africa Protectorate, 2 January 1912, EAUNHS, Correspondence with Government Concerning Grant to Pay Curator 1912–13, National Museums Kenya Archives.

<sup>178</sup> A dispatch to all District Commissioners declared that ‘His Excellency the Governor desires that steps should be taken to collect articles of native manufacture while opportunity still offers, in view of the rapidity with which the knowledge and practice of their manufacture is being forgotten’. See letter from H.R. Montgomery (PC Nyanza Province) to the Hon Col Sec, Nairobi in response to Secretariat Circular no.19 (20 March 1931), 19 Feb 1932, PC/NZA/2/1/9 Native Tribes and their Customs, Kenya National Archives, Kenya National Archives; and Response from the Provincial Commissioner, Nyanza Province, to a circular letter from the Secretariat, MCNZA/3/4/62, Coryndon Memorial Museum, 1931–50.

<sup>179</sup> In neighbouring Zanzibar, Sarah Longair indicates a similar disjuncture between enthusiastic officials who furnished their homes with their collected wares and later formed a colonial museum to reflect their own self-conceptions as a colonial ruling elite, and the harsh realities of the State’s other financial priorities. Sarah Longair, *Cracks in the Dome: Fractured Histories of Empire in the Zanzibar Museum, 1897–1964* (Farnham, 2015), p. 68.

Geographical Society and the British Association for the Advancement of Science.<sup>180</sup> The purpose was to explore a route through the unknown country between Kilimanjaro and Victoria Nyanza in order 'to visit, fix and describe Kenia (sic)'.<sup>181</sup> Little was known of the region in Britain, other than what had been reported by the explorer Joseph Thomson, who had visited parts of it in 1881 and 1883. The expedition was therefore regarded with great expectation by academic circles and the wider public and press.

The expedition also excited interest from multiple scientific bodies in Britain. The Royal Gardens at Kew argued for a botanical and zoological expedition to take place alongside the geographical one. Correspondence held at Kew attributes this fervent planning to rising competition in Europe's scientific arena in this period. Germany was 'beginning to cast eyes in the direction of Africa' and was in a strong position to 'secure the last great prizes' in eastern Africa.<sup>182</sup> Political tensions ran alongside scientific rivalries when the Foreign Office, which 'had chosen to assume that the mission to Kilimanjaro was partly political' also began to display considerable interest in the projected journey.<sup>183</sup> Johnston noted that:

It seemed to be assumed by the African Department at the Foreign Office, several months before my departure, that the expedition could be deflected to political purposes should there be an increase in the mysterious "scientific" expeditions by both France and Germany. I was not to press such negotiations on the chieftains only to deal with such a matter if a French traveller seemed to be coming to the neighbourhood.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Harry Johnston's Kilimanjaro Expedition AEX/3/1, Kew Gardens; and Johnston, *The Kilimanjaro Expedition*.

<sup>181</sup> Memorandum on the proposed Expedition to Victoria Nyanza via the Snowy Mountains, Sir John Kirk, AEX/211/25, Kew Gardens. The Royal Botanic Garden at Seebpore near Calcutta also wished to send a representative on the Expedition. AEX/211/77, Kew Gardens. 'Kenia' here refers to the province of that name. It later became known as 'Kikuyu' when the territory of 'Kenya' came into existence in 1920. The province of 'Kenia' changed its name to 'Kikuyu', and the old title 'East Africa Protectorate' went out of use.

<sup>182</sup> Memorandum, AEX/211/25, Kew Gardens.

<sup>183</sup> Johnston, *The Story of My Life*, p. 134.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid*, p. 116.

Competition had been rising among European powers seeking to establish a presence on the mainland. Noting this tension, Johnston wrote to Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice (1846-1935), the Liberal Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, warning of the risk of it falling to German or French control.<sup>185</sup> Johnston echoed the sentiments of other explorers, Joseph Thomson (1858-1895) and Gustav Fischer (1848-1886), describing the region as ‘eminently suited for European colonisation’ with prospects for a railway and commerce. In response, the Liberal Foreign Secretary Earl Granville (1815-1891) told Sir John Kirk (1832-1922): ‘it is essential that a district situated like that of Kilimanjaro, if Mr. Johnston’s descriptions of it are correct, should not be placed under the protection of another flag to the possible detriment of British interests’.<sup>186</sup> The collecting trip thus morphed into an opportunity to spy on European rivals under the veneer of gentlemanly scientific activity. However, official government support of collecting, science and anthropology in eastern Africa was uneven and appears to have been contingent upon whether it suited the state’s interests at any given time. Officials and administrators received little in the way of a long-term guidance for the acquisition of objects and knowledge from within the formal structure of colonial governance and generally operated on their own or with the support of a wider network of officials and cultural institutions.

### **Collecting on the Ground: Gift-Giving, Violence and Colonial Power Relations**

Officials and administrators in Uganda and Kenya appear to have collected for a variety of reasons. Some officials were commissioned to collect by museums and institutions in Britain. Others believed that collecting would better their knowledge of local

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<sup>185</sup> Johnston to Fitzmaurice, 10 July 1884, FO 881/5037, The National Archives (TNA). See also Tilley, *Africa as a Living Laboratory*, pp. 32 and 26 for a description of Johnston and his work pushing scientific research for more profitable trade.

<sup>186</sup> Granville to Kirk, Letter 9 October 1884, Confidential, FO 881/5037, TNA.

customs and thus aid them in carrying out their administrative duties. For aspiring academics, collecting and studying objects as a scientific method helped to make sense of the world. The opportunity to join a wider social network of collectors and cultural and academic institutions encouraged many individuals to participate. Military expeditions provided opportunities for acquiring war trophies and helped to forge an image of military success, while those with a passion for hunting often collected local hunting equipment in addition to their trophy kills, which bolstered the image of middle-class sporting manliness. At other times, objects simply have no written provenance attached to them, and it is difficult to know why or how their collector acquired them, though the fact that they were kept and given to museums indicates some element of value was ascribed to them. Many of the objects recorded in museum records donated by officials are also recorded as ‘gifts’.

Items collected by officials in Uganda therefore found their way to ethnographic museums via several different routes. At one end of the spectrum, acquisition methods involved violent extraction through punitive expeditions and coercion. At the other end sat an exchange economy that involved both market relations and ostensibly altruistic sentiment, reflecting the different regimes of value and uses accorded to these objects, in-line with Kopytoff’s thinking in *The Cultural Biography of Things*.<sup>187</sup> Although the capture and display of war loot reflected violent and cultural control by British colonizers, gift exchanges involved a quite different set of power relations between Ugandan and British elites that set the tone for future relations and mediated European access to knowledge. Exploring these histories is especially interesting because of the insights they provide on the different relations and mechanisms for communication between officials and local leaders. When analysed more closely, the seemingly

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<sup>187</sup> Igor Kopytoff, ‘The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process’, in Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, p. 64–91.

apolitical act of gift-giving emerges as highly political and provides a partial, but nevertheless important, view of local figures and their relations with officials.

Gift-giving was a key mode of acquisition for officials such as Frederick Jackson who received a variety of gifts during his time working for the IBEAC and the colonial government in Uganda and Kenya (see Appendix 1.1). These objects are part of larger collection of almost five hundred objects that formed the foundations of Nairobi National Museum in the late nineteenth century.<sup>188</sup> In a later account, he noted that gift-giving was a key feature of the formalities of visiting a place, and on the eve of his first major caravan expedition into Uganda, the IBEAC directors wrote to Jackson with instructions, emphasising that he should give gifts ‘immediately to chiefs’ to establish good relations.<sup>189</sup> The specific objects that Jackson acquired and the details of their exchange are discussed in greater detail in chapter three, as they offer important insights into the agencies of Ugandan elites.

This chapter focuses instead upon a complex set of exchanges involving Charles Delmé-Radcliffe. In 1905, Delmé-Radcliffe gave a lecture to the Royal Geographical Society that detailed his own experience of gift exchange in eastern Africa.<sup>190</sup> Delmé-Radcliffe was a senior military officer and civil administrator of the Nile Province who had been ordered by the Foreign Office to produce systematic surveys of Madi, Acholi, and Lango territories in the late 1890s. His account described an encounter in Patiko in the Nile Province where Samuel and Lady Baker had formerly built a fort. During this encounter, he engaged with an elderly chief called Watel Ajus. According to Delmé-Radcliffe, Ajus:

took an elephant’s hair necklace from his neck and begged me to give it to [Lady Baker] when I went back. This I did and the old chief was delighted to receive a

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<sup>188</sup> Frederick Jackson Collection, 1886.1–1906.300, Nairobi National Museum.

<sup>189</sup> Letter to Frederick Jackson from George Mackenzie, 29 November 1888, PP MS 1/IBEA/1/1A/115, Mackinnon *Papers*, SOAS.

<sup>190</sup> Charles Delmé-Radcliffe, ‘Studies and Surveys in Uganda’, *The Geographical Journal* 26:5 (1905), pp. 481–487.

return present of photographs of Sir Samuel and Lady Baker, with an ivory-handled knife. This he acknowledged by sending back a leopard-skin to Lady Baker.<sup>191</sup>

Ivory and leopard-skins were traditionally given to Acholi ‘chiefs’ (*rwots*) as a form of precolonial tribute. Other popular tributes included iron bracelets, arrows, spearheads and hoe blades. Ronald Atkinson explains that local people made tributes to the *rwodi* and that these gifts were central to the workings of chiefship and social stratification. In return, the *rwodi* reciprocated by redistributing other gifts.<sup>192</sup> The *rwodi* were thus ‘the focal point in the redistribution of goods and services within the polity’. The *rwot* could ‘use his position as the most generous giver to build up a fund of social and political good will and support’, and this ‘translated into real power over people’.<sup>193</sup> Ajus therefore engaged Delmé-Radcliffe in a traditional form of gift exchange, but with the added inclusion of photographs. It is unclear whether wives were normative in pre-colonial gifting or whether this aspect was also new, but it is interesting to note the presence and role of Lady Baker in this exchange.

Sixty different independent *rwodi* ‘chiefdoms’ existed by the time that the British arrived.<sup>194</sup> The British, however, sought to insert a Buganda-style council of chiefs who would cooperate with British ambitions. ‘Paramount Chiefs’ were created, and independent chiefdoms began to be amalgamated into the British system. Delmé-Radcliffe used Ajus’s gift to demonstrate these chiefs’ loyalty, cooperation and allegiance to Baker and the British. To develop the point about loyalty, he presented in his lecture a similar story:

Old Shooli was still very flourishing, and was most useful to the administration. [...] Shooli gave me one of the scarlet shirts which had been worn by Sir Samuel’s famous “Forty Thieves”. He had treasured it carefully all those years

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid., p. 482.

<sup>192</sup> Ronald R. Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity* (Philadelphia: PA, 2015), p. 93.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>194</sup> Charles Amone and Okullu Muura, ‘British Colonialism and the Creation of Acholi Ethnic Identity in Uganda, 1894 to 1962’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 42:2 (2014), p. 240.

in an earthenware jar, as a sort of credential to show his connection with Baker.<sup>195</sup>

‘Old Shooli’, just like the European museum, put Baker into storage, banking the shirt as a form of cultural capital. In doing so, he sought to display and preserve his connection with Europeans. Bernard Cohn has observed that in pre-colonial and colonial India the gift of clothing incorporated recipients ‘into the body of the donor’, and this material incorporation may also have been play in eastern Africa.<sup>196</sup>

However, the shared interests implied in Delmé-Radcliffe’s description of these gift exchanges stand in stark contrast to the descriptions that others provide of his time in northern Uganda. Unlike ‘Old Shooli’, many Acholi chiefdoms sought to resist British intrusion. Unhelpful and disobedient chiefs saw their traditional rights and symbols of power removed by British officials. One of the most poignant examples of this centred around the drum. The only people permitted to play their drums were government *rwodi*. The British also confiscated the drums of the Pagak, Parabongo, Paomo, and Pawal.<sup>197</sup> Just as the metropolitan state ordered Delmé-Radcliffe to disarm the increasingly militarized Acholi and to bring their *rwodi* into line with the structures of British governmental organization, he also acquired four Acholi drums, six from the Lango, and two ‘miscellaneous’ drums.<sup>198</sup> In a letter to Charles Hercules Read at the British Museum, Delmé-Radcliffe offered a number of ‘war drums’, which Read accepted.<sup>199</sup> Yet, in his speech to the Royal Geographic Society, Delmé-Radcliffe claimed that it had not been necessary to fire a single shot anywhere on the British side

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<sup>195</sup> The word ‘Shooli’ was adapted by Baker from the *Kutoria* term ‘Shuuli’. Baker used ‘Shooli’ to describe the area now known as Acholi. He identified the paramount ruler of Shooli as Rwotcamo. This may or may not have been the individual referred to above as ‘Old Shooli’. Atkinson, *Roots of Ethnicity*, p. 271.

<sup>196</sup> Bernard S. Cohn, ‘Representing Authority in Victorian India’, in: Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 168.

<sup>197</sup> Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity*, p. 96.

<sup>198</sup> Charles Delmé-Radcliffe Collection, Af1902,0714.197–200; Af1902,0714.202–208; Af1902,0714.201, and Af1902,0714.205, British Museum.

<sup>199</sup> Letter from Delmé-Radcliffe to C.H. Read, 6 May 1902, Department of Britain, Europe and Prehistory, British Museum.

of the boundary.<sup>200</sup> Ogenga Otunnu has described how Delmé-Radcliffe was known in Acholi as *Langa-Langa*, a ‘bulldozer’ because of his unrestrained political violence. Acholi war songs also record the ‘terror’ of *Langa-Langa*.<sup>201</sup> Otunnu argues that during a punitive expedition in 1894 to stop Langi support of Kabalega, Delmé-Radcliffe’s troops ‘unleashed terror and plundered the area’.<sup>202</sup> In response, groups including the Payira declared war on the colonial system. In the context of these events, Delmé-Radcliffe acquired a further 390 objects from the region.<sup>203</sup>

This is a rich and diverse collection. It contains items of war such as a war horn, a sword bound in snakeskin, an arrow and two shields, though these were all objects of a former style of warfare. Acholi was one of the most heavily armed districts in the Protectorate and official British narratives regularly described the violence of the Acholi through their use of firearms.<sup>204</sup> Yet the vast majority of these objects did not represent a particularly violent or ‘primitive’ people. Instead, they present a group with strong cultural roots and a system of powerful leadership.<sup>205</sup> Objects included an ivory armband, a headrest, bracelets and necklaces made of iron wire, a stool, belts and aprons of chiefs’ wives, skilfully made headwear, and musical instruments. These objects also represented a rich culture of commerce. Glass beads of various colours adorned girdles, necklaces and headwear and were the result of a successful but relatively short-lived slave and ivory trade and proximity to Sudan.<sup>206</sup> Headwear such as that in Figure 1.3 symbolized power, masculinity and identity. Like the royal drums, the Acholi only used

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<sup>200</sup> Charles Delmé-Radcliffe, *Geographical Journal (Continued)*, 26:6 (1905), p. 623.

<sup>201</sup> Ogenga Otunnu, *Crisis of Legitimacy and Political Violence in Uganda, 1890 to 1979* (Cham, 2016), p. 120.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 115 and 120.

<sup>203</sup> Charles Delmé-Radcliffe Collection, Af1902.0714, British Museum.

<sup>204</sup> Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity*, p. 5.

<sup>205</sup> Richard Reid explains that ‘The roots of the northern military complex lie in this striking conjunction of the nineteenth-century military revolution and a localised, pragmatic application of British martial race theory’. Reid, *A History of Modern Uganda*, pp. 182–183.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.



headwear on special occasions such as clan meetings, male initiation and peace talks.<sup>207</sup> On closer inspection, we find that some of the items in Figure 1.3 are embedded with spent brass cartridge cases for decoration, illustrating the different regimes of value that were attributed to these items. Research by Vanessa Bahirana Kazzora also suggests that they were ‘symbols of resistance and identity during the colonial and post-colonial period’.<sup>208</sup> There appear to be no records of provenance for Delmé-Radcliffe’s collection, so we cannot be sure whether these objects were given or plundered. Delmé-Radcliffe’s experience reminds us that while gift exchange could be an orchestrated interpersonal act designed to promote social cohesion, the acquisition of objects by officials also occurred in extremely violent circumstances.



**Figure 1.3: A selection of Acholi, Lango and Alur headwear in the British Museum. Photograph taken by Alison Bennett, Courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum.**

<sup>207</sup> Vanessa Bahirana Kazzora, ‘Ceremonial Headdress’, in: Lagat and Hudson (eds.), *Hazina*, p. 83. See also Michael Oehrl, ‘Beaded Coiffures of the Acholi, Dodinga, Latuka, and Related Groups’, *Tribal Art* 80 (2016), pp. 112–121.

<sup>208</sup> Kazzora, ‘Ceremonial Headdress’, pp. 82–83.

Although some officials engaged in political gift exchange, coercion and violent plunder for their collections, for other eager individuals, objects were sometimes difficult to acquire, and at times even impossible. Charles William Hobley and other administrators admitted their difficulty in gaining access to some of the objects that they desired, despite their official role. In Ukamba, Hobley was unable to witness many of the ceremonies that he described in his texts because they were not often held within the vicinity of stations. He was therefore reliant on ‘chiefs’ for objects and information about them.<sup>209</sup> At other times, he attempted to collect objects from specific ceremonies, but was unable to locate them.<sup>210</sup> Charles Dundas faced similar obstacles in his collecting of the Theraka. Medicine men once left charms on the outskirts of their village to keep him and his porters out.<sup>211</sup>

... At one I saw two halves of a baobab tree fruit pierced inside with a network of acacia thorns intended to keep out witchcraft. Another, the object of which was to bar my entrance to a deserted village, consisted of a number of odds and ends placed in a bag hung on a tree, including an old pipe and a small tortoise shell stuffed with some herbs; this was enormously feared by my Akamba, who could not be got to stay near it. Others were horns of all sorts placed on the paths with ashes strewed round them.<sup>212</sup>

Dundas suggested various reasons for this opposition. First, he suggested that it was his Kamba porters that prevented him from continuing. Second, the Theraka, he argued, were ‘bent on hostilities’.<sup>213</sup> At the same time, he also suggested that the Theraka reserve was due to a ‘natural timidity’ and ‘primitive way of life’. None of these reasons reflected upon his own position in the process. When attempting to understand the Kamba elders of Ukuu, he again found that their customs were shrouded in great secrecy, and that information was only imparted to those who paid fees. When he did

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<sup>209</sup> Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs*, p. v.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241 and p. vi.

<sup>211</sup> Dundas ‘History of Kitui’, *JRAI*, 43 (July–December 1913), p. 548.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

so, elders were still stationed around him to ward off listeners.<sup>214</sup> Dundas admitted that, like other Europeans, he had not been able to penetrate the inner sanctuary of the village. Here we are reminded of just how removed officials could be from the inner life of the societies they were attempting to govern. These examples remind us of the unevenness and shifting boundaries of colonial power relations when it came to collecting at least at the point of collection, though of course, once these objects reached European museums, their collecting provenance was flattened and forgotten.

### **Objects and their Uses for Officials: Case Studies of the Maasai and Kamba**

In a 1938 address about the Maasai, Claud Hollis proclaimed that ‘half a century ago [the Maasai] were the most interesting and formidable race in what is now Kenya Colony’.<sup>215</sup> Why were the Maasai so interesting to British officials at that time? During his earlier 1884 Expedition, Harry Johnston acquired one of the earliest collections of Maasai material for the British Museum and the Trocadero Ethnographique Museum in Paris.<sup>216</sup> This significant collection provided one of the first impressions of Maasai material life in Britain. The collection was small, but included key articles: a bow and arrow, a sword, a cape, and a headdress made of black and brown ostrich feathers, which can be seen in Figures 1.4 and 1.5.

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid., p. 541.

<sup>215</sup> Claud Hollis, ‘The Masai’, *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 42:168 (July, 1943), pp. 119-126.

<sup>216</sup> Harry Johnston Collection, Af1885, 1209.1–6, British Museum. For reference to the Paris donation, see letter from Harry Johnston, May 1885, Christy Correspondence, Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas, British Museum. While it does not fit with the flow of the argument being offered here, it is interesting to note, in terms of earlier arguments in the chapter about European rivalry that at the very bottom on the right-hand side of the museum slip is a note referring to communications of the Hamburg Geographical Society in 1882. This suggests not only that German learned societies had knowledge of such objects earlier, but also that their British counterparts were keeping a keen eye on such communications.

**Figure 1.4: Head-dress Af1885,1209.5 © The Trustees of the British Museum**

**Figure 1.5: British Museum entry slip, 9 December, 1885. 'Masai head-dress'.  
Donated by the British Association Kilimanjaro Committee. Field Collection by  
Sir Harry Johnston. Af1885,1209.5 © The Trustees of the British Museum**

Figure 1.4 is a recent museum image of the headdress that depicts its actual form. Figure 1.5 is standard format for British Museum acquisition slips, which were used to record objects when they arrived in the Ethnographic department. Ethnographic objects were typically recorded on these slips with a basic description and where possible, information regarding acquisition, and also a black and white visual depiction, as can be seen here. It was unusual to include a face or person in these images, but it has obviously been deemed necessary in this case to show how the headdress was worn.

The headdress can also be seen in other image contexts from this time. Figure 1.6 shows a static figure wearing a headdress remarkably like the one that Johnston collected. The ‘scientific’ approach intended by Johnston’s British Museum record often lent itself to static detailed depictions of objects like this one. As Johnston brought these objects back to Britain, it is possible that the objects in Figure 1.6 were drawn from life for the publication. Figure 1.7 meanwhile, shows a figure in motion, or action. Thomson’s ‘Journey of Exploration’ (the book from which this image was drawn) has more of an active narrative to its title and so the figure in action makes sense in that regard. In showing the figure in movement, Figure 1.7 also highlights the materials of the cloak falling behind the figure and the movement and texture of the materials adorning the legs. Both of these images, their captions, and the titles of the books suggest the intention to be accurate. Johnston’s publication was a ‘Record of Scientific Exploration’ while Figure 1.7 was described as being ‘drawn by the author’, the element of ‘observation’ suggesting a truth to the image and narrative. The style and form of the images in Figures 1.6 and 1.7 differ between each other and with the museum image, illustrating the different ways in which the Maasai and their material culture could be portrayed in this period. Yet the use of the same objects on a racialized body contribute to a consistent stereotypical image of the young male Maasai warrior.



Fig. 74.—A Masai Warrior.



**Figures 1.6–7: L–R. Image of ‘Masai Warrior’ in Harry Johnston, *The Kilimanjaro Expedition* (London, 1886), p. 415.; Frontispiece: ‘On the War Path in Masai Land’ drawn by the author in Joseph Thomson, *Through Masai Land* (London, 1884).**

If we view the textual narrative accompanying these images through a material-culture lens, we find that objects like those collected by Johnston were deeply entangled in the racialized and gendered images of the Maasai that were being produced in late-Victorian literary narratives.<sup>217</sup> On his Royal Geographical Society expedition, Thomson described the Maasai as the most ‘unscrupulous and arrogant savages to be found in all Africa’, but continued that ‘a more remarkable or unique race does not exist on the continent of Africa... in their physique, manners, customs, and religious beliefs,

<sup>217</sup> Dorothy Louise Hodgson suggests that the perceptions of early travellers (such as Johnston and Hobley) cloud how the Maasai perceived themselves and questions whether all the individuals who were categorised as Maasai did in fact identify as Maasai. Dorothy Louise Hodgson, *Once Intrepid Warriors: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Cultural Politics of Maasai Development* (Bloomington: IN, 2004).

they are distinct from true negroes... they are the most magnificently modelled savages I have ever seen or read of'.<sup>218</sup> Thomson particularly emphasised 'the great war spear and heavy buffalo-hide shield, the sword and the knobkerry' as key to that warrior image.<sup>219</sup> Johnston, meanwhile, described the Maasai warrior as an 'unregenerate robber' and a 'splendid... beef-eating, bloodthirsty warrior' and exclaimed 'it is a treat to the anthropological student to gaze on such magnificent examples of the fighting man... the Masai Warrior is the result of the development of Man into a beautiful Animal'.<sup>220</sup> In February 1884 the German explorer Dr. Fischer's discourse on the 'thievish' Maasai was accompanied by descriptions of the 'spear, short sword and club' they carried with them.<sup>221</sup>

These 'noble savage' descriptions and images here are all imbued with internal contradictions. On the one hand, this period witnessed growing fears of racial decline among the British population, seen through the work of Francis Galton and his theories of eugenics.<sup>222</sup> By 1900, such concerns had been exacerbated by the Boer War (now termed the South African War), which had raised concerns about racial decay in Britain.<sup>223</sup> At the same time, the British required the Maasai to assist them in their punitive expeditions against other tribes so cultivation of this warrior stereotype was key to their own imperial power. This was also a period in which concerns were being raised about the British destruction of other groups.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Joseph Thomson, 'Through the Masai Country to Victoria Nyanza', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography*, 6:12 (December, 1884), p. 700.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 701.

<sup>220</sup> Johnston, *The Kilimanjaro Expedition*, p. 404.

<sup>221</sup> Fischer noted that he had shot many Maasai dead during skirmishes. G. A. Fischer, 'Dr. Fischer's Journey in the Masai Country', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography*, 6:2 (February, 1884), p. 78.

<sup>222</sup> Francis Galton, *Natural Inheritance* (London, 1889); *Hereditary Genius* (London, 1892); *Essays in Eugenics* (London, 1909).

<sup>223</sup> Richard A. Solway, *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birth Rate in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Chapel Hill: NC, 1990), pp. 41–43.

<sup>224</sup> Asafa Jalata, 'The Impacts of English Colonial Terrorism and Genocide on Indigenous/Black Australians', *SAGE Open* (July–September, 2013), pp. 1–12.



Over the following decade, the other officials studied in this chapter also collected similar items when they visited the Maasai. In 1891, Frederick Jackson collected spears that are now in the Nairobi National Museum collection. In 1902, Delmé-Radcliffe donated a Maasai sword and sheath to the British Museum. In 1903, Hobley donated a headdress made of a lion's mane to the Royal Scottish Museum, along with a spear 'of the old pattern carried by elders' and an ivory ear ornament.<sup>225</sup> Around the same time, Hollis donated Maasai swords, bows and arrows, spears and shields to the British Museum. The similarities in these collections helped to carve out a dominant and consistent image of the young male Maasai warrior.

Unlike in Buganda, the centre of gravity lay not with Maasai elders or chiefs, but young warriors, making political and economic control difficult for colonial authorities who preferred to collaborate with elders and self-appointed chiefs.<sup>226</sup> Hobley's description of the spear with the 'old pattern' indicates that Maasai material culture was changing, but the 'savage warrior' image continued to dominate. The supposedly timeless and traditional way of Maasai life served as a key justification for their forcible resettlement in 1904 from grazing grounds in the central Rift Valley to two reserves, to make way for white settlement and the railway.<sup>227</sup> The material objects collected by early officials were items of bodily adornment and weaponry. There were barely any objects of utility or day-to-day use, which helpfully fit the stereotype of the Maasai as external to the rapid modernisation occurring in other areas of Kenya, even if they had, as Hobley's shields suggested, long been in the process of change.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> For examples of these old spears see A.1923.181, National Museums Scotland and Af1947,16.84, British Museum. Also Hollis, *The Masai*.

<sup>226</sup> Hollis, *The Masai*, p. xvii.

<sup>227</sup> Lotte Hughes, "'Beautiful Beasts'" and Brave Warriors: The Longevity of a Maasai Stereotype' in Romanucci-Ross, De Vos and Tsuda (eds.), *Ethnic Identity*, pp. 264–294. See also David Collett, 'Pastoralists and Wildlife: Image and Reality in Kenya Maasailand' in David Anderson and Richard H. Grove (eds.), *Conservation in Africa: Peoples, Policies and Practices* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 129–148.

<sup>228</sup> This pattern can be found in the British Museum's Australian collections as well. For further information on the Maasai versus modernization see Dorothy Louise Hodgson, *Being Maasai, Becoming Indigenous: Postcolonial Politics in a Neoliberal World* (Bloomington, IN, 2007).



Hobley's collections from the Kamba offer an interesting comparative case study.<sup>229</sup> The Kamba were also converted into a martial race by the British, though some time after the Maasai. During the First and Second World Wars, the Kamba were heavily recruited to the British colonial forces.<sup>230</sup> Timothy H. Parsons has described this shift as part of a wider system of division and classification of society into easily digestible clans, tribes and groups by colonial authorities, which were, at the same time, interwoven with 'the specific biological and cultural attributes of a martial race'.<sup>231</sup> Hobley, however, was collecting Kamba material culture before this time and his collections illuminate a rather different image. Among those collections made by Hobley and others in Ukambani in the early twentieth century, a distinct form of Kamba material culture was being assembled, but not the martial one that we expect.

Hobley collected other forms of masculine authority. Rather than objects related solely to warriors, he collected arrows, snuff bottles, bracelets, armlets, and stools from figures including hunters, traders, blacksmiths, and elders. Each of these actors held a different form of authority in pre-colonial and early colonial Kamba society. At that time, British officers 'dismissed the more commercially inclined Kamba as having no soldierly potential' and the Kamba were better known as traders and elephant hunters.<sup>232</sup> These objects therefore offer important alternative insights into late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Kamba society, and the different ways in which it has been represented.

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<sup>229</sup> It should be noted that Hobley was known to use violent measures of coercion although his memoirs advocated 'scientific treatment and knowledge rather than armed forces and expeditions'. See a list of corporal punishments approved by Hobley in *The Diary of Charles Hobley*: Royal Commonwealth Society Library, University of Cambridge, RCMS 113/47.

<sup>230</sup> Myles Osborne, 'The Kamba and Mau Mau: Ethnicity, Development, and Chiefship, 1952-1960', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 43:1 (2010), pp. 63-87.

<sup>231</sup> Timothy H. Parsons, "'Wakamba Warriors Are Soldiers of the Queen": The Evolution of the Kamba as a Martial Race, 1890-1970', *Ethnohistory*, 46:4 (Fall, 1999), pp. 671-696.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 674.

Katherine Luongo has noted a distinct lack of academic research into the history of ‘Kamba people, places and things’.<sup>233</sup> Luongo provides the most recent study of the Kamba. Her work explores the colonial response to perceived acts of witchcraft, which began with anthro-administrative research and ended with anti-witchcraft legislation. By tracing this evolution in colonial policy, Luongo is one of the first scholars to bring this traditionally anthropological topic and perspective into the framework of political imperial history, and this is an approach that this thesis hopes to build upon in this chapter by incorporating objects into the discussion and focusing more on the earlier period of colonial rule. Hobley played a key role in the production of anthropological objects and texts at that time, as well as in the administration of the Kamba. His work deserves much closer attention.

In 1905, Hobley became the first Sub-Commissioner of the Kamba and the Kikuyu. In 1910, he published the first systematic study of the Wakamba entitled *Ethnology of A-Kamba*.<sup>234</sup> The book reads much like a handbook. Aimed primarily at other administrators to aid their work in the region, it was also part of Hobley’s wider project of advocating proper anthropological training for new CAS recruits.<sup>235</sup> When he arrived in the region as a colonial administrator, Hobley received little information from the colonial government about the people that he was to govern. With such a lack of direction, Hobley decided to collect this information himself, partly through the acquisition and study of local articles. A pioneer among other British administrators in this sense, Hobley built a close network of colonial researchers and situated himself at the centre of it. The respect that Hobley forged among other ‘anthro-administrators’ is evidenced in their letters asking for his comments on their research.<sup>236</sup> Anthropologists

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<sup>233</sup> Luongo, *Witchcraft and Colonial Rule in Kenya*, pp. 4 and 16.

<sup>234</sup> Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba*.

<sup>235</sup> Hobley wrote letters to the Foreign Office and to the Royal Anthropological Institute pleading this case. See MS27, Charles William Hobley Papers, Royal Anthropological Institute.

<sup>236</sup> MS27, Hobley Papers, Royal Anthropological Institute.

in Britain also took note of Hobley's research. James Frazer, for example, validated Hobley's work by describing him as the 'foremost expert' on the Kamba.<sup>237</sup>

However, Hobley faced difficulties in his interactions with the Kamba which he attributed to his heavy administrative workload. Hobley was not able to personally acquire many of his objects, nor witness the ways in which they were used, relying instead upon local chiefs for information.<sup>238</sup> He faced particular difficulty in understanding Kamba tribal authority along British administrative lines. One problem he noted, 'is to get the natives as a whole to recognise any one individual member of their tribe as a person of authority'.<sup>239</sup> Geographically, the Kamba region appeared to Hobley to form a well-marked zone. However, unlike the kingdoms of Uganda, the Kamba, he concluded, were an egalitarian decentralised community whose power was regulated by interactions between kinship groups and elders.<sup>240</sup> Hobley's object collections reflect his attempts to understand these different forms of authority. The Kamba arrows that Hobley acquired provide a particularly rich case in point. Arrows were linked to multiple forms of Kamba authority. It is unsurprising that they form the largest body of Hobley's Kamba material, though of course they were also relatively compact items that could be easily transferred. Arrows were not only weapons of war, but objects that reflected skill in hunting and subsequently trade, as well as superior ironworking and aesthetics.

Arrows were central to the nineteenth-century hunting practices of the Kamba, which in turn played a crucial role in a developing Kamba trade network. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Kamba were incorporated into new regional and global trade networks. This period saw great political and social change, which continued as Swahili, and later European, forces entered the surrounding region. The arrival of

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<sup>237</sup> James Frazer, 'Introduction' in *Ethnology of A-Kamba*, p. v.

<sup>238</sup> Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba*, p. v.

<sup>239</sup> Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba*, p. 3.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*

Swahili trade created new opportunities for greater personal wealth, lineage creation and leadership through commerce around the ivory trade. Hunting leaders (*athiani*) who had long held positions of authority did extremely well out of this trade. The most successful became commercial specialists and entrepreneurs, using the wage labour of porters to move their goods.<sup>241</sup> At the centre of these occupations lay elephant hunting. The Kamba were skilled at organised hunting expeditions, and their powerful arrows enabled them to meet the high demand for ivory. In return, they received wire, cloth and glass beads from the coast. Their arrows were therefore a key part of the Kamba economy and the development of a new entrepreneurial elite.<sup>242</sup>

Hobley also found arrows to be important measures of ‘civilisation’.<sup>243</sup> In 1913 he published an evolutionary study on the topic.<sup>244</sup> Hobley argued that such articles could indicate the development and ‘fate of nations’. The most ‘primitive’ form of arrow head, he argued, could be seen in the arrows of the Congo ‘pygmies’. The next evolutionary stage was evidenced in detachable points, which served to economise labour and were visible on arrows from East Kavirondo. Kikuyu arrows developed even further to contain lateral barbs in the wooden point. Mombuttu arrows had iron points that had been ‘developed to an extravagant extent’.<sup>245</sup> The most highly-developed arrows in British East Africa, according to Hobley, came from the Kamba. While admiring them, he still equated them with antiquity, arguing that they were equal to anything from Neolithic Europe, but did not compare to modern Western forms of weaponry.<sup>246</sup> Hobley appears to have salvage-collected these arrows, knowing that increasingly a new standard form of arrow had developed that was ‘certain to be the

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<sup>241</sup> J. Forbes Munro, *Colonial Rule and the Kamba: Social Change in the Kenya Highlands 1889–1939* (Oxford, 1975), p. 20.

<sup>242</sup> Edward L. Steinhart, ‘Elephant Hunting in 19th-Century Kenya: Kamba Society and Ecology in Transformation’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 33: 2 (2000), pp. 336–340.

<sup>243</sup> Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs*, p. 246.

<sup>244</sup> Hobley, ‘The Evolution of the Arrow’, *Journal of The East Africa and Uganda Natural History*, 3 (1913), pp. 31–41.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34–36.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

ultimate form', and the Kamba arrow thus continued to be used in evolutionary tropes despite evidence of its change. He attributed this change to external influence 'now that Western civilisation had entered, and native hunting has become more controlled', eventually to be phased out.<sup>247</sup>

Another internal contradiction can be found in Charles Dundas' comments about the Kamba arrow, and about Kamba art and skill more generally. According to Dundas, while the Kamba had advanced past other tribes in term of intelligence and therefore had potential to learn about manual labour and machinery quickly, morality was 'at a low stage among the Akamba as many of their customs show ... courage, hardihood and strength are not prized at all; to a Mkamba it is best to be cunning and deceitful, his weapons, the bow and poisoned arrow, are typical of such a character'.<sup>248</sup> In Dundas' view, Kamba ornaments and weaponry suggested hardiness and skill, but the 'indolence' of the Akamba made British use of these skills difficult. Hopley had a strong aesthetic appreciation for Kamba arrows, which he found 'beautifully made and accurately feathered', but Dundas did not rate the artistic skill of the Akamba any more than he did their morals, and as we have already seen in his conclusion regarding poisoned arrows, he found the two to be closely linked.<sup>249</sup> In arts such as basket-making and decorating with dyes and colours, he believed that 'the Akamba appear to know nothing ... In their pottery and wood work one remarks a total absence of any suggestion of art'.<sup>250</sup> Any artistry to be found in these gourds, he concluded, must be due to external influence, for he had 'seen a few gourds ornamented with designs burned on them, but these are so very rare that I am inclined to think that they are not original Kikamba work'.<sup>251</sup> His pleasure at the 'wonderful use made of the most

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<sup>247</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>248</sup> Dundas, *History of Kitui*, p. 488.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., p. 504.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., pp. 505–506.

common European articles, such as metal parts of umbrellas' further suggested that he believed European influence played a key role in Kamba artistic skill.<sup>252</sup>

These contradictions were linked to contemporary debates about the origin of iron in British anthropology at that time. For Hobley's generation, the origin of iron was an important and contentious subject, and there was much debate about whether the manipulation of iron had occurred in Europe or Africa first. This debate had the potential to disrupt the European concept of developmental superiority. The skill that Dundas found in Kamba ironwork, therefore, did not fit his preconceptions of African skill. The Kamba were highly skilled in ironwork, and museum collections in Britain represent a distinct material culture of ironwork collected by Europeans at that time. The Wakamba smiths of Kitui, like the Kikuyu, were skilled at working iron and copper wire into bracelets, necklets, snuff bottles, ornaments, bows, clubs and stools, and Hobley collected the machinery used to create ornaments out of admiration for and interest in the craftsmanship.<sup>253</sup> Even Dundas argued that,

more ingenuous and finely worked are the many wire-made ornaments, particularly those worn by the Anake. The chains of brass, copper and iron wire which are worn in profusion are sometimes of such fine make that one could scarcely believe them to be of native work.<sup>254</sup>

As with the gourds, Dundas found it difficult to attribute this skill to the Akamba. As active agents like the material objects analysed by Latour, these supposedly inert objects were troubling, resisting easy colonial classifications that typically extended to people from objects.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Ibid., p. 503.

<sup>253</sup> Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba*, p. 34. Dundas also described this device as 'ingenious', Dundas, *History of Kitui*, p. 504.

<sup>254</sup> Dundas, *History of Kitui*, p. 497.

<sup>255</sup> Latour argues that 'Natural objects are naturally recalcitrant' in Bruno Latour, 'When Things Strike Back: A Possible Contribution of 'Science Studies' to the Social Sciences', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 51:1 (March, 2000), p. 116.

Snuff bottles were particularly popular with Hobley. Tobacco arrived in eastern Africa in the sixteenth century, and its production and use quickly spread. During the colonial period it became a cash crop and, as Chris S. Duvall illustrates, ‘helped sustain mercantilist and slave-trade economies, [and] became a focus of colonial and postcolonial economic development efforts’.<sup>256</sup> Smoking, chewing, and snuffing tobacco were also linked to colonial labour.<sup>257</sup> Duvall further notes that ‘manufactured cigarettes rapidly supplanted pipes worldwide after about 1880’.<sup>258</sup> Tobacco-related goods were therefore of anthropological interest to officials such as Hobley, who was interested in every part of the snuffing process, including the bottles that it was held in. He acquired bottles from various regions, including Kikuyu, to make comparisons in their style. Of these, he believed that the Kamba examples, much like their arrows, were superior.<sup>259</sup>

**Figure 1.8: Kamba chain-maker’s outfit, National Museums Scotland, A.1923.180–C, purchased from C. W. Hobley, 1923**

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<sup>256</sup> Chris S. Duvall, ‘Cannabis and Tobacco in Precolonial and Colonial Africa’, *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Africa* (March, 2017), p. 1.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>259</sup> Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba*, pp. 40 and 41.

**Figure 1.9: Wooden pyriform snuff bottle (Kamba) covered with iron, copper and brass wire coiled on in alternating bands, National Museums Scotland, A1923.179, purchased from C. W. Hobley, 1923**

Hobley was interested in the tools used to craft such fine pieces. As Figure 1.8 illustrates, he collected each part of the process as objects of interest in themselves. These handmade tools were used to intricately decorate items in different wires as we can see in the bottle in Figure 1.9, which is covered with iron, copper and brass wire coiled on in alternating bands. Sometimes made of local ivory, the bottles were usually held by a chain around the neck, whereas others were used by elders and fitted to the top of their staff. These objects clearly represented fine artistic techniques, but they also represented the former power of both the elders and the smiths themselves.

Much like the history of the Akamba, Andrew Reid reminds us that pre-colonial iron smelting and iron workers have largely been forgotten in the contemporary popular



consciousness of Ugandan history.<sup>260</sup> Although their narratives have been obscured, iron workers, he argues, were extremely powerful.<sup>261</sup> The guild of smiths in Ukamba, like the Kikuyu, were believed to possess hereditary magic powers.<sup>262</sup> According to Hobley, the cult of the smith in Ukamba did not appear to be as highly developed as in Kikuyu, where smiths blessed swords and spears of their making and thus played a powerful role in the perceived success of society.<sup>263</sup> However, Kamba smiths did bless their cattle brands and were believed to have the power to curse anyone who stole from their kit.<sup>264</sup> Hobley took time to copy and illustrate their designs in Figure 1.10. As this image tells us, he recorded the patterns as ‘clan marks’ that could also be found on the brass inlay of the stools of Kamba elders.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> Andrew Reid, ‘Constructing History in Uganda’, *Journal of African History*, 57:2 (2016), p. 205. See also Richard J. Reid, *Political Power in Pre-Colonial Buganda* (Oxford, 2002) for a fuller discussion of ironworkers in pre-colonial Buganda; and A. Reid and R. Young, ‘Iron Smelting and Bananas in Buganda’, in P. Mitchell, A. Haour, and J. Hobart (eds.), *Researching Africa’s Past* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 118-123.

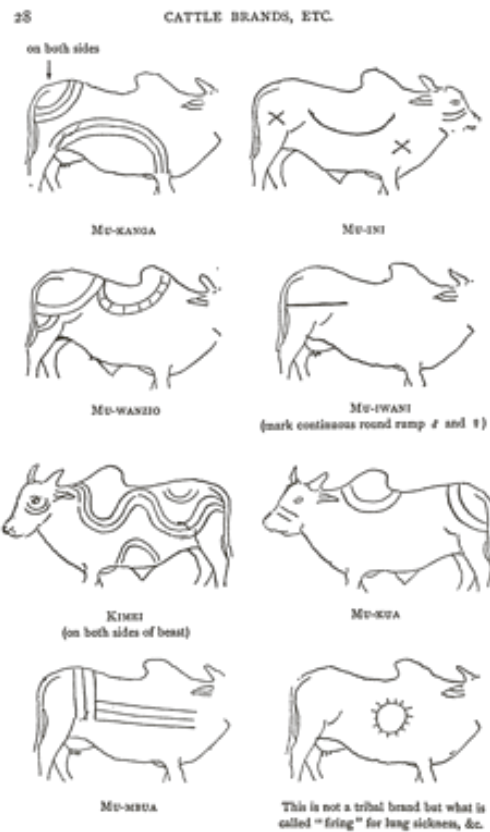
<sup>261</sup> Reid, *Constructing History*, p. 206.

<sup>262</sup> Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 165.

<sup>263</sup> Dundas also claimed that the smith did not appear to occupy the same ‘peculiar position’ that he did amongst other tribes. Dundas, *History of Kitui*, p. 503.

<sup>264</sup> Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs*, p. 174.

<sup>265</sup> Patterned stools were distinguished as male objects; the stools used by women were taller and were not patterned, Dundas, *History of Kitui*, p. 494. Hobley also notes a stool specific to Kitui, which only women could use. Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba*, pp. 35-38.



**Figure 1.10: ‘Cattle Brands etc’ in C. W. Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba*, (1910), p. 28.**

Hobley believed that Kamba stools were some of their most artistic articles, followed closely by snuff bottles. He observed the making-process and carefully described it in ethnographical texts and photographs.<sup>266</sup> After Kamba arrows, stools were the second-most numerous Kamba article to be found in British museums.<sup>267</sup> Not only valued for their artistic skill, the patterns on the stools, like the cattle brands, enabled Hobley to record, identify and classify different groups. Each ‘clan’ had several brands and each family had its own.<sup>268</sup> A particularly detailed example can be seen in Figure 1.11.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., pp. 34-35 and 40. See A.1923.179 at National Museums Scotland.

<sup>268</sup> Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba*, p. 22.

**Figure 1.11: Composite stool of wood inlaid with brass and iron wire and iron chain through a hole in one foot; used by old men, Af1947,16.3, © The Trustees of the British Museum**

Hobley was mapping and classifying Kamba society at that time, and it is interesting that whilst doing so, he was also assembling heavily decorated objects embedded with group markings and identification images such as this stool. There are many other objects in Hobley's museum collections that also contain marks of identification. The chain-making outfit now in National Museums Scotland, for example, has images of identification engraved on it, as do cylinders for storing honey (*mwatu*), gourds, and arrows.<sup>269</sup> Similar markings can be found on his objects collected from the Kikuyu.<sup>270</sup> William Fagg, the late Keeper of the Department of Anthropology at the British

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<sup>269</sup> A.1923.180-180 B, National Museums Scotland. See also Aitangwa clan mark on Plate 3 in Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba*.

<sup>270</sup> Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba*, p. 43. See beehive, A.1923.185, National Museums Scotland.

Museum, argued that art ‘provides one of the principal criteria for the identification and delineation of tribes.’<sup>271</sup> Hobley was not explicitly recording these markings, patterns, and pigments for administrative purposes, but his papers in the Anthropological Institute state that he sought to link common local customs to potential forms of local governance and administration in his work.<sup>272</sup> Julie MacArthur notes that ‘although officials professed a desire to make administrative boundaries coincide with the “tribal” areas mapped by Hobley’, many, such as Geoffrey Archer (1882–1964) ‘struggled to ‘consolidate boundaries along the lines of “native laws and customs”’.<sup>273</sup> Hobley’s collecting of objects and information from the Kamba reveals how colonial priorities and personalities shifted over time, and the changing ways in which the Kamba saw themselves.

## **Conclusion**

Collecting was woven into multiple spheres of colonial officialdom between 1870 and 1920. It was marked by a disjuncture between officials working on the ground, and the ‘official mind’ in Whitehall. Although the Foreign Office displayed little interest in supporting the collecting activities of officials in order to support their understanding and assimilation into local communities, it did support collecting when it saw that it could capitalise on it for strategic purposes. For officials working in Uganda and Kenya, however, the material world was embedded in, and central to all aspects of their work and lives.

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<sup>271</sup> William Fagg, ‘Introduction: Tribes and Forms in African Art’ in Howard Morphy and Morgan Perkins (eds.), *The Anthropology of Art: A Reader* (Oxford, 2006), p. 75.

<sup>272</sup> Charles William Hobley, *Tribal and Inter-tribal Position and Relations and their Forms of Government*, MS27.16, Charles William Hobley Papers, Anthropological Institute.

<sup>273</sup> *Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1910*. Quoted in Julie MacArthur, *Geography and the Political Imagination: Mapping Community in Colonial Kenya* (Athens, OH, 2016), p. 60.

We can see this particularly clearly through examples of gift exchange, which were pivotal to the power relations of diplomatic encounters. As colonial gifts, these apparently ‘pre-modern’ objects served as important sites of political praxis in early imperial diplomacy for both coloniser and colonised and were central to the establishment of ‘modern’ social and political relations. During these events, the shifting balance of power often lay in favour of local elites due to the lack of understanding on the part of the British about the regimes of value that Ugandans attached to different forms of material culture. Successful mastery of this led to better political outcomes for the British. On the other hand, the violent appropriation of symbolic material culture provided another means of disciplining and governing those places that the British did not wish to collaborate with, and did not deem useful, as we see in Acholiland. The materiality of objects acquired also had an affective impact on relations, particularly when they had some link to the human body.

Both the Maasai and Kamba examples studied in this chapter suggest how objects and images of ‘tribal’ cultures were created and re-cultivated over time for political purposes. Sometimes collected objects bolstered images, but at others they did not fit neatly into these narratives. They counter the idea of static tribes, and indeed force us to ask whether the Maasai and Kamba were ever tribes at all in the ways that the British wanted them to be.

Myles Osborne notes that during the 1950s and 1960s Kamba narrators spoke of decades of war in the nineteenth century, and presented themselves as better disciplined in military terms than the ‘savage Maasai’.<sup>274</sup> The tension between the two tribes culminated in clashes in the 1960s and Kamba spokespeople described their ‘manliness’ being threatened by Maasai incursion and their descriptions of the Kamba

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<sup>274</sup> Osborne, *Ethnicity and Empire*, pp. 3 and 227.

as *iloongu* (women).<sup>275</sup> Osborne quotes colonial officials at the time describing the event as the Kamba ‘removing their modern dress and reverting to earlier costume’. Yet Osborne suggests that this event was ‘more an effort to recall older practices and mobilize a shared history to achieve contemporary legitimacy’.<sup>276</sup> This example demonstrates the importance of re-examining officials’ material object collections for understanding how the material world contributed to these ideas.

This chapter has illuminated the different ways in which objects and their information were mobilised for colonial purposes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. These collections enrich previous historiographical approaches to officialdom and allow us to interrogate notions of colonial power and provenance, and the ways in which colonialism worked on the ground. Doing so exposes complex narratives of interaction, in both its violent and more peaceful forms, as well as the resilience, resistance, and creativity of Kenyan and Ugandan actors.

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid., p. 241.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid.

## II

### Collecting, Conversion, and Colonization: Problematizing Missionaries in Uganda

This chapter examines the collecting activities of Protestant missionaries posted to Uganda in the period 1870–1920. Alongside colonial officials, this group constituted the most numerous British ethnographic collectors operating in the region at this time. Two of the most active of these were the medical missionary Dr. Robert William Felkin (1853–1926) and Rev. John Roscoe (1861–1932). These individuals form the central focus of this chapter, which pieces their vast collections together for the first time. Understanding the complex histories behind their acquisitions allows us to interrogate the early work of missionaries in Uganda in new ways, and to reinterpret them through larger networks of influence.

Historians have long debated the role of missionaries as cultural imperialists, often linking their propaganda and efforts at conversion to imperial cultural dominance.<sup>277</sup> In keeping with recent work on missionary collecting in empire, this chapter builds upon and modifies this influential argument, advanced most strongly by John and Jean Comaroff in both volumes of *Of Revelation and Revolution*.<sup>278</sup> Using a South African context, their first volume broadly argued that the stereotypes of difference and the ideologies of improvement that missionaries produced through their

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<sup>277</sup> Andrew Porter, “‘Cultural Imperialism’ and Protestant Missionary Enterprise, 1780–1914’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 25:3 (1997), p. 372. See also Andrew Porter, *Religion Versus Empire?: British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700–1914* (Manchester, 2004), pp. 6–7. Porter’s arguments have been developed in more recent works by Hilary Carey and Anna Johnston, for example. See Hilary Carey (ed.), *God’s Empire: Religion and Colonialism in the British World, c.1801–1908* (Cambridge, 2011). For an examination of the texts of the London Missionary Society (LMS), see Anna Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire* (Cambridge, 2003). See also Norman Etherington (ed.), *Missionaries and Empire* (Oxford, 2007).

<sup>278</sup> Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa, Volume I* (London, 1991); Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier, Volume II* (London, 1997).

discourse and propaganda paved the way for imperial cultural dominance.<sup>279</sup> In the second volume, they argued that even in the micro, everyday settings of missionary life, whether through the use of architecture, medicine, clothing, domestic objects, or corporeal activities, the ultimate goal of missionaries was to undermine traditional beliefs and ways of life in Africa, which in turn supported larger imperial aims.<sup>280</sup>

Historians have extensively discussed and debated the Comaroffs' arguments since these influential volumes were published. Andrew Porter contended that the individual faith, discourse, and methods adopted by missionaries were too 'fluid' to be as successful as imperialist tools as the Comaroffs had implied.<sup>281</sup> Esme Cleall similarly suggested that while missionaries had 'colonizing tendencies', and contributed to colonial constructions of difference, their textual discourses were continuously 'made, remade, and ruptured'.<sup>282</sup> Furthermore, the discursive strategies of missionaries to transform African societies, she suggests, were not always experienced by local people in the same ways.<sup>283</sup> This chapter situates the history of collecting in Uganda at the intersection of these re-examinations of missionary cultural dominance and argues that the collecting activities of Felkin and Roscoe problematize the Comaroffs' theory in three ways.

First, the chapter commences with a sketch of these two collectors, tracing their backgrounds, interests, and career trajectories, demonstrating their efforts to balance a career in the mission field with personal ambitions to achieve distinction in the realms of metropolitan science.<sup>284</sup> Both Felkin and Roscoe resigned from their missionary duties to pursue scientific careers, and their collecting played an important role in these

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<sup>279</sup> Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Volume I*, pp. 86-125.

<sup>280</sup> Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Modernity, Volume II*, p. 4.

<sup>281</sup> Andrew Porter, "'Cultural Imperialism'", p. 372.

<sup>282</sup> Esme Cleall, *Missionary Discourses of Difference: Negotiating Otherness in the British Empire, 1840-1900* (Basingstoke, 2012), p. 2.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>284</sup> Here I refer back to Bourdieu's thesis of 'Distinction' outlined in the introduction to this dissertation.



efforts. This suggests that they were ultimately less interested in pursuing evangelical programmes of propaganda, and more interested in using the opportunities presented by empire and the mission field to develop different careers.

The second section builds on this argument and examines Roscoe's collections of objects – labelled 'fetishes', 'relics', 'amulets' and 'charms' – which now reside in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA) at the University of Cambridge, Pitt-Rivers Museum at the University of Oxford, and the British Museum. It problematizes them as simply sources of missionary propaganda. On the one hand, Roscoe's collection of these items was framed by social anthropological thought and its preoccupation with measuring global religions and cultures along racial and evolutionary lines. The missionary and anthropological interest in 'fetishes', for example, partly represented a belief that African religion occupied the lowest levels of the evolutionary scale. On the other hand, Roscoe was highly dependent upon local elites to acquire his items. He worked closely with Buganda's Prime Minister, Sir Apolo Kagga, and later with other Ugandan kings and elites.<sup>285</sup> Their knowledge, cooperation, and connections were pivotal to the volume, character, and content of his collections, which also included many items of royal regalia, belief, and worship, and shaped a specific image of Ugandan elite power. This section reveals how missionaries in collaboration with African Christians and British anthropologists actively constructed an identity for these items that was more complex than simply undermining African societies, and linked instead to particular constructions of the historical past. The Comaroffs offer little space for African agency, collaboration, or resistance in actively shaping missionary activity and thought.<sup>286</sup> The history of missionary collecting in Uganda complicates that approach.

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<sup>285</sup> Kagga and others will be examined in greater depth in the following chapter, but their role is crucial to note here, and will be referenced through the course of this chapter.

<sup>286</sup> Donald L. Donham, 'Thinking Temporally or Modernizing Anthropology', *American Anthropologist*, 103:1 (March, 2001), p. 138.

The third section explores items collected by Roscoe and Felkin that eventually entered scientific museums in Britain. Both men found examples of Ugandan and Kenyan medical equipment and medicine that they believed to be comparable to modern European implements and were surprised by their sophistication, providing an interesting counterpoint to their fetish collections and their associations with the past. These items served British medical knowledge and efforts to improve the health of the British population. By focusing entirely on the missionary desire to undermine, change, and exploit local beliefs and practices obscures opportunities to understand the skills of local people and the ways in which missionaries learned from local practices. At the same time, Felkin's collecting in particular entailed elements of exploitation of the African body (particularly female bodies) through his collecting methods and subsequent representations of his objects and the 'tribal' peoples who made use of them. The topic of missionary corporeal exploitation for imperial purposes (particularly in relation to the capitalist labour market) has occupied an important place in the wider historiography. Some historians have demonstrated missionaries' active participation in this process, while others have provided examples of their opposition.<sup>287</sup> Perhaps the most pertinent approach for the purposes of this chapter is Megan Vaughan's examination of discourses of otherness produced through missionary medicine in eastern Africa. Vaughan argues that medicine was crucial to the formation of colonial

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<sup>287</sup> Terence Ranger argued that some medical missionaries were explicitly opposed to the medical approaches of colonial capitalism. See Terence O. Ranger, 'Godly Medicine: The Ambiguities of Medical Mission in Southeast Tanzania, 1900–1945', *Social Science & Medicine. Part B: Medical Anthropology*, 15:3 (July, 1981), pp. 261–277. Jean Comaroff meanwhile contended that the two were inseparable in 'The Diseased Heart of Africa: Medicine, Colonialism and the Black Body', in Shirley Lindenbaum and Margaret M. Lock (eds), *Knowledge, Power, and Practice: The Anthropology of Medicine and Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA, 1993) pp. 305–329. Susan Pederson has described the complex relationship between missionaries and colonial state in their attempts to stamp out female genital mutilation and circumcision ceremonies in Kenya in 'National Bodies, Unspeakable Acts: The Sexual Politics of Colonial Policy-making', *The Journal of Modern History*, 63:4 (December, 1991), pp. 647–680.

and European discourse about Africans but highlights its complexity and inconsistent nature.<sup>288</sup>

Felkin's and Roscoe's collecting alerts us to the fact that behind the racialized representations that missionary collections and accounts produced about African culture in Britain, lay a spectrum of different human encounters. Attending to these encounters and networks (here through the lens of collecting) offers important insights into the ambivalence of those representations. The chapter concludes by suggesting that if we study the historical contexts of missionary collecting more closely, different stories emerge, which do not always fit into neat narratives of conversion, imperial power, and Western 'science', though they are still bound up in their broader frameworks.

These arguments build upon and develop other studies of missionary collecting in empire. Some of these have focused on missionary collections as tools of evangelical propaganda. Using surrendered Polynesian 'idols' from the London Missionary Society (LMS) Museum as an example, Steven Hooper argues that missionary collections served as 'performance indicators' of evangelical and imperial success.<sup>289</sup> This line of argument has provided a productive analytical framework for scholars of missionary collecting.<sup>290</sup> In her examination of the LMS museum, however, Annie Coombes suggests that the contingent and often self-contradictory nature of LMS collections from Africa illustrates that missionaries were 'agents of heterogeneous knowledge' rather than simply 'idol-bashing evangelicals'.<sup>291</sup> They were situated between the colonial government and a powerful educated African elite and had multiple

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<sup>288</sup> Meghan Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills* (Stanford, CA, 1991), p. 4. Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley, CA, 2000).

<sup>289</sup> Steven Hooper, *Pacific Encounters: Art and Divinity in Polynesia 1760–1860* (London, 2006), p. 27.

<sup>290</sup> For example, Rosemary Seton, 'Reconstructing the Museum of the LMS', *Material Religion* 8:1 (2012), p. 101.

<sup>291</sup> Annie Coombes, 'For God and for England': Missionary Contributions to an Image of Africa', in *Reinventing Africa*, pp. 161-186, p. 161.

associations, objectives, and loyalties.<sup>292</sup> Moreover, missionaries were not just removing idols from society for ‘civilising’ purposes, but also salvaging, studying, and seeking to understand them, illustrated by the often highly-detailed research that accompanied them.<sup>293</sup>

In a more recent study, Chris Wingfield builds upon Coombes’ insights and argues that LMS collections formed much more than just a ‘Christian trophy case’.<sup>294</sup> In-line with Andrew Porter’s earlier argument about missionaries and empire, Wingfield demonstrates that, rather than representing a single agenda, different objects reflected different contexts of local missionary activity. Often described as ‘trophies’, ‘relics’, and ‘curios’, these items had multivalent significances that were not just bound up in conversion. Instead, they represented multiple threads of the imperial experience.<sup>295</sup>

Missionary collections from Uganda support this latter line of thought, put forward by Wingfield and Coombes, but both authors largely focus their enquiries on the metropolitan museum and the LMS. The neglect of the CMS is likely due in part to the fact that its own museum collections were dispersed in the 1950s among various museums in Britain and abroad. Their documentation was also fractured in the process. This chapter adds new insights by turning to other sources such as memoirs, anthropological works, and objects to piece together the encounters, networks, and collaborations through which CMS collectors acquired their items. Examining Felkin’s collecting also adds a new dimension to wider discussions of missionary collecting, which have failed to interrogate the collecting activities of medical missionaries.

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<sup>292</sup> Ibid., p. 168.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Chris Wingfield, “‘Scarcely More than a Christian Trophy Case’? The Global Collections of the London Missionary Society Museum (1814–1910)”, *Journal of the History of Collections*, 29:1 (2017), p. 109.

<sup>295</sup> Karen Jacobs, Chantal Knowles and Chris Wingfield, ‘Introduction’, in Karen Jacobs, Chantal Knowles and Chris Wingfield (eds.), *Trophies, Relics and Curios? Missionary Heritage from Africa and the Pacific* (Leiden, 2015), p. 16.

This chapter also contributes to the larger historiography around missionaries in Uganda. Early work expressed a particular interest in the politico-religious relationship between missionaries and the Buganda state.<sup>296</sup> The Ganda appropriation of Christianity at this time was part of the reason why the British elevated them politically and many of these earlier studies sought to understand how this happened.<sup>297</sup> Roland Oliver's *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, produced in 1952, offered one of the earliest studies of the relationship between missionaries and imperialism, but was framed by a limited idea of politics.<sup>298</sup> Holger Bernt Hansen's *Mission, Church and State in a Colonial Setting: Uganda 1890-1925*, published in 1984, later developed a new benchmark for the study of missionaries in Uganda by providing details of their shifting relations with the colonial state in a broad variety of cultural and political realms.<sup>299</sup> More recently there has been greater interest in the role of the medical missionary and the study of African politico-religious texts (particularly dissenting texts) in response to missionary incursions.<sup>300</sup> This chapter adds a new material and cultural perspective to these studies, and new insights into pre-colonial forms of elite worship and well-being. It concludes that missionary collections from Uganda reflect a complex triangulation between evangelical beliefs and practices, emerging scientific disciplines, and local knowledge and power structures, all within the context of the changing imperial landscape.

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<sup>296</sup> John V. Taylor, *The Growth of the Church in Buganda* (London, 1958); C.C. Wrigley, 'The Christian Revolution in Buganda', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 11 (1959), pp. 33–48; John Mary Waliggo, 'The Religio-Political Context of the Uganda Martyrs and its Significance', in *African Christian Studies* (Nairobi, 1986), pp. 3–40.

<sup>297</sup> In a much more updated and nuanced study, Jonathan Earle has studied the political writings of indigenous political and religious thinkers at the end of empire to argue the ways in which religion and politics in colonial Buganda were ontological. Jonathan L. Earle, *Colonial Buganda and the End of Empire: Political Thought and Historical Imagination in Africa* (Cambridge, 2017).

<sup>298</sup> Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (London, 1952).

<sup>299</sup> Holger Bernt Hansen, *Mission, Church and State in a Colonial Setting: Uganda 1890–1925* (London, 1984).

<sup>300</sup> Earle, *Colonial Buganda*.

## The Collectors: Roscoe and Felkin

Roscoe and Felkin were both attached to the CMS in Uganda at different points of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Although they did not operate in Uganda at the same time, a key link between them is their joint interest in collecting and emerging scientific disciplines. Missionary work provided an important outlet for these interests with opportunities for research. Both individuals produced important anthropological texts, which are still used today as key sources of information. However, neither wrote in any detail about their missionary activities or personal religious beliefs, suggesting that they wished to be defined publicly through their scientific achievements alone.

Felkin was the CMS' first medical missionary to travel to Uganda. He was also one of the earliest commentators on anthropological research about Uganda. After living for some time in Germany, he attended the University of Edinburgh in 1875 to study medicine.<sup>301</sup> The University was highly regarded for both its medical and missionary training and by 1892 the Scotland Foreign Mission Committee had even launched its own steamer, the *Henry Henderson*, to enable medical missionaries to conduct operations in British East Africa. In 1878 Felkin met with Rev A.M. Mackay (1849-1890) and although not yet qualified as a doctor, agreed to join what was only the second CMS expedition to Uganda.<sup>302</sup>

He was a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Berlin Anthropological Society as well as a member of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain.<sup>303</sup> Felkin also appears to have been the first major missionary collector of Ugandan material, and the breadth of his ethnographic collection, which numbered almost one hundred items from across Uganda and the

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<sup>301</sup> Peter Dunn, 'Robert Felkin MD (1853-1926) and Caesarean delivery in Central Africa (1879)', *Royal Medical Journal*, 80:3 (1999), p. 250.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid.

Equatorial Province (now South Sudan and northern Uganda), was highly significant for its time.<sup>304</sup> Felkin sold his collection to what was then the Royal Scottish Museum in 1908. By 1882, the CMS only had twelve medical missionaries worldwide, and there had been no successor to Felkin in Uganda, illustrating the rarity of his surviving collection now at National Museums Scotland.<sup>305</sup> The collection provides important insights into local medical practices, and missionary understandings of them. It also sheds light on Felkin's own ambitions and opportunities to pursue a career in ethno-medicine beyond the mission, and the ways in which he used his object collecting helped him to do so. Felkin resigned from the CMS in 1881 and developed a professional and academic career in tropical medicine at the Edinburgh Medical School.<sup>306</sup>

John Roscoe was a missionary in Uganda between 1891 and 1909. He was the principal of the Theological College in Mengo, Buganda that taught ordination candidates and catechists.<sup>307</sup> As Roscoe noted in his memoir, the school year consisted of two terms lasting five months each. Each term ended with a break of a month and it was during these breaks that Roscoe visited different districts by bicycle for collecting and research purposes, assisted by carriers, who were his students.<sup>308</sup> Most of Roscoe's collecting during his time occurred within the areas surrounding the royal court of Buganda, and he built a particularly close working relationship with Buganda's Prime Minister Apolo Kagawa, who helped Roscoe to research and collect.

Roscoe left his missionary post in Uganda in 1909 and continued to work as a clergyman in Cambridge.<sup>309</sup> During this time he also began to cultivate his reputation

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<sup>304</sup> Felkin's collection of objects are stored in National Museums Scotland (formerly the Royal Scottish Museum), A.1908.306.1-72.

<sup>305</sup> *CMS Gleaner* 1880, p. 180.

<sup>306</sup> 'Caesarean Section - A Brief History', U.S. National Library of Medicine, <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/caesarean/part2.html>, accessed 07. 02. 18.

<sup>307</sup> Maud Michaud, 'The Missionary and the Anthropologist: The Intellectual Friendship and Scientific Collaboration of the Reverend', *Studies in World Christianity*, 22:1, p. 60.

<sup>308</sup> John Roscoe, *Twenty-Five Years in East Africa* (Cambridge, 1921), pp. 207-208.

<sup>309</sup> Ray, *Myth, Ritual and Kingship in Buganda*, p. 28.

within the scholarly networks of the University, where James George Frazer was a Fellow of Trinity College.<sup>310</sup> He voluntarily catalogued Frazer's personal library and lectured in the Anthropology Department while Frazer amended drafts of Roscoe's publications.<sup>311</sup> Despite his best attempts, Roscoe failed to secure a fulltime fellowship at the University, though the University offered him a rectory in Norfolk in 1911. Frazer described this as 'a recognition by the University of your eminent services to science as well as in the mission field; for I have no doubt that the electors considered both your claims, your scientific and clerical, which you unite in so high and rare a degree'.<sup>312</sup> Here we begin to see Bourdieu's theory of distinction more clearly, with Roscoe acquiring cultural property in Uganda in return for both cultural capital and actual property back in Britain. The same might be said of Felkin and his career back in Edinburgh.

To boost his profile, Roscoe made plans to return to Uganda to conduct a professional collecting expedition. The recent Cambridge Expedition to Torres Straits led by Alfred Cort Haddon (1855–1940) in 1898 had ushered in a new standard for 'modern' technical methods of ethnographical fieldwork and collecting, and it is possible that Roscoe sought to emulate its success.<sup>313</sup> This trip had the institutional backing of both the Royal Society and the recently opened Wellcome Museum. Roscoe returned to Uganda in 1919 on an official collecting expedition under the auspices of the *Mackie Ethnological Expedition*. The trip was funded by the businessman and philanthropist Sir Peter Mackie (1855–1924), the Royal Society, and Henry Wellcome. This time Roscoe visited the Kingdoms of Bunyoro and Ankole. Roscoe was a consistent donor. He made his first gift of twenty objects from Buganda to the British Museum in 1896; he then made successive donations to the MAA from Buganda,

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<sup>310</sup> Ibid.

<sup>311</sup> Michaud, 'The Missionary and the Anthropologist', p. 61.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

<sup>313</sup> H. J. Fleure, 'Haddon, Alfred Cort', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (January, 2011).



Mount Elgon, Teso, Ankole, Busoga, Bunyoro and Bukedi between 1903 and 1927. The museum acquired further objects after his death in 1933 and 1937 through auctions. Roscoe also gave items from Buganda, Ankole, and Bunyoro to the Pitt-Rivers Museum in 1916, 1920 and 1921.

### **Fetishes, Charms, and Amulets: Objects of Missionary Conversion? A Study of John Roscoe's Collections**

Working through the records of John Roscoe's considerable object collections at the MAA and Pitt-Rivers Museum, it is difficult to ignore the numerous listings that are described as 'fetishes', 'charms', 'relics', 'amulets' and items associated with 'gods'. Today, these are problematic terms for scholars. The term *lubaale*, for example, is traditionally associated with the term 'god' or 'guardian', but as Jennifer Johnson has pointed out, 'English language accounts of African vernacular concepts suffer from a translation problem' and could mean something quite different to local people.<sup>314</sup> Late nineteenth-century colonial definitions described *lubaale* as 'a spirit, a demon; a false god; an idol'.<sup>315</sup> As Johnson points out, '*Lubaale* are not, however, properly purely religious or spiritual entities. They are beings made real through material and affective encounters with and conversations about the objects and phenomena with which particular *lubaale* are associated'.<sup>316</sup> Here Johnson refers to natural phenomena such as

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<sup>314</sup> Jennifer L. Johnson, 'Fish, Family, and the Gendered Politics of Descent Along Uganda's Southern Littorals', *History in Africa*, 45 (June, 2018), p. 450.

<sup>315</sup> Quote taken from G.L. Pilkington, *Luganda-English and English-Luganda Vocabulary* (London, 1892), p. 58. *Ibid.*, p. 458.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*

lightning and rainbows.<sup>317</sup> However, little attention has been paid to the physical objects to which these entities were attached, and which now lie in museums across Britain.

The idea of the ‘fetish’ was also a broad and vague term originally coined by Portuguese explorers of Africa in the early-modern period. In the nineteenth century, it was transformed through the emergence of anthropology, colonialism, and modern aesthetics.<sup>318</sup> Today, the meanings of these so-called ‘fetish’ objects are much better understood, but in the nineteenth century John Mack notes that they were ‘one of the most potent zones of misunderstanding’ and that ‘the perception of these objects as “fetish” is an entirely spurious external view which classifies objects regardless of indigenous understanding’.<sup>319</sup>

Objects in museums that are described as ‘fetishes’ range from figurative carvings to containers that hold medicine or magically-charged substances. A common feature among most ‘fetishes’ is a mixture of natural and manufactured materials.<sup>320</sup> Until now, most contemporary scholarly attention has focused on the sculptural forms of royal human figures (*Ndop*) that Emil Torday (1875–1931) and the missionary William H. Sheppard (1865–1927) collected during an anthropological expedition to the southern parts of the Belgian Congo (1907–1909).<sup>321</sup> In their assessments of the cultures of Africa, early twentieth-century museums and anthropologists elevated the carving and decorative art traditions of Kuba artefacts.<sup>322</sup> Those collected by Roscoe in

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<sup>317</sup> For a similar argument about belief and the natural world see Jonathon L. Earle, ‘Political Activism and Other Life Forms in Colonial Buganda’, *History in Africa*, 45 (2018), pp. 373–395.

<sup>318</sup> Peter Pels, ‘The Modern Fear of Matter: Reflections on the Protestantism of Victorian Science’, *Material Religion: The Journal of Objects, Art, and Belief*, 4:3 (2008), p. 266; Patricia Spyer, *Border Fetishisms: Material Objects in Unstable Places* (New York, NY, 1998), p. 1.

<sup>319</sup> John Mack, ‘Fetish? Magic Figures from Central Africa’ in Anthony Shelton (ed.), *Fetishism: Visualizing Power and Desire* (London, 1995), pp. 54–55.

<sup>320</sup> Mack, ‘Fetish?’, p. 53.

<sup>321</sup> Mack, ‘Fetish?; John Mack, ‘Kuba Art and the Birth of Ethnography’ in Enid Schildkrout and Curtis A. Keim (eds.), *The Scramble for Art in Central Africa* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 63–78; David A. Binkley and Patricia Darish, ‘Missionary and Ethnographer as Collectors of Kuba Artifacts’ in Schildkrout and Keim, *The Scramble for Art in Central Africa* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 37–62.

<sup>322</sup> Binkley and Darish, ‘Missionary and Ethnographer’, p. 37.

Uganda were not of a sculptural form, and this may be part of the reason that they have not yet received any sustained attention from contemporary scholars. This neglect is significant, for as this chapter will demonstrate, these important objects have much to tell us about the dynamics of imperialism, as well as elite pre-colonial life in Uganda.

Roscoe collected hundreds of objects during his time in Uganda, of which fifty-seven are described as objects relating to indigenous gods, fetishes, charms, and amulets. Forty-eight came from Buganda, while the remaining items came from the Bahima. As the descriptions in Table 2.1 illustrate, these objects were associated with a wide range of social realms, from warfare to cattle-keeping, canoeing, health, social mobility, and ancestry. The majority were associated with royal ritual. Although museums labelled these items ‘fetishes’, ‘charms’, ‘relics’, and ‘amulets’, they clearly had far more complex meanings and functions. Their classificatory labels make it tempting to simply ascribe them to the missionary propaganda project, as tools that legitimated and illustrated successful conversion.<sup>323</sup> However, examining Roscoe’s networks suggests these should be interpreted within a broader framework of interests.

John Roscoe was an ambitious man who sought to contribute to the burgeoning discipline of anthropological scholarship developing in Britain, particularly at the University of Cambridge. He was especially influenced by the anthropologist James Frazer. There was a complex pairing, for on the one hand Frazer berated the ‘deplorable ravages of Christianity and civilization among the people’ of Uganda, while simultaneously working with a missionary and marking its religious culture low on an evolutionary scale of worship.<sup>324</sup> His academic interest, however, lay in comparative religion and divine kingship.<sup>325</sup> Frazer conducted comparative studies using research from questionnaires given to missionaries and officials, believing that this would reveal

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<sup>323</sup> Mack, ‘*Fetish?*’, p. 53.

<sup>324</sup> Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, p. 166

<sup>325</sup> J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (Oxford: 1894).

an evolution in human culture.<sup>326</sup> His interests in dynastic ritual are clearly visible throughout Roscoe's written works. The pair soon developed a mutually beneficial relationship, with Roscoe collecting information and Frazer theorising. Frazer's influence had a significant impact on the objects that Roscoe collected, and the ways in which he understood them. Together, they helped to define a significant phase of British evolutionary anthropology, though Roscoe and his objects are often overlooked in anthropological histories on this period.

Missionary and anthropological ways of thinking would become further aligned in the first decade of the early twentieth century through the development of the so-called 'Hamitic Hypothesis'. This theory built on the biblical myth of Ham, the banished son of Noah, and attributed all significant cultural achievements in sub-Saharan Africa to a supposedly ancient pastoral Caucasian race called the 'Hamites' who had travelled south into sub-Saharan Africa and assimilated with the supposedly inferior 'Negroid race'.<sup>327</sup> British anthropologist Charles Gabriel Seligman (1873–1940), inspired by Roscoe's collecting, suggested that living descendants were still present in complex communities in Africa, including the Bahima of Uganda.<sup>328</sup> The Hamitic Hypothesis continued to be influential throughout the first three decades of the twentieth century and framed many popular and academic works on Uganda.<sup>329</sup> In many ways, then, although Roscoe's collecting was tempered by his scientific impulse to study and organize, rather than to destroy.

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<sup>326</sup> J. G. Frazer and T. V. Holmes, 'Questions on the Manners, Customs, Religion, Superstitions of Uncivilized or Semi-Civilized Peoples' *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 18 (1889), pp. 431–40.

<sup>327</sup> E.R. Sanders, 'The Hamitic Hypothesis; Its Origin and Functions in the Time Perspective', *The Journal of African History*, 10:4 (1969), pp. 521–532.

<sup>328</sup> Early letters on the topic between Roscoe and Seligman are in the archives of the Royal Commonwealth Society Library at the University of Cambridge. See John Roscoe to Seligman from Kampala/Mackie Ethnological Expedition, 27 June 1920, Add 9396/45, Royal Commonwealth Society Library, University of Cambridge.

<sup>329</sup> See, for example, Sir Harry Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, p. 575.

Roscoe also operated through networks of Ugandan collaborators and intermediaries. A key feature of Roscoe's collecting in Buganda, Bunyoro, and Ankole was his collaboration with local elites. Apolo Kagwa, the *Katikkiro* (Prime Minister) of Buganda, played a formative role in Roscoe's early collecting, offering his own knowledge and objects. Later, Andereya Duhaga II (1882–1924), the *Mukama* (king) of Bunyoro, played a similar role, as did *Omugabe* (king) Kahaya of Ankole, and his *Nganzi* (Prime Minister) Mbaguta.<sup>330</sup> Their contributions will be explored in their own right in the following chapter, but it is crucial to underline them here, for the information provided by these figures was key to Roscoe's acquisitions and analysis. Thus, there were many layers of influence guiding Roscoe's approach to these objects, including information from royal Ugandan informants and methods of analysis from evolutionary anthropologists, all within a wider framework of missionary zeal and state expansionism. The resulting collections, and the ways in which they were understood, developed thanks to a complex collaborative effort.

This chapter will focus on one particular set of objects that Roscoe collected: the *Kibuuka* relics and other associated items such as royal umbilical cords, which Roscoe stated were all believed by Kiganda royalty to hold special powers of protection. Neil Kodesh argues that historians have too often accepted the orthodox accounts of dynastic tradition put forward by Roscoe, who did not account for any major change in Buganda until the arrival of foreign influence.<sup>331</sup> In his rich and persuasive account, Kodesh, who has conducted extensive oral histories in Buganda, argues that shrines were once crucial sites of local community cosmology and

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<sup>330</sup> Karen Jacobs, Chantal Knowles and Chris Wingfield view missionary collecting as a process of negotiation, challenging the traditional tropes of missionary collections as simply trophies, relics and curios. Among their edited collection, Andrew Mills's chapter about female statuettes in Tonga, for example, illustrates that missionaries were 'pawns' rather than 'players' in the collection of indigenous objects. Andrew Mills, 'Female Statuette, Tonga' in Wingfield, Jacobs and Knowles (eds), *Trophies, Relics and Curios?* pp. 37–45.

<sup>331</sup> Neil Kodesh, *Beyond the Royal Gaze: Clanship and Public Healing in Buganda* (Charlottesville, 2010), p. 197. Kodesh refers in particular here to Benjamin Ray, *Myth, Ritual and Kingship in Buganda* (New York NY, 1991).

wellbeing. The power of the oracle priests grew to such an extent that Ganda kings sought to transform their local clan spirits into ‘national gods’. For Kodesh, these shrines therefore represented a major transformation in the scale of public healing and the formation of the state. The ritual power that was once commanded locally was re-choreographed into new coronation ceremonies and the expansionist ideology of the Ganda state. More recently, Jennifer Johnson has explained how late nineteenth-century kings also sought to administer the waters (and the powerful spirits of the waters such as Mukasa) surrounding Buganda.<sup>332</sup>

These accounts have been crucial for correcting colonial narratives and generalisations about Ugandan religion, and for reconfiguring our understanding of pre-colonial shrine sites as sites of community wellbeing. However, this analysis can be developed further by incorporating the specific objects to which they were associated and attached, into the discussion. The physicality of these objects was central to the practice of community wellbeing, and the legitimacy of priests and kings and continued to bear significance in colonial and post-colonial understandings of them.

One important example of objects collected by Roscoe and Kaggwa are those associated with the God, *Mukasa*, including ‘charms’ and baskets used to carry to *enkejje* or fish of the lakes surrounding Buganda (see Appendixes 2.1 and 3.2). Johnson notes that because these fish almost entirely disappeared from these lakes in the 1980s, ‘without a visual referent for these fish, in their historic abundance, *enkejje* have thus far been unable to animate the historical imaginations of even the most attentive scholars working to advance methodological approaches for analysing social histories of recent and much more distant pasts’.<sup>333</sup> Yet, as Johnson further notes, attending to the role of *enkejje* in events and social life ‘reorients analyses of descent politics beyond

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<sup>332</sup> Jennifer L. Johnson, ‘Fishwork in Uganda: A Multispecies Ethnohistory about Fish, People, and Ideas about Fish and People’ (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2014).

<sup>333</sup> Johnson, ‘Fish, Family, and the Gendered Politics’, p. 449.

an often implicit focus on male interests towards the work of grandmothers, aunts, and mothers' who dealt with the fish.<sup>334</sup> Thus, although *Mukasa* came to be associated with royal narratives in the nineteenth century, the objects that Roscoe and Kaggwa collected may also offer alternative insights and directions with further research and analysis.

Another example can be found in the shrine of *Kibuuka*, which is also a key site in Kodesh's analysis. *Kibuuka* was part of a larger group of gods and spirits or departed ancestors, which commanded influence at both state and local level in pre-colonial Uganda. Oral records suggest that the relics were originally kept at a local shrine in Mbaale, managed by priests and priestesses who functioned as oracles for *Kibuuka*. Kodesh argues that the shrine was appropriated by Ganda kings and *Kibuuka* was assimilated into Ganda rhetoric as the national God of War.<sup>335</sup>

The objects in Figure 2.1 were taken from *Kibuuka's* Mbaale site by Roscoe and now reside in the collections of Uganda Museum. These objects are recorded as human relics, though it is unclear whether tests have confirmed that they indeed contain human remains, and if so, what their age is. In 1962, F.B. Welbourn noted that if these were truly the relics of *Kibuuka*, oral histories would suggest that they were at least four centuries old.<sup>336</sup> The objects include a lower jaw, an umbilical cord and a phallus, which have been placed in cases decorated with cowrie shells. They are part of a larger collection of regalia, including a ceremonial stool and leopard-skin on which the relics would have once been placed. These additional items illustrate the careful curation that was once intended for these objects, while the composition of Roscoe's photograph (one of many that he took from various angles and perspectives) reveals their continued curation (in different guises) throughout their object-biographies.

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<sup>334</sup> Ibid.

<sup>335</sup> Kodesh, *Beyond the Royal Gaze*, pp. 143–154.

<sup>336</sup> F.B. Welbourn, *Religion and Politics in Uganda 1952-1962* (London, 1962), p. 17.

**Figure 2.1: Relics of *Kibuuka*. From L to R, phallus, umbilical cord and jawbone, decorated with cowrie shells and glass beads. Photograph taken by Rev. John Roscoe. Courtesy of the Royal Anthropological Institute, London**

These objects made an important impact among scientific circles in Britain. The Egyptologists Aylward Blackman, Margaret Murray and Charles Gabriel Seligman all studied them and subsequently wrote articles in the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* between 1911 and 1916, linking them to Egyptian kingship and birthing rituals (particularly the placenta standard) and to Hamitic theories.<sup>337</sup> Blackman stated, ‘it must be remembered that the Baganda royal family is hamitic in origin and consequently akin to the proto-Egyptians’.<sup>338</sup> Blackman discussed the evolution of its style through the umbilical cords of later kings that Roscoe also collected.

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<sup>337</sup> Aylward Blackman, ‘Some Remarks upon the Head of an Ancient Egyptian Birth Goddess’, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* (January 1916), pp. 199–206; C.G. Seligman and Margaret A. Murray, ‘Note upon an Early Egyptian Standard’, *Man*, 11 (1911), pp. 165–171.

<sup>338</sup> Blackman, ‘Some Remarks’, p. 206.



Umbilical cords can also be found in Roscoe's British museum collections. Roscoe stated that the 'ghosts' of former kings were attached to them.<sup>339</sup> The umbilical cord on the bottom left (Figure 2.2) is labelled 'Kamanya', who ruled from approximately 1794–1830. The item on the mid-left is recorded as the oldest in the collection, and the most recent cord is on the bottom right. As these images illustrate, their distinctive style clearly developed over time as more bead colours were added, presumably as trade networks increased. Both cowrie shells and beads were much sought-after in trade and projected the prestige of their owner.<sup>340</sup> The decorated jawbone was placed in a wooden vessel called a *lutiba*, which was itself wrapped in bark-cloth and rubbed with butter until it assumed a conical shape some two feet six inches high. This process was called 'decorating the king'.<sup>341</sup> The jawbones were then set on a throne with the umbilical cord. These objects therefore offer a rare window on the haptics and careful tactile methods involved in the aesthetic creation and worship of royal ancestry. They also offer potential physical evidence of the development of royal tradition and lineage in Buganda, on which the textual record has been a source of much disagreement among historians such as John Rowe, David Henige and Christopher Wrigley.<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 285.

<sup>340</sup> For more on the trade of glass beads in the pre-colonial period, see Karin Pallaver, 'From Venice to East Africa: History, Uses, and Meanings of Glass Beads' in Karin Hofmeester and Berndt-Stefan Grewe (eds.), *Luxury in Global Perspective: Objects and Practices, 1600–2000*, (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 192-217.

<sup>341</sup> Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 282.

<sup>342</sup> See for example John A. Rowe, 'Myth, Memoir, and Moral Admonition'; David Henige, 'Reflections on Early Interlacustrine Chronology: An Essay in Source Criticism', *Journal of African History*, 15 (1974) pp. 27-46; and Christopher Wrigley, *Kingship and State*.

**Figure 2.2: Umbilical cords, John Roscoe Collection, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge. From Top left: E 1907.299; 1920.396/Roscoe; Z16510; E 1912.1; E1907. 300-301; E 1907.302.**

Roscoe also collected oral tales that describe the unique spatial orientation and choreographed production once ascribed to these relics and their ritual ceremonies.<sup>343</sup> The jawbone and umbilical cord were supposedly kept in a cell dug in the second chamber of a temple. The enclosure to the temple was made with plaited reed in a special design that the court did not allow to be replicated elsewhere.<sup>344</sup> When kings visited the temple of their predecessor, the few allowed inside the space of the temple would bow to the jawbone, which was called ‘the King’.<sup>345</sup> Drums were beaten,

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<sup>343</sup> Antoinette Burton encourages us to think about the relationship of material objects to the built environment and space in A. Burton (ed.), *The Urban Experience in Eastern Africa, c.1750–2000* (Nairobi, 2002).

<sup>344</sup> Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 284.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283.

presents were brought, music was played, women sang and a fire was kept alight, all adding to the drama of these objects. Although these details may have been exaggerated by Roscoe, they do offer a potential insight into the social relations attached to the objects and the temple, and particularly the role of women in the maintenance and production of royal history. The guardians of the tombs were women. When the king died, the former queen (and other widows of the king) went to live inside the shrine and became the Queen Mother, an important and powerful position.<sup>346</sup> When a widow died, she was replaced by members of her clan. Women were therefore effectively the gatekeepers to this tradition, linked to it in both metaphor and association. These umbilical cords may have been preserved to sanctify the spirit of the King, but they were also closely associated with the royal maternal line and the female role in reproduction. These objects are even more significant when we consider Jennifer L. Johnson's point that 'all women were "removed entirely from the palace" of Buganda's colonially reordered kingdom around 1906 and by extension the formal domain of high politics'.<sup>347</sup>

According to Roscoe, when the King died, the tomb of his predecessor lost much of its importance (although it was still maintained and no temple disappeared altogether).<sup>348</sup> The first to change this system and not have his jaw removed was King Muteesa, who sat on the throne when Muslim and then European representatives entered the country in the nineteenth century.<sup>349</sup> This story of the jaw bone tradition not only demonstrated to missionaries a history of religious tradition, it also demonstrated the potential for religious change.<sup>350</sup> It was in this context that Roscoe acquired these

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<sup>346</sup> Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 110.

<sup>347</sup> Quote taken from Charles W. Hattersley, *Uganda by Pen and Camera* (London, 1906), p. 24 in Jennifer L. Johnson, 'Fish, Family, and the Gendered Politics of Descent Along Uganda's Southern Littorals', *History in Africa*, 45 (June, 2018), p. 450.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 284, 285 and 303.

<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>350</sup> Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*

relics and brought them back to Britain. However, this event raises important questions about colonial collecting and looting.

Roscoe documented his story of their acquisition in the anthropological journal *Man* in 1907.<sup>351</sup> Describing their extraction from the country as a mode of protection, Roscoe claimed that when he found the relics, they had been hidden by the temple's priest as their shrine had recently been burned down by Muslims who 'were trying to destroy the old temples and other historical places'.<sup>352</sup> Roscoe explained that the priest gave up the relics with great reluctance. The priest feared being discovered giving up something that was still looked upon by many as a real deity, as well as personal vengeance from the god himself. Nevertheless, and possibly motivated by his own debts, he sold the relics to Roscoe for a sizeable sum. The two men agreed that no indignity would come to the deity. The priest gave strict stipulations that the deity should not be examined in the country, nor travel by the direct road. A nervous porter wrapped the god in bark cloths and mats and spent a month on the journey to the coast, where it was posted to England and deposited in the Museum of Ethnology and Archaeology in Cambridge, as it was then called.<sup>353</sup>

Just as unsettling as its acquisition was Frazer's exploitation of *Kibuuka* in his theory of deification. Frazer believed that comparative studies of religion would reveal evolution in human culture and thought, so he studied the religious practices of the ancient world and the 'primitive' worlds of pre-colonial regions to find correlations. According to Frazer, the evolutionary structure of human religious belief progressed through three stages: primitive magic, religion, and science. Benjamin Ray has examined Frazer's and Roscoe's correspondence and argues that Frazer distorted Roscoe's ethnographic research to support his own theories about divine kingship and

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<sup>351</sup> John Roscoe, 'Kibuka the War God of the Baganda', *Man*, 7 (1907), pp. 161–166.

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

ritual magic without considering how they expressed socio-political realities and change.<sup>354</sup> In the third edition of the *Golden Bough* (1911), Frazer argued that the *Kibuuka* myth fell in line with the comparative ancient theory that the god Osiris was human, the human relics offering physical evidence for the Uganda example.<sup>355</sup> Later anti-evolutionary anthropologists such as Franz Boaz would forcefully discredit such ideas, but by returning to these objects and re-examining their physical characteristics, we can also gain new perspectives on the genealogical recording, aesthetic practices, gender relations, and forms of trade within the Kiganda court.<sup>356</sup>

The records at MAA provide very little information about the life of these objects once they arrived. The 1903 Annual Report described their collections from eastern Africa as greatly lacking and noted that this gift was ‘of very exceptional interest’, though it seems to have been kept in boxes in the Museum store for much of the time.<sup>357</sup> Although these objects contributed to British anthropological research, they were misunderstood and re-appropriated along European anthropological lines. They were never intended to be publicly displayed as art or ethnographic specimens, but instead designed to create a visual effect in the context of ritual use, heightened by songs, drumming, and dancing. In the European Museum, they were domesticated, immobile and exposed to public view, moving from the hidden and sacred to the public and profane.

As a missionary, an obvious explanation for Roscoe’s gift of the *Kibuuka* relics to the Museum might be that it was an attempt to take control of a powerful non-Christian force, especially one that represented national military prosperity. In the museum setting, it would be placed in a latent and thus controlled state. As Coombes argues in reference to West Africa, however, missionary collecting was conducted not

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<sup>354</sup> Ray, *Myth, Ritual and Kingship*, p. 29.

<sup>355</sup> Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, p. 197.

<sup>356</sup> George Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York, NY, 1987), p. 287.

<sup>357</sup> MAA, *19th Annual Report* (AR1903).

so much to show the horrors of idol worship as to compare West African religious practices.<sup>358</sup> Roscoe's collection of the *Kibuuka* and royal relics expands this argument.

### **Problematizing Medical Missionaries**

In 1919, Roscoe was also commissioned by Henry Wellcome to collect objects and instruments connected with the practice of Ugandan medicine and medical folklore, for the sum of one hundred pounds.<sup>359</sup> The museum's curator, Dr. Thompson, was particularly interested in information relating to inoculation and the treatment of disease, though *materia medica*: materials, especially plants and herbs, used as the basis for medicines. Pharmacists such as Wellcome examined traditional remedies to try and see if they had active chemical properties that could be isolated and reproduced. Important medicines such as quinine had already been developed this way. For example, Roscoe collected a bag of herbs in 1919, with a neatly written label telling us that it contains *omuzhuma*, a herb used in traditional Ugandan medicine to treat fevers.<sup>360</sup> Such items would of course be beneficial to European settlement prospects, but could also contribute to anthropological knowledge about the 'evolution' of medical practice.<sup>361</sup> By attending to medicine, Thompson not only framed a modern future for the British in Africa, but also presented Ugandans as living in the past, despite the benefits that Ugandan medicine could bring:

These are most important to us as they fill in gaps in the history of medicine that we cannot obtain elsewhere... the practice of medicine and surgery by primitive people is most useful to us for study as we get from them the first instincts of man towards alleviating disease. Every instrument, however small and primitive, even if it is a piece of wire or a stick, so long as it has been used is valuable to us in our research.<sup>362</sup>

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<sup>358</sup> Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, p. 171.

<sup>359</sup> Letter 2 April 1919, WA/HMM/CO/Ear/807, Papers of John Roscoe, Wellcome Collection.

<sup>360</sup> Bag of 'Omohukyi' plant, *lantana salvifolia*, Uganda, collected 1919, A665335, Science Museum.

<sup>361</sup> Letter 15 April 1920, WA/HMM/CO/Ear/807, Papers of John Roscoe, Wellcome Collection.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 January 1920.

This letter illustrates how important empire and collecting were to the medical research industry at the time, and the role of Uganda within that story. It also highlights what types of objects the museum was expecting to receive from Uganda, and its preconceptions about their levels of sophistication.

The medicine-men outfits were particularly popular at the museum and Roscoe was asked to collect many more.<sup>363</sup> This indicates that what was collected was also shaped by what was popular to Museum audiences in Britain.<sup>364</sup> However, he often had difficulties in obtaining the instruments and outfits from the medicine men.<sup>365</sup> One outfit took a month to purchase, suggesting that either the original owners had engaged in clever barter or genuinely felt a strong attachment to the material.<sup>366</sup> Either way, the acquisition of such items was not straightforward. The objects that Roscoe acquired were also more sophisticated than Dr. Thompson had initially believed. In addition to cupping horns, Roscoe also assembled blistering irons, surgical knives, lancets, local medicines, and ‘excellent-quality’ salt from the Kibero salt works in Bunyoro. If we look further into medical missionary collections from Uganda, we find that Ugandan medicine was highly sophisticated.

Nevertheless, Felkin practiced European medicine on local people, which provided the potential for a close and unique form of colonial contact. He collected many pieces of equipment from the procedures that he witnessed. How he obtained these important objects is unclear, but at a lecture at the Edinburgh Obstetrical Society on 9 January 1884 he produced objects, which included knives, mats, ‘tom-toms’ and

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<sup>363</sup> Ibid., 20 June 1920.

<sup>364</sup> For further insights and debates into the historic role of communities and audiences, see Laura Carter, ‘Rethinking Folk Culture in Twentieth-Century Britain’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 28:4, 2017, p. 557; and Kate Hill, ‘Thinking About Audience and Agency in the Museum: Models from Historical Research’, Paper from the Conference “Current Issues in European Cultural Studies”, organised by the Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden (ACSIS) in Norrköping 15-17 June 2011.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid., 20 November 1919. Papers of John Roscoe, Wellcome Collection.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid., 17 December 1919.

drinking tubes, for discussion. The three Wakamba cupping horns in Figure 2.3 were used to cup Wakamba and Waniki women during labour, and Felkin described them simply as ‘very curious’.<sup>367</sup> There is a performative element here, in which the objects, which were so hard to acquire at that time, served to boost Felkin’s lecture and reputation as an expert, enhancing his cultural capital. Roscoe used his objects in a similar fashion. On 1 May 1921, he presented a lecture for the Royal Society’s *Conversazione*, a biannual semi-public event attended by around one hundred ‘distinguished’ guests (mainly men), who exhibited and discussed apparatus and objects of scientific interest.<sup>368</sup> Roscoe’s invitation to speak was thus a prestigious opportunity. His lecture was not transcribed or published, so it is unclear exactly which objects he presented during his lecture. However, it does further illustrate how he and Felkin disseminated knowledge to the metropolitan scientific elite directly through their collections.

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<sup>367</sup> Robert William Felkin, ‘Notes on Labour in Central Africa’ (*Read before the Edinburgh Obstetrical Society, 9 January 1884*), *Edinburgh Medical Journal*, 20 (April 1884), p. 927.

<sup>368</sup> R.K. Bluhm, ‘A Note on the Origin of the Society’s *Conversazioni*’, *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, 13:1 (June, 1958), pp. 61-63; Sally M. Horrocks, ‘The Royal Society, its Fellows and Industrial R&D in the Mid Twentieth Century’, *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, 64:1 (Sept. 2010), pp. 31–41.



**Figure 2.3: Three Wakamba cupping instruments of horn, Kenya, Felkin Collection, National Museums Scotland, A.1908.306.56 B**

In a separate article, Felkin claimed to have observed eight hundred women in childbirth – a questionable claim – but admitted that he was rarely able to participate.<sup>369</sup> Having regularly been denied access to such procedures, he either resorted to becoming a ‘peeping Tom’ (his own words) or giving presents of beads or cloth to gain access.<sup>370</sup> As Luise White has highlighted, the nature of this acquisition of medical knowledge occupies an unsettling space, somewhere between a gift and loot.<sup>371</sup> This example highlights the complexity of acquisition methods deployed by medical missionaries.

It is unclear whether Felkin presented these objects from Uganda alongside equivalent objects for European women. However, he was interested in the comparative

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<sup>369</sup> Felkin, ‘Notes on Labour’, p. 927.

<sup>370</sup> Given the short duration of his stay (three months), this statement is questionable. See Robert William Felkin ‘Notes on the Waganda Tribe of Central Africa’ in *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, XIII (1884-86), p.744; Felkin, ‘Notes on Labour’, p. 924.

<sup>371</sup> Luise White, “‘Bandages on your Mouth’: The Experience of Colonial Medicine in East and Central Africa’ in White, *Speaking with Vampires*, pp. 89–121.

methods of reproductive labour across eastern and central Africa, noting that in some regions pots of boiling water and herbs were used, while in Uganda, beds (*kitanda*) were popular and all such equipment affected the positioning of the woman and the resulting success and type of labour. Uganda was of interest as the only region in central Africa in which he had witnessed successful caesarean sections designed to save both mother and child. Felkin noted that certain objects were gendered and tended only to be used by women or men.<sup>372</sup> The highly-skilled caesarean sections, he suggested, were only performed by men. A knife like the one represented in the image below was brought back to Britain and transferred to the Uganda Museum in the 1960s from the Wellcome Museum to support the claim of successful operations.<sup>373</sup> The intimate scenes in Figure 2.4 show some of the objects that Felkin described as contributing to a successful African birth, including successful caesareans (bottom right), while objectifying the female body and its reproductive powers in the process.<sup>374</sup> These images are particularly striking because British midwifery books from this era do not portray European woman as explicitly.<sup>375</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> Felkin 'Notes on the Waganda Tribe', p. 924.

<sup>373</sup> E.56.01, Caesarean knife presented to the Uganda Museum by the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum in 1955, The Uganda Museum Report for the Year 1956, Uganda Museum.

<sup>374</sup> The most pertinent and objectified image in medical scholarship was of Sarah Baartman, described by Europeans as the 'Venus Hottentot'.

<sup>375</sup> Based on examinations of the main midwifery and gynaecological journals from the period, including: *British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* from the date 1902 onwards; Alfred Meadows, *A Manual of Midwifery* (London, 1882); and William Thomson Lusk, *The Science and Art of Midwifery* (London, 1882).

**Figure 2.4: Top left to bottom right: pot with decoction of herbs at Kerrie on the White Nile; position occupied by the women in the Moru district with a jar of native beer, leaves and drinking tube; labour of Wakamba woman (cupping horns not shown); successful caesarean in Uganda with knife and instruments in background. Notes on Labour in Central Africa, Wellcome Collection.**

In these images, female bodies as much as the medical utensils are objects of science and curiosity. These images fit into a wider colonial archive of medical drawings and objects. British Victorian gynaecological and obstetric textbooks at this time not only objectified African women, especially in medical drawings: they also described African parturition as painless and easy, with very little need for intervention during labour, unlike their over-civilised sisters in Europe who had ‘forgotten’ how to perform their most basic and fundamental task.<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>376</sup> Suman Seth notes that this trope has a much longer history. For example, Seth quotes Jean de

There was also much debate about the tools that British obstetricians used during childbirth and obstetric care for British women, such as the speculum and the forceps, so the objects that Felkin collected would have introduced important new elements to those debates.<sup>377</sup> It is not clear if there was ever a prolonged discussion among practitioners about whether or not certain tools were appropriate for women in the Empire. This is an underexplored topic in medical history more generally.<sup>378</sup> One useful exception is Lisa Plotkin's recent work on the measurement of the pelves in India, which demonstrates how 'Eurasian', Bengali, and European women were ranked on an evolutionary hierarchy according to the width of their pelves.<sup>379</sup> Plotkin's work illustrates that objects and ways of measuring were invoked in medical debates around the position of women. These debates were framed through a grand evolutionary schema and were used to rank women as a separate 'race' unto themselves (with European women at the top), while simultaneously positioning them below all 'the races of man'.

The medical equipment collected by Roscoe and Felkin was thus situated within a complex imperial and medical landscape that was strongly marked by classifications of gender and race. As in India, eastern African women were placed below men, who were portrayed as the most medically skilled. Simultaneously, the hardiness of African women implied in the scenes above, and indeed by the surgical knife itself, helped to establish a distance from European women (who would soon begin to settle in Uganda),

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Thevenot in 1697: 'In *Aethiopia* the women are blessed with particularly easy and happy Labours and are generally delivered on their knees'. Brazilian women, he noted, 'do not keep themselves up for five or six Weeks after Labour, like the *European* Women, but set about their ordinary Business next Day'. Suman Seth, *Difference and Disease: Medicine, Race, and the Eighteenth-Century British Empire* (Cambridge, 2018), p. 181.

<sup>377</sup> Ornella Mosucci, *The Science of Woman: Gynaecology and Gender in England, 1800-1929* (Trowbridge, 1990).

<sup>378</sup> See Joanna Grant, "'Those Parts Peculiar to Her Organization': Some Observations on the History of Pelvimetry, a Nearly Forgotten Obstetric Subspeciality" in Andrew Mangham and Greta Depledge (eds), *The Female Body in Art and Literature* (Liverpool, 2011), pp. 135–147.

<sup>379</sup> Lisa Plotkin, "'The Diseases Peculiar to Women': Gender and Curative Space in Britain and British India, 1860-1914', PhD Dissertation (University College London, 2015).

and was perhaps implicated in potential designs for the physical work and labour of Ugandan women under a colonial system. Yet the considerable skill that the caesarean equipment implied surprised British commentators like Felkin and challenged the assumptions of those like Dr. Thompson at the Wellcome Museum, who had intuitively placed Uganda at the lower levels of evolutionary medical practice. Whereas Roscoe's fetishes were used to support ideas of the ancient and primitive as conceptualized by Frazer, medical equipment, like Felkin's, served to disrupt that image.

## **Conclusion**

Neither John Roscoe nor Robert William Felkin has ever been studied in terms of their object collecting, despite it being central to their lives and careers. The two sections in this chapter have examined these collections in greater detail, illustrating the different actors and influences that were interlaced among them. This chapter has shown that collections made by these missionaries in Uganda between 1880 and 1920 did not just reflect a desire to undermine traditional beliefs and ways of life in Africa. Careful study and multiple influences and agendas instead reflect a complex triangulation between their evangelical beliefs and practices, the interests of emerging scientific disciplines, and Ugandan Christians. In an article about missionaries in Lubaland in the Belgian Congo, David Maxwell argues that their 'religious impetus was animated by contradictory tendencies'.<sup>380</sup> The same may be said of missionaries in Uganda. Whereas Felkin's and Roscoe's collecting was framed by social anthropological thought and its preoccupations with measuring colonized peoples along racial and evolutionary lines, it also depended on local elites for its information.

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<sup>380</sup> David Maxwell, 'The Creation of Lubaland: Missionary Science and Christian Literacy in the Making of the Luba Katanga in Belgian Congo' *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 10:3, (November, 2016) p. 385.

Although they found medical items of significant sophistication, these items were also bound up in the exploitation of female African bodies.

Missionary collections are loaded items, assembled within a complex web of scientific and imperial endeavors. If studied closely, they reveal shifting patterns of imperial power, as well as careers, illustrating that both objects and people are capable of doing very different things. When they were reassembled in museums and labelled as objects of 'religion', these insights became distorted. These findings contribute new, contextually specific, and material perspectives to histories of missionary collecting as well as to current scholarship on the history of missionaries and imperialism in Uganda.

### III

## Eastern African Collectors and Donors: A Reassessment of Subjects & Objects

**Figure 3.1: ‘Sacrificial Victim’s Drinking Vessel’, Af1902, 0718.11 © The Trustees of the British Museum**

The striking vessel pictured in Figure 3.1 arrived at the British Museum in July 1902. Museum records indicate that it was donated by a missionary, Rev. Ernest Millar (1868–1917) who was then working in Uganda. Standing at almost 35cm tall, it is composed of black pottery with rouletted patterning, three branching mouths, and four curved legs for its base.<sup>381</sup> Today, the vessel is on display in the British Museum as an example of African pottery, yet further investigation indicates that multiple discursive layers have also been attached to this object throughout its lifetime. Peeling back these layers with the help of other contextual sources offers an insight into how different actors during the colonial period sought to define and conceptualise Uganda and its past through the donation, interpretation and display of material objects.

Early British Museum records trace this vessel back to a royal sacrificial site called *Namugongo* in Buganda.<sup>382</sup> Here, sacrificial victims supposedly drank beer from its spouts to kill their spirit, before a particularly violent death at the request of the *Kabaka* (king). Although it is well-worn and marked, it is difficult to surmise whether this vessel truly served in some form of royal sacrificial rite. Nevertheless, thanks to its alluring associations with ancient royalty and sacrifice, in 1910 the vessel was privileged with its own display case, and featured in a striking full-page spread in the Museum's *Handbook to the Ethnographic Collections* as a defining focal point of Ugandan culture.<sup>383</sup> The absence of information on its date and provenance would have left any casual Edwardian viewer clueless as to whether this object, with its supposed associations with violent despotism and spirit-worship, was a representation of contemporary Uganda, or something from the 'deeper past'.<sup>384</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> This is knotted-strip roulette decoration formed by folding a reed into a series of knots that form a pattern when rolled across the surface of unfired clay.

<sup>382</sup> Af1902, 0718.11 entry slip, Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas, British Museum.

<sup>383</sup> Thomas Athol Joyce and Ormonde Maddock Dalton, *Handbook to the Ethnographical Collections* (London, 1910), p. 34.

<sup>384</sup> Here I reference Richard Reid's use of this term. Richard J. Reid, *A History of Modern Uganda* (Cambridge, 2017), p. 24.



Museum records attribute the vessel to a missionary, yet closer inspection of the vessel's entry slip reveals a second name crossed out and replaced with Millar's. The original name is that of Apolo Kaggwa (1864–1927), the *Katikkiro* (Prime Minister) of Buganda, whom Millar accompanied to Britain and to the Museum in 1910. Kaggwa was an intellectual and self-styled gatekeeper of Ugandan history. Discovery of his crossed-out name led to my uncovering numerous other donations made by Kaggwa to the British Museum and other repositories across Britain and Uganda. I suggest that his donation of these objects formed part of a larger strategy to preserve an image of Buganda as a political entity with a long and powerful history of centralised statehood, while also mobilising a modernising narrative for the future, in which he would be a key figure. Yet no mention of Kaggwa was made alongside the image in the museum *Handbook*. The partial nature of the museum record almost removes Kaggwa from the story, making it easy to assume that this vessel was simply a missionary gift or trophy.

The history of this vessel offers a brief insight into how colonised elites not only enabled, but also actively mediated, imperialism through material objects. Yet complex object 'biographies' like this were often flattened when objects reached the museum and became subsumed by a new set of dynamics and priorities.<sup>385</sup> This chapter seeks to reassert the role of Ugandans and Kenyans in narratives surrounding the collection of objects now resident in museums across Britain. Previous chapters have touched on their entangled relations with colonial officials and missionaries in the collecting process, but this chapter brings them and their objects to the forefront of its analysis to understand the actions of these individuals in their own right.<sup>386</sup> It argues that the strategic deployment of material culture played a pivotal role in the activities of these

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<sup>385</sup> I use the term 'object biography' in relation to Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process', in Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 64–91.

<sup>386</sup> Its focus is on elite actors, mainly because of the rich source base that exists around this topic, which has not yet been properly interrogated. However, there were many other indigenous figures involved in this process, from porters to informants, who deserve far greater scholarly attention in future research.

individuals as they navigated the radical changes of colonial intrusion. Deploying material objects enabled them to forge new positions of cultural power in the face of political change.

Recovering these stories requires a careful re-reading of the colonial archive, but also a reading of entirely new sources, including objects. Over the past two decades, historians have increasingly sought new methodological ways to overcome the one-sidedness of colonial archives in order to tell more balanced stories of non-European agency in imperial knowledge production. In their edited collection of essays on this topic, Ricardo Roque and Kim Wagner noted that, ‘As a legacy of colonization and empire-building, the “knowledge” embodied in this diverse material has been identified with projects of imperialist or colonialist domination, and as such simply labelled as “colonial”. This designation, however, hides considerable complexity’.<sup>387</sup> Within the colonial archive, they continue, is ‘a proliferation of subjects, objects, categories, stories, events, and personal and collective dramas, either experienced or imagined’.<sup>388</sup> Roque and Wagner’s insight forms part of a much broader appreciation within current imperial scholarship that colonial sources harbour evidence not just of European frameworks of knowledge and power, but also the ways in which non-Europeans contributed to, directed, and manipulated that knowledge. Theirs is part of a broader approach among historians that seeks to modify post-colonial critiques of imperial knowledge, which inadvertently reproduced the same colonial trope as the sources that they were condemning, by rendering non-European knowledge systems and agencies a passive role.

Ever since Christopher Bayly’s seminal study of the nineteenth-century South Asian ‘go-betweens’ who provided the British with intelligence about local society,

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<sup>387</sup> Ricardo Roque and Kim Wagner (eds.), *Engaging Colonial Knowledge Reading European Archives in World History* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 1.

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*

similar approaches and arguments have been made in the context of Africa. Significant works of this type have been produced by Timothy Parsons, who has demonstrated multiple ways in which Africans actively participated in, and directed empire.<sup>389</sup> Benjamin N. Lawrence, Emily Lynn Osborn and Richard L. Roberts, meanwhile, suggest that African civil servants occupied a unique position at the intersection of colonial society, having knowledge of both colonial processes and local communities, which allowed them to control flows of knowledge and pursue their personal interests.<sup>390</sup> As Schaffer, Roberts, Raj, Delbourgo and others have demonstrated, ‘people involved in these networks were not simply conduits of information for London, but were important nodes within their own networks of patronage, profit and trust’.<sup>391</sup>

Histories of collecting and material culture can also illuminate these entangled histories.<sup>392</sup> As Claire Wintle notes,

The facility to leave a material mark on the world is not subject to the same class, gender, and race restrictions which dictate opportunities to contribute to colonial archives or published documents, and accordingly the study of objects has the potential to produce insights into the lives of those peoples who are excluded from those modes of representation.<sup>393</sup>

By exploring the role of objects in moments of exchange and encounter, and also by peeling back objects’ many physical and symbolic layers, we can begin to see that objects have had multiple meanings, roles, and histories for different people.

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<sup>389</sup> Timothy H. Parsons, ‘African Participation in the British Empire’, in Philip D. Morgan and Sean Hawkins (eds.), *Black Experience and the Empire* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 257–285.

<sup>390</sup> Benjamin N. Lawrence, Emily Lynn Osborn and Richard L. Roberts (eds.), *Interpreters, Intermediaries and Clerks. African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa* (Madison, WI, 2006).

<sup>391</sup> Alice Marples and Victoria Pickering, ‘Exploring Cultures of Collecting in the Early Modern World’, *Archives of Natural History*, 43.1 (2016), p. 6.

<sup>392</sup> Leonie Hannan and Sarah Longair, *History through Material Culture* (Manchester, 2017), p. 34.

<sup>393</sup> Claire Wintle, *Colonial Collecting and Display: Encounters with Material Culture from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands* (Oxford, 2013), p. 2.

This is demonstrated by the three sections of this chapter. Drawing on Frederick Jackson's list of gifts (Appendix 1.1) as an entry point, the first section illuminates a long history of gift exchange with British agents from the arrival of missionaries in Uganda in the 1870s, to the early trade treaties with the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC), right through to the period of imperial administration in the first half of the twentieth century. Although the nature of these gifts evolved, and there was no single or pervasive elite gifting culture among these figures, gifting as a process remained a key feature of diplomatic relations and we can pick out similarities and patterns. Gifts reinforced the image of the dynastic and ritual authority of the Ugandan kingdoms and their masculine material culture. The giving of similar gifts to multiple persons and institutions reinforced this identity. Female members of the court were also involved in the exchange of gifts. These instances of female gifting provide important insights into the lesser known rituals, regalia, and gender of the courts. We also find that some gifts impressed their recipients more than others, and that giving inappropriate gifts had consequences. Gifts, moreover, could communicate diplomacy when language itself failed. For the historian plotting these histories, however, the fractured nature of museum records and the inevitable over-reliance on colonial sources are important methodological limitations.

To help remedy this archival deficit, the second section focuses on a collection of objects donated directly to a series of museums by Apolo Kaggwa when he visited Britain in 1902. Kaggwa was literate in English and the author of his own written legacy. Donations by the Europeans who transferred their objects from the colonies to European museums often overshadow evidence of African collectors and donors in the museum archive. Apolo Kaggwa not only gave objects to Uganda Museum: he also travelled to Britain and gave his objects directly to museums and individuals, documenting such events in detail. Kaggwa's gifts therefore allow us to read the

European museum archive against the grain by inserting African donors as agents into their conventionally European narratives.

Section three explores how Kaggwa's success at managing Buganda's cultural and material heritage influenced other Ugandan leaders in later years. The *Mukamas* (kings) of Bunyoro and Ankole both deployed similar tactics by offering important historical objects to Rev. John Roscoe when he visited in 1919. Roscoe gave these objects to the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, and the MAA in Cambridge, but the *Mukamas* also kept many objects behind, allowing material memories to be dispersed between the 'metropole' and 'periphery'. Together, these key examples speak to the spatial contingencies of gift-giving, transnational networks of power, methods of self-representation, and the cultural creation of historical memory and identity in Uganda. By situating the collection and gifting of objects within wider projects of cultural, intellectual, and political management, this chapter argues that material objects played an important diplomatic role in the activities of Ugandan elites between 1880 and 1920. Exploring the hidden voices of Ugandan elites in the production of colonial museum collections reveals a larger history of complex material strategies and performances enacted by Ugandan leaders, and sheds new light on interactions between the material and political worlds.

### **Diplomatic Gifts: Rethinking Colonial Politics in East Africa through Objects**

The objects listed in Appendix 1.1 are gifts that Sir Frederick Jackson received during his time working for the IBEAC and the colonial government in Uganda and British East Africa, part of a larger collection of almost five hundred objects that formed the foundations of Nairobi National Museum in the late nineteenth century.<sup>394</sup> The items

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<sup>394</sup> Nairobi National Museum, Frederick Jackson Collection, 1886.1 – 1906.300.

listed in the Museum inventory can be traced back to *Kabaka Mwanga*, *Katikiro Apolo Kaggwa*, and a group loosely labelled ‘Ugandan Chiefs’. There are also gifts from ‘Mandara of Moshi’, ‘Micreali of Kilimanjaro’, and ‘Leitongwa of the Nandi’, alerting us that gifting was not a practice limited to one area, but rather a common ritual in the encounter between Jackson and leaders across Uganda and Kenya. A published account of his time in eastern Africa provides rich information about other gifts given by ‘Chief Mbaguta, the Katikiro of Ankoli’, ‘Chief Wakoli of Usoga’, and leaders from the Maasai. Jackson noted in this account that gift-giving was a key feature of the formalities of visiting a place.<sup>395</sup> IBEAC records also reveal that on the eve of his first major caravan expedition into Uganda, Company directors wrote to Jackson with instructions, emphasising that he should give gifts ‘immediately to chiefs’ to establish good relations.<sup>396</sup>

Between 1886 and 1895, Jackson travelled with his caravan from the coast into the interior of British East Africa to make treaties. In 1890, he took an unexpected detour into Uganda when he received a treaty request from *Kabaka Mwanga*. During these treaty expeditions, Micreali, Mandara, and Mwanga all presented him with spears. Museum records reveal that he acquired a significant number of what we may now call weapons during his time in East Africa.<sup>397</sup> Like many British officials, Jackson enjoyed hunting and would have valued these objects. Spears were popular European decorative devices, and photographs often depicted the careful arrangement of spears on walls as trophies. In the museum, they were specimens of ‘primitive’ or ‘savage’ warfare.<sup>398</sup>

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<sup>395</sup> Frederick Jackson, *Early Days in East Africa* (London, 1930), p. 387.

<sup>396</sup> Letter to Frederick Jackson from George Mackenzie, 10 November 1888, PP MS 1/IBEA, Mackinnon Papers, SOAS.

<sup>397</sup> Of eighty-three items now in the Pitt-Rivers Museum, there are fifteen shields, five spears, a set of arrows, and a club. Frederick Jackson Collection, Pitt-Rivers Museum, 1966.1.1–94. At Nairobi National Museum there are nineteen spears, eight shields, four clubs, one arrow, and two swords. Frederick Jackson Collection, Nairobi National Museum, 1886.1–1906.300.

<sup>398</sup> John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (Manchester, 1997), p. 44; Sarah Longair, *Cracks in the Dome: Fractured Histories of Empire in the Zanzibar Museum, 1897–1964* (Farnham, 2015), pp. 51–53; Claire Wintle, ‘Career Development:

However, as Richard Reid notes, in Buganda, spears and shields represented something quite different, acting as ‘cultural symbols, or standards of office and honour’, and to quote Speke, ‘the Uganda cognisance’.<sup>399</sup> Although these spears took on new meanings as they changed hands, for those giving them, they represented local authority and power.

Whereas spears appear to have been representative of the treaty-making process, Jackson received different objects when he departed Uganda in 1902. It can be presumed that many of the ‘chiefs’ listed in Jackson’s inventory were Baganda for their objects correspond with specifically Kiganda traditions. Many of these objects signify masculine power and elite identity. The Baganda had a reputation for creating the finest bark cloth, a material which has had a long association with coronation, healing, and funeral ceremonies of the royal family.<sup>400</sup> The production of bark cloth was once widespread, but when Arab caravan traders brought increasing amounts of cotton to Buganda in the nineteenth century, bark cloth became more commonly associated with specific social and cultural traditions. Only male artisans of the *Ngonge* clan used bark cloth mallets like the one that Jackson received.<sup>401</sup> Venny Nakazibwe notes that ‘bark-cloth was not only used to extend and bridge social relations, but also became a major political and economic symbol of the kingdom of Buganda’, signifying its social and political function as a diplomatic gift.<sup>402</sup>

Jackson also acquired a pipe made of black pottery and glazed with graphite. The royal court and other notables were the principal owners of black pottery.<sup>403</sup> The

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Domestic Display as Imperial, Anthropological and Social Trophy’, *Victorian Studies*, 50:2 (2008), p. 282.

<sup>399</sup> John Hanning Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* (Edinburgh, 1863), p. 291. Quoted in Richard J. Reid, *Political Power in Pre-Colonial Buganda* (Oxford, 2002), p. 219.

<sup>400</sup> Venny Nakazibwe, ‘Bark-Cloth of the Baganda People of Southern Uganda: A Record of Continuity and Change from the Late Eighteenth Century to the Early Twenty-First Century’ (PhD dissertation, Middlesex University, 2005), p. 3.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>403</sup> John Mack, *Africa: Arts and Cultures* (London, 2000), p. 214.

royal potters, called *Bajjoona*, were always men, but women controlled all access to the pots during ceremonies and at royal sites.<sup>404</sup> The royal potters were exempt from *luwaalo* (tax) and received land in exchange for their pottery. In the seventeenth century, potters were connected to public healing and political authority, and were even identified as medicine-men and protectors of the social health of the kingdom.<sup>405</sup> John Giblin and Kikongo Remigius note that there was a belief among the Ganda that pottery is immortal (in a material and metaphysical sense) and had a symbolic association with life.<sup>406</sup> The bark cloth and the pipe were presumably given, then, to emphasize the long-standing power and prosperity of the royal court.

Prior to its advancement as a cash crop, the coffee tree and its fruits also held strong cultural and ritual significance in the court. The Ganda offered coffee beans to the spirits of deceased kings.<sup>407</sup> They were also used in brotherhood ceremonies, offerings to guests, and in the game of *mancala* and were therefore likely given to Jackson with friendly intentions. The coffee beans, and indeed many of the other objects given to Jackson, resemble those gifted by Apolo Kaggwa to the British Museum and King Edward VII in 1902. This suggests that the Ganda court forged a distinctive gifting identity that they believed would be legible to European royal courts. Kaggwa's collection receives closer attention in the following section, but he too gave the British Museum coffee beans, a pipe, a shield, drinking vessels, fetishes, and a chair, amongst other items. He also gave King Edward VII and George V (1865–1936) a *mancala* board, smoking pipes, fetishes, drinking vessels, a shield, and armlets.<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>404</sup> Margaret Trowell and Klaus Wachsmann, *Tribal Crafts of Uganda* (London, 1953), p. 117.

<sup>405</sup> Neil Kodesh, *Beyond the Royal Gaze: Clanship and Collective Well-Being in Buganda* (Evanston, IL, 2004), pp. 98–130.

<sup>406</sup> John D. Giblin and Kikongo Remigius, 'The Social and Symbolic Context of the Royal Potters of Buganda', *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 47:1 (2012), p. 74.

<sup>407</sup> Susan Beckerleg, *Ethnic Identity and Development: Khat and Social Change in Africa* (New York, NY, 2010), p. 51.

<sup>408</sup> British Museum, Af1902,0718.1–31, Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 69353 and RCIN 69875–69924.



The ivory bracelets in Jackson's collection belonged to women and children. It is unclear exactly who gave these objects to Jackson or why, but there is evidence that female members of the Kiganda and other royal courts did engage in gift exchanges with European visitors. Muteesa's daughter gave the medical missionary Felkin a stunning ceinture (similar to a belt or girdle) that consisted of fashionable green, blue, and white beads and a large, rare opal bead at the centre.<sup>409</sup> He also acquired further gifts from princesses in Bunyoro, such as a tobacco pouch made of cowhide by Princess Nakatschupi (Kodi) who was photographed by explorer and photographer Richard Buchta in 1879 displaying her power in full bark cloth and iron necklet (Figures 3.2–3.3).<sup>410</sup> Roscoe received armlets, and a coffee-berry basket used on the end of a princess' sceptre at the Banyoro Court.<sup>411</sup> Ganda leaders also gave gifts to the wives of missionaries. In 1909, Hamu Mukasa (1868–1956) wrote to Miss Harriet. H. Walker, the sister of Archdeacon Walker (1857–1939), wishing her farewell from Buganda and informing her that he had sent her some 'things of our country' which included a drum, a mat and two knives and insisted that she take them with her to England.<sup>412</sup> Both Ugandan and British women clearly had a role in the official gifting culture of the court. This is significant because both are under-represented in written colonial accounts. This example illustrates that attending to the material world through a history of collecting offers an alternative avenue for reaching their voices and contributions to the colonial encounter and diplomacy. This is a sphere that historians have predominantly attributed to white males.

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<sup>409</sup> 'Waganda Young Princess's Ceinture', A.1908.306.43, Robert William Felkin Collection, National Museums Scotland.

<sup>410</sup> 'Tobacco Pouch Made of Cowhide by Princess Nakatschupi, Kodj, Unyoro', A.1908.306.38, Robert William Felkin Collection, National Museums Scotland.

<sup>411</sup> See for example: 'Armlets of black hair worn by Princesses, Ba Hima, Bunyoro', 1920.101.64, John Roscoe Collection, Pitt Rivers Museum; and 'Very small case for coffee-berries, made from neck of a gourd covered with very fine wicker-work; coiled basketry lid. Used for hanging on the sceptre of a princess, Bunyoro', 1920.101.88, John Roscoe Collection, Pitt Rivers Museum.

<sup>412</sup> Ham Mukasa to Miss Walker, 31 March 1909, RCMS 339, Correspondence and Papers of Robert Walker, Royal Commonwealth Society Library, Cambridge University Library.

**Figure 3.2: A vignette full-face portrait of Nakatshupi, the sister of chief Ruyonga (Rionga). Richard Buchta Photograph Collection, Pitt-Rivers Museum, 1998.203.1.36.1**

**Figure 3.3–18: A full length portrait of two women wrapped in bark cloth. The woman to the right is Nakatshupi, and to the left possibly Kagaja, Ruyonga's daughter. Richard Buchta Photograph Collection, Pitt-Rivers Museum, 1998.203.1.38.1**

In his published work, Jackson compared the gifts that he received from Mbaguta, the *Katikkiro* of Ankole, Wakoli, ‘Chief’ of Busoga, and a group of Maasai, illustrating the different regimes of value that different objects invoked at this time. Of all three gifts, Jackson dedicated the longest description in his text to Mbaguta’s, recalling how Mbaguta had loaded up his caravan with ‘curios of the finest workmanship’ during a visit. Jackson was less impressed by the Maasai gifts of trade beads which he had easy access to, while Wakoli had only offered food and hospitality.<sup>413</sup> On the one hand Jackson ranked Mbaguta’s gifts highly because they represented a relationship that had been forged previously. Mbaguta carved a strong diplomatic reputation for himself in the 1901 Ankole Agreement, which Jackson administered in his role as Acting Commissioner. The gift therefore likely represented a relationship of political alliance in Jackson’s eyes. On the other hand, the materiality of these objects made an impression on him as well. Jackson did not state exactly what Mbaguta’s ‘curios’ were, perhaps because he did not fully understand their meaning and purpose. However, the fact that he described them as being ‘of the finest workmanship’ suggests that he still understood that they were valuable and attributed this to the material craftsmanship of the object itself. It also suggests an implicit expression on the part of the king that Jackson was valued. In turn, the gift served to create a closer bond.<sup>414</sup> Jackson noted that Mbaguta’s gift communicated to him a sense of ‘gratitude’. In his memoir, Jackson described his preconception of Ugandans as ‘lacking in affection or regard for the white man’. This image, he argued, had been constructed by linguists who claimed that ‘in most native languages there is no real word for gratitude’.<sup>415</sup> Jackson did not explain what Mbaguta was supposed to have been grateful for – presumably the dominant role which he had been accorded in the Ankole Agreement – but in this scenario, Jackson

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<sup>413</sup> Jackson, *Early Days in East Africa*, p. 387.

<sup>414</sup> Here I refer back to arguments of both Igor Kopytoff in *The Social Life of Things*, and Bruno Latour in *Reassembling the Social*, as outlined in the introduction to this dissertation.

<sup>415</sup> Jackson, *Early Days in East Africa*, p. 306.

understood these gifts to have performed an important act of diplomacy that language alone could not.

What were the consequences of an unsuitable gift? During his expedition to Kilimanjaro in 1884, Harry Johnston secured an important treaty with Chief Mandara of Chagga. After ‘considerable argument’, Mandara, whom Johnston described as ‘the principal leader of the areas around the Southern slopes’, had agreed to put his mark on a form of agreement on 27 September by which, if the Sultan of Zanzibar waived his suzerainty over Kilimanjaro, he, Mandara, agreed to accept the Queen of England instead.<sup>416</sup> However, Mandara retained material power over Johnston by forcing him to ask for permission to collect on his land. This request was not a mere formality. Johnston recalled waiting in anticipation for several days, illustrating how reliant the expedition was on the good will of local leaders. This is not to say that Johnston was not forceful in other contexts and places, but his task of persuading Mandara had not been easy.

One of his methods of diplomacy and persuasion was to give handsome gifts. However, Johnston’s gifts were gravely disappointing and illustrate how the wrong gift had the potential to disrupt a diplomatic relationship and an expedition. In Moshi, Johnston had nervously awaited his call to Mandara to present his gifts and was taken to a house for the event:

...I hastily unpacked and arranged the gifts I had brought him, which were as follows: a handsome embroidered ‘joho’ or Arab coat; a kanzu, a ‘kilemba’ or stuff for a turban; several ‘vikoi’ or waistbands’, a scarlet fez; a musical box, many coloured pictures, looking-glasses, mouse-traps, knives, bells, two small barrels of gunpowder, boxes of caps and a bar of lead.<sup>417</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> H.H. Johnston, *The Kilima-njaro Expedition: A Record of Scientific Exploration in Eastern Equatorial Africa and a General Description of the Natural History, Languages, and Commerce of the Kilima-njaro District* (London, 1886), p. 21.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

Johnston's subsequent infantilising description of Mandara sitting and playing with his gifts 'like a great child' implies that Johnston felt that he held the upper hand in the encounter. Nicholas Thomas has noted that 'much of the action of indigenous peoples in dealings with intrusive Westerners has been rendered childlike or irrational because of ignorance of the contexts of particular transactions'.<sup>418</sup> This insight rings true in Johnston's case, for the following morning, he found Mandara with a circle of soldiers active in conversation and 'coldly' inspecting the goods, suggesting that he had misread the previous encounter. That Johnston mentioned this scene in his publication implies that he had placed a level of expectation on his gifts, and that their hostility to them had some impact on him, altering the balance of power between the two figures.

Mandara's two different reactions to the gift (at least from Johnston's perspective) also suggest some performance in this encounter, directed by Mandara. On a later occasion, Mandara told Sir Frederick Jackson that he had strongly disliked Johnston and the gifts that he had chosen to exchange as part of their encounter. For example, he had already received Arab coats many times from other Swahili traders.<sup>419</sup> Clearly concerned that his gifts had not been satisfactory, Johnston was forced to offer Mandara other items. Immediately, the private space of his tent was searched, confounding the sense of power that he had felt the previous day.<sup>420</sup> Once a sufficient gift, a toothbrush, was found, negotiations continued regarding the commencement of the expedition and the permanent settlement of Moshi. The price paid for the concession was 210 yards of American sheeting, three dozen handkerchiefs, and thirty pounds of red beads. In the accounts that followed, Johnston admitted how 'utterly I had placed myself in Mandara's power'.<sup>421</sup> Johnston did not describe the items he received in

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<sup>418</sup> Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA, 1991), p. 8.

<sup>419</sup> Jackson, *Early Days in East Africa*, p. 119.

<sup>420</sup> Johnston, *The Kilimanjaro Expedition*, p. 110.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

return from Mandara, although we know that Mandara was an avid giver of gifts, for he gave Jackson several pieces now in Nairobi National Museum.<sup>422</sup> Johnston's experience highlights how important gifts were in the diplomatic encounters of collecting expeditions and how easily these could be disrupted when the wrong gift was given.

Jackson, however, had an altogether different experience with Mandara. On leaving Mandara's residence, he was led to his private lodgings, which contained a hut especially for Mandara's gifts. On entering the hut, Mandara presented Jackson with a *simi* (sword). In his memoirs, Jackson recalled Mandara instructing him to 'put it on ... it is yours'. Again, Mandara directed the encounter. Jackson remarked that he valued the gift 'the more for the regal manner in which [Mandara] presented it'.<sup>423</sup> Amongst the other objects that Jackson brought away, were 'two very fine spears', and Mandara's ear-ring, about which he happily recalled:

There is an illustration of the latter in Johnston's book and directly I recognized it in Miriali's (a neighbouring Sultan and Mandara's Son in Law) ear. Old Sadi was quietly instructed to exercise his diplomacy by gently hinting that nothing would please me so much in the way of a present as that ear-ring.<sup>424</sup>

That Jackson remembered the ear-ring reveals the power that such objects held in the memory and imagination of officials and the wider readership. It also reveals the attention to detail that officials paid to each other's ethnographic observations and collections. Johnston was so taken with the ear-ring that he asked Mandara's permission to sketch it (Figure 3.4), having been denied the opportunity of photographing it. That Jackson asked for this gift suggests that the gifting in this context was not only determined by the giver, but was itself a diplomatic negotiation in the midst of a larger

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<sup>422</sup> See Jackson's list of gifts in Appendix 1.1.

<sup>423</sup> Jackson, *Early Days in East Africa*, p. 120.

<sup>424</sup> *Ibid.*

diplomacy. Moreover, knowing the difficult exchange that Johnston had experienced with Mandara, Jackson's successful acquisition of this highly personal object, which almost functioned as a body-part in itself, represented supremacy over Johnston as well.



**Figure 3.4: 'Mandara's Left Ear', Harry Johnston, *The Kilimanjaro Expedition*, p. 107.**

The exchange of gifts played a key role in the functioning of modern imperialism on the ground, and offers a unique window on the strategic and affective aspects of early diplomatic encounters between Ugandan and Kenyan elites and British agents. Gifts served as political envoys, and were part of the navigation of new political and social spaces. They paved the way for new relations and the exercise of elite local agency. However, gifting was a complex act that often involved intense negotiation, and the possibility of rapid alterations in the balance of power for either party in the exchange. It served to create a relationship or association between individuals and groups, but also signified different things for those on either side of the exchange. These complexities remind us of the unevenness and shifting boundaries of colonial power relations. Although applying a material lens to these written sources offers rich new perspectives

on these encounters, they are still subject to colonial subjectivities. Apolo Kaggwa, however, wrote his own histories. The following section considers how these texts work in combination with his object collections, and how these sources enrich our understanding of Ugandan agencies further.

**Ugandan State Building and Historical Imagination: Apolo Kaggwa  
and Collections from the Buganda Kingdom**

**Figure 3.5: Ham Mukasa and Apolo Kaggwa in London. Studio carte-de-visite.  
Cambridge University Library: Royal Commonwealth Society Library,  
Reverend Ernest Millar collection, RCMS 113/38/3/ 31**



In July 1902, (Sir) Apolo Kaggwa (1864–1927) the Protestant Prime Minister (*Katikkiro*) of the Buganda Kingdom travelled to Britain with his Secretary, Hamu Mukasa (1868–1956) on an official visit for the coronation of King Edward VII (1841–1910). The striking portrait in Figure 3.5 was taken during their visit, and portrays the two men standing at the interface of African and European society, at once partaking in European customs of spectacle by having their portrait taken, while retaining their own ceremonial dress. Kaggwa later gave the staff that he holds in the image (a symbol of authority) to the MAA.<sup>425</sup> The image encapsulates the liminal reputation that Kaggwa carved for himself more widely in the colonial landscape of the early twentieth century. This position rested carefully between his own notions of ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ and served an essential role in his political and social legitimacy. Kaggwa was also an important agent in the production of museum collections in Britain and Uganda through his giving of gifts, his facilitation of collecting expeditions, and his dissemination of information. These activities offer an important new lens on his political and social positioning.

Kaggwa is most often remembered for his historical and intellectual writings. He began writing in 1890, having been taught to read by missionaries at the Buganda court.<sup>426</sup> In 1901, he produced the first published record of a unilineal Kiganda history in the Luganda vernacular entitled *Bassekabaka Be Buganda (The Kings of Buganda)*, followed in short succession by several other significant texts relating to Ganda customs, clans and folklore.<sup>427</sup> Kaggwa drew on the help of old men who had knowledge of the Kingdom’s oral history.<sup>428</sup> A central feature of these works was the

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<sup>425</sup> Official staff of office of the *Katikkiro*, 1920.256/Roscoe, MAA.

<sup>426</sup> John A. Rowe, ‘Myth, Memoir and Moral Admonition: Luganda Historical Writing, 1893–1969’, *Uganda Journal*, 33 (1969), p. 21.

<sup>427</sup> Apolo Kaggwa, *Bassekabaka be Buganda (The Kings of Buganda)* [translated by Semakula Kiwanuka] (Nairobi, 1971 [1901]); *Ekitabo Kye Kika kya Nsenene (The Book of the Grasshopper Clan)* (Mengo, 1905); *Ekitabo Kye Mpisa Za Baganda (The Book of the Customs of Buganda)* (New York, 1934 [1905]); *Ekitabo Kye Bika Bya Baganda (The Book of the Clans of Buganda)* (Kampala, 1949 [1908]); *The Tales of Sir Apolo: Uganda Folklore and Proverbs* (London, 1934).

<sup>428</sup> Apolo Kaggwa, *Bassekabaka be Buganda*, p. xxxi.

historical development of the Kiganda dynasty. *Bassekabaka Be Buganda* offers a list of the names of former kings and their administrators who had allegedly existed since the birth of the Kiganda dynasty.<sup>429</sup> In tracing this long history of administrators, and including himself in these records, Kaggwa secured his own name within the newly-written annals and traditions of Uganda's history. In his 1974 translation of *Bassekabaka Be Buganda*, Mathias Kiwanuka argued that these books served a political purpose: to unify disparate clans under a sense of 'nationhood' and around the concept of a centralized monarchy through knowledge of a common founding myth, history, leader, and culture.<sup>430</sup> Kaggwa's 1901 book therefore chronicled a history of traditions whilst serving modernising purposes. *The Tales of Sir Apolo: Uganda Folklore and Proverbs* (translated in 1934), likewise was a powerful, and largely biographical book that presented Kaggwa as a commoner who had ascended the Buganda Kingdom and penetrated the Court as a mediator of local cultural practices and an able handler of culture.<sup>431</sup> In producing these texts, Kaggwa effectively positioned himself as a gatekeeper of the pre-colonial dynastic past.

After Kaggwa's efforts a rich vein of written material subsequently emerged from Uganda's political thinkers. The value placed upon written documents was linked to the importance of 'the Word' more generally in colonial Uganda. John Rowe argued that the ability to read provided the spiritual key to Protestantism (more broadly known as Christianity of 'the book') but also provided political and social advancement.<sup>432</sup> Kaggwa had a close connection with the Anglican CMS and its representative, Rev John Roscoe, as chapter two illustrates. Most of his texts and letters were translated by missionaries, alerting us to multiple and complex layers of missionary influence in the

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<sup>429</sup> Ibid.

<sup>430</sup> Semakula Kiwanuka, 'Introduction' in Apolo Kaggwa, *Bassekabaka Be Buganda (The Kings of Buganda)* [translated by Semakula Kiwanuka] (Nairobi, 1971 [1901]), pp. i–xxii, xxi.

<sup>431</sup> Apolo Kaggwa, *The Tales of Sir Apolo: Uganda Folklore and Proverbs* (London, 1934).

<sup>432</sup> Rowe, 'Myth, Memoir and Moral Admonition', pp. 17–40.

*Katikkiro*'s work and thus the wider historiography of Uganda. Neil Kodesh argues that Kaggwa's relationships with missionaries and Roscoe fostered the centralised, 'Hamitic' and evolutionary ideas of Uganda by anthropologists like Frazer, to the detriment of more local perspectives.<sup>433</sup> Protestant Christianity, however, was not the only influence on Uganda's intellectual elite. Jonathon Earle has demonstrated that a large literary output emerged from the late nineteenth century, and political and theological debate also included Catholic and Muslim converts and dissidents.<sup>434</sup> Uganda's rich literary legacy, and indeed Kaggwa's own intellectual contribution to that wider history, have been the focus of lively and important discussion among academics.<sup>435</sup> To fully appreciate Kaggwa's efforts at knowledge and identity creation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, we must recognize that he deployed multiple methods to do so. These methods included the deployment of both texts and material culture.

While writing his historical texts, Kaggwa also set about acquiring material objects associated with that past to give to museums in Uganda and Britain. These activities demonstrate a strategic triangulation in which Kaggwa used historical objects and narratives for political ends. Kaggwa's written texts have had an enduring legacy and are still key points of departure for current researchers as a window on both the colonial and pre-colonial past. His related material collections, however, have lain practically dormant and forgotten in their museum settings for a century. Bringing Kaggwa's object collections and historical writings back into the same framework of analysis reveals a complex relationship between the material world, the writing of history, and the maintenance of power in colonial Uganda.

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<sup>433</sup> Kodesh, *Beyond the Royal Gaze*, p. 34.

<sup>434</sup> Jonathon L. Earle, *Colonial Buganda and the End of Empire: Political Thought and Historical Imagination in Africa* (Cambridge, 2017), p. 35.

<sup>435</sup> Michael Twaddle, 'On Ganda Historiography', *History in Africa*, 1 (1974), pp. 85–100; Rowe, 'Myth, Memoir and Moral Admonition', pp. 17–40; John Rowe, 'Eyewitness Accounts of Buganda History: The Memoirs of Ham Mukasa and His Generation', *Ethnohistory*, 36 (1989), pp. 61–71.

Kiwanuka suggested that in addition to Kaggwa's written work, material objects such as regalia, royal and clan drums, weapons, and fetishes might also provide some of the best sources of information for the royal history of Uganda.<sup>436</sup> Royal and clan drums, he observed, were sometimes made in memory of important events, while Roland Oliver described the preserved jawbones of former *Kabakas* as 'charters of the present dynasty' in his investigations into the royal tombs of Buganda in 1959.<sup>437</sup> However, many important objects were destroyed in fires and the great destruction of religious civil war in the 1880s and 1890s. Others were destroyed in 1966, when central government troops stormed the *Lubiri* Palace of *Kabaka* Muteesa II (1924–1969) and set it on fire.<sup>438</sup> Kiwanuka pondered whether many of the objects that did survive these events were 'misappropriated by the colonial administration' and were 'lying in European and perhaps American museums'.<sup>439</sup> His suspicions were correct, though it was not only the colonial administration who appropriated these objects, but also Kaggwa, the subject of his own study.

In July 1902, Kaggwa travelled to Britain with his Secretary, Hamu Mukasa, on an official visit for the coronation of King Edward VII. During his momentous visit, Kaggwa gifted a collection of thirty-one objects to the British Museum, sixteen to Cambridge's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (formerly known as the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, hereafter MAA), and other objects to King Edward VII and the Royal Collection.<sup>440</sup> These objects have yet to receive any serious interrogation other than by Rachel Hand at the MAA, who has written about a brass

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<sup>436</sup> Kiwanuka, 'Introduction', i–xxii, iii.

<sup>437</sup> See A.J. Lush, 'Kiganda Drums', *Uganda Journal*, 3 (1935), pp. 7–20; F. Lukyn Williams, 'The Drum Wango', *Uganda Journal*, 6 (1938), pp. 54–55; Roland Oliver, 'The Royal Tombs of Buganda', *Uganda Journal*, 23 (1959), pp. 124–133.

<sup>438</sup> Kiwanuka, 'Introduction', p. iii.

<sup>439</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>440</sup> Af1902,0718.1–31, British Museum; RCIN 69656 and RCIN 69875–69924, Royal Collection Trust; E 1903.466–480A Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge.

necklet once worn by the King's bodyguard.<sup>441</sup>

Mukasa chronicled the trip in the 1904 book *Uganda's Katikiro in England*.<sup>442</sup> The book provides a wealth of contextual information behind Kaggwa's gift, such as visits to museums and cultural institutions, the presentation of gifts during house visits and long descriptions of their general impressions of their material surroundings. *Uganda's Katikiro in England* contains some exceptionally rich descriptions of Kaggwa's visits to the homes of elite British society. His most significant visit was to King Edward VIII, to whom Kaggwa gave a lyre made of snakeskin and a wooden frame.<sup>443</sup> Kaggwa also visited the homes of old and new acquaintances, many of whom were important figures in the eastern African collecting network. Sir Harry Johnston invited the party to his home in London and showed Kaggwa his writing room where he kept much of his memorabilia and collections from Uganda.<sup>444</sup> Recalling Bourdieu, other scholars have noted the historical significance of the gentlemanly study as a space that individuals constructed and furnished with objects to suggest civility and educated tastes.<sup>445</sup> In this sense, we might say that Kaggwa entered Johnston's 'habitus' which offered a different type of opportunity for engagement from the high diplomacy and strategizing that is usually described in relation to their encounter during the Buganda Agreement.<sup>446</sup>

Kaggwa also attended the home of, Sir Henry Stanley, whom Kaggwa had met in Uganda when he was a child. Again, Kaggwa and Mukasa viewed the objects that

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<sup>441</sup> 'Rachel Hand, 'Brass Necklet' in Chris Wingfield, Karen Jacobs and Chantal Knowles (eds.), *Trophies, Relics and Curios? Missionary Heritage from Africa and the Pacific* (Leiden, 2015), pp. 74–77.

<sup>442</sup> Ham Mukasa, *Uganda's Katikiro in England: Being the Official Account of His Visit to the Coronation of His Majesty King Edward VII* (London, 1904).

<sup>443</sup> Lyre, RCIN 69353, Royal Collection.

<sup>444</sup> Ham Mukasa, *Uganda's Katikiro in England*, p. 71.

<sup>445</sup> Dora Thornton, *The Scholar in His Study: Ownership and Experience in Renaissance Italy* (London, 1998).

<sup>446</sup> D.A. Low, 'The Making and Implementation of the Uganda Agreement of 1900' in D.A. Low and R.C. Pratt (eds.), *Buganda and British Overrule, 1900–1955: Two Studies* (London, 1960), pp. 3–159.

Stanley had brought back from Uganda.<sup>447</sup> Captain C.V.C. Hobart took the pair to his home in London and showed them the spears and skins he had collected in Uganda.<sup>448</sup> They later visited his father's home in Hampshire and saw his son's curiosities from Uganda.<sup>449</sup> Sir Clement Hill also invited Kaggwa and Mukasa to his home to view his collections.<sup>450</sup> These examples demonstrate how pervasive the domestic display of Ugandan material culture was in metropolitan high society for those who had visited the country. They also demonstrate that objects consistently served as important points of communication and common ground in these encounters. John Mackenzie has discussed the display of spears and skins in British homes and the ways that they evoked an image of masculine control and power over Africa.<sup>451</sup> We may also draw on Emma Martin's argument about the colonial officer Sir Charles Bell, who collected certain objects in order to gain the respect of Tibet's highly cultured elites. In doing so, Bell manufactured a cultured identity that could be appreciated not by the metropole, but by those on the peripheries.<sup>452</sup> Martin's analysis offers a useful framework for interpreting the encounters here, whereby British men used objects as a form of cultural communication with elite Africans, just as much as they were a form of cultural control.

Kaggwa's hosts also gave him gifts, but these were different to the spears and skins that they had brought back from Uganda. Sir T. Fowell Buxton and Lady Buxton bought the *Katikkiro* a writing desk, a symbol of cultural distinction.<sup>453</sup> Speke's sister in Wokingham gave them China coffee cups. This is notable given that, just as Kaggwa gifted raw coffee beans to the British Museum (as symbols of the pre-colonial culture

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<sup>447</sup> Ibid., p. 62

<sup>448</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>449</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid., p. 198.

<sup>451</sup> John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (Manchester, 1988), p. 29.

<sup>452</sup> Emma Martin, 'Charles Bell's Collection of "Curios": Acquisitions and Encounters during a Himalayan Journey' in Sandra Dudley, Amy Jane Barnes, Jennifer Binnie, Julie Petrov, Jennifer Walklate (eds.), *Narrating Objects, Collecting Stories: Essays in Honour of Professor Susan M. Pearce* (London, 2012), pp. 167-183.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid., p. 179

and power of the Buganda court, and at a time when the coffee plant was being commoditized in Uganda), he was also receiving manufactured luxury consumer goods that were products of empire, globalization, and the commoditization of coffee.<sup>454</sup> This act replicated the intended flow of goods in British imperialism. Again, these examples illustrate both the symbolic and physical roles of material culture to the dynamics of these metropolitan cross-cultural encounters and social occasions.

Kaggwa's engagement with the material world continued with visits to industrial towns, factories, and multiple cultural institutions, including the Natural History Museum, the Zoological Gardens, Osbourne House, Crystal Palace, and the British Museum. In the British Museum, Kaggwa noticed attempts to regulate behaviour, such as the 'Do not touch' signs, though Mukasa did not elaborate further on what he thought about these.<sup>455</sup> He also described the glass cases as 'ingenious' for their ability to prevent damage, acknowledging the power of the institution over the public and its power to protect the past.<sup>456</sup> Describing other museum visits, Mukasa explained how he and Kaggwa learnt the workings and purposes of European museums and their collections. Mukasa keenly noted the arrangement of material by country, as well as the memorialization of kings and leaders. In the Crystal Palace, he observed that:

[T]hey keep only the most beautiful things. There are figures of all the kings, and many great men. (...) There are also copies of all the things made in their land; they pick out one thing and put it there to show people how things are made in different places to which they cannot go themselves... They chisel out stones and make them just like people, and put them there to remind people after years what they were like.<sup>457</sup>

In collecting and gifting ethnographic material, Kaggwa joined a network of other

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<sup>454</sup> Ibid., p. 191. See Steven C. Topik, 'The Integration of the World Coffee Market' in William G. Clarence Smith and Steven C. Topik (eds.), *The Global Coffee Economy in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, 1500–1989* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 27–30.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid.

<sup>457</sup> Mukasa, *Uganda's Katikiro*, p. 94.

influential figures in Uganda's European colonial society for whom collecting and gifting were key elements of one's cultural repertoire as well as tools of 'soft' power, used in conjunction with more formal state instruments. These visits emphasised his historical position and the importance of making material contributions to ensuring his legacy. Susan Pearce has noted that 'to give material freely to museums is a meritorious act which conveys famous immortality' in the 'European tradition'.<sup>458</sup> Kaggwa adds another layer to this analysis. Although he was only in England for a limited time, his objects would serve as physical reminders of his presence and power to future museum visitors.

Kaggwa selected the British Museum and the University of Cambridge as recipients for his gifts knowing that such institutions would help him to carve a favourable public profile in imperial society. Sam Alberti suggests that 'as with any process of gift exchange, donation constituted a reciprocal relationship between benefactor and recipient. An isolated practitioner, collector, or manufacturer sent a specimen to a metropolitan museum with the hope of securing potentially useful patronage or, even better, the minor fame of a label or catalogue mention'.<sup>459</sup> When understood in their context as 'gifts', Kaggwa's objects then, illustrate a keen understanding about the gift economy of European museums and the political and social role of such gifts. D.A. Low argues that Mukasa's account illustrates the intended awe and spectacle that the British sought to impress upon them.<sup>460</sup> This was certainly the intention, but I argue that the outcome was more complex. Through Kaggwa's gift we can also add further nuance to Low's notion of British hegemony. Kaggwa was himself an active participant in this process and used material culture and gifting as a potent

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<sup>458</sup> Susan M. Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London, 1995), p. 407.

<sup>459</sup> Samuel J. M. M. Alberti, 'Objects and the Museum', *Isis*, 96:4 (December, 2005), p. 564.

<sup>460</sup> D. Anthony Low, *Fabrication of Empire: The British and the Uganda Kingdoms, 1890–1902* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 330–332.



symbol of his own regal and historical authority. As Alberti further argues, when donors offered objects to museums, despite handing over physical custodianship, ‘they retained symbolic ownership—a manifestation of what Annette Weiner calls “the paradox of keeping-while-giving”’.<sup>461</sup> Kaggwa’s gift thus reveals new perspectives on the power of British cultural institutions, but also provides a rare opportunity to view the agency of a non-European donor who simultaneously appropriated the Museum for his own political and social ends.

Of course, it was Kaggwa’s elite status that enabled him to travel to Britain to give his gifts. Thanks to the increased land ownership rights he gained under the 1900 Uganda Agreement, and the fact that that *Katikkiro* received taxes and major shares of the spoils of war, he was essentially one of the top ‘landed aristocratic’ elites in Uganda.<sup>462</sup> By travelling to Britain to present his gifts, he was not an anonymous donor and could capitalise on his presence in the museums, homes, public places, and elite circles of Britain to boost the power of his gifts. He also became a member of the collecting community rather than simply the indigenous subject of ethnographic study.<sup>463</sup> Kaggwa crossed geographical, cultural and social boundaries. In doing so, he bridges the periphery and metropole binary that Catherine Hall, Antoinette Burton, Ann Stoler, Frederick Cooper and others have argued against, illustrating that people and objects moved between these zones in important and powerful ways.<sup>464</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> Ibid. Annette B. Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving* (Oxford, 1992).

<sup>462</sup> Michael Twaddle, ‘The Emergence of Politico-Religious Groupings in Late Nineteenth-Century Buganda’, *The Journal of African History*, 29:1 (1988), p. 89.

<sup>463</sup> For example, Mukasa noted that in the British Museum ‘We saw there different articles from our country; some had been brought by Sir H.H. Johnston, who had given a great many things, and others by other Englishmen: the Rev. J. Roscoe had given a great many, the Rev. R.P. Ashe had given a great many, and others too had given things from our country of Uganda’. Ham Mukasa, *Uganda’s Katikkiro*, p. 64.

<sup>464</sup> Antoinette M. Burton, ‘Introduction: On the Inadequacy and the Indispensability of the Nation’, in Burton (ed.), *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking With and Through the Nation* (Durham, NC, 2003), p. 4; Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, ‘Introduction: Being at home with the Empire’, in Hall and Rose (eds.), *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 9; Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, ‘Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research

Other scholars have explored the history of elite colonial visitors to Britain. Antoinette Burton has shown how Indian elites struggled to overcome prejudice in bourgeois British society.<sup>465</sup> In his study of African students trying to penetrate the Oxbridge community between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century, Paul Deslandes similarly argues that racial prejudice among their fellow students often held them back. In contrast, David Cannadine suggests that in British society, the ‘prime grid of analysis was individual status rather than collective race’.<sup>466</sup> Michael Fisher’s *Counterflows of Imperialism* suggests that Indians fashioned their identities in Britain in ways that they could not ‘at home’. In this interpretation, being abroad in fact opened up opportunities for social climbing.<sup>467</sup> The unique nexus between Kaggwa’s material culture and diplomacy makes him particularly distinctive in this historiography on colonial visitors, which tends to focus on younger men and women and their formal education. His visit augments our understanding of this field of history and highlights how his careful mobilization of the material world allowed him to elude neat categories usually ascribed to other colonial visitors. This is illuminated nicely in the following quote from the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* in which ideas about Kaggwa’s class and race were clearly mediated by his material and cultural presentation of himself:

It is a long time since a dusky potentate created so much commotion as this Prime Minister. It is not too much to say that at the reception at the Town Hall yesterday afternoon, he impressed everybody by his dignified manner and intelligence. He appeared at the function attired in the same robe that he wore as the guest of Lord Salisbury at Hatfield on Saturday afternoon. This is a long, blue gown magnificently embroidered with silver, and lined with white. Underneath was a pure cambric shirt of native cloth. His headdress was a white cap of exquisite work.<sup>468</sup>

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Agenda’, in Cooper and Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, CA, 1997), p. 3.

<sup>465</sup> Antoinette M. Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (London, 1998).

<sup>466</sup> David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (London, 2001), p. 8.

<sup>467</sup> Michael Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism: Indian Travellers and Settlers in Britain, 1600-1857* (Delhi, 2004), pp. 192 and 280.

<sup>468</sup> 24 July 1902, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, p.5. The British Newspaper Archive.

Here, the racial discourse used to describe Kaggwa was deeply entangled in the positive account of his Ugandan dress. Kaggwa's careful deployment of both 'traditional' culture (through Ugandan textiles and clothing) and 'modernity' (touring of British towns and learning about modern industry) thus problematized traditional British thought on race and identity.

Of course, it wasn't only Ugandan clothing that Kaggwa deployed in his efforts to carve his reputation in metropolitan society and memory. He also gifted Ugandan objects to British cultural institutions like the British Museum, the MAA in Cambridge, and the Royal Collection. We can learn more about the objects he gifted through other important sources. Rev. Ernest Millar's papers at the Royal Commonwealth Society Library in Cambridge contain the photograph pictured in Figure 3.6.

**Figure 3.6: Cambridge University Library: Royal Commonwealth Society Library, Ernest Millar collection, RCMS 113/38/3/23, 'Charms Brought to England by the *Katikiro* and the Rev. E. Millar. A Group of Labare (Spirit) Instruments Comprising Magic Wands, a Headdress, a Shield, Drums, Horns and Cards'.**

The only textual information relating to this photograph comes from its caption ‘Charms brought to England by the *Katikiro* and the Rev. E. Millar: A Group of Labare (Spirit) Instruments Comprising Magic Wands, a Headdress, a Shield, Drums, Horns and Cards’. The photograph illustrates that Kaggwa’s gift was pre-planned and carefully considered. In this image, presumably taken by Millar, the objects have been deliberately reclassified both through their symmetrical curation, and their description as ‘charms’, blurring the distinct meanings of each individual object (which Kaggwa presumably would have known).

Clearly Kaggwa’s gifts must be read in the knowledge that courtly and missionary narratives were closely entwined, but in doing so I draw on insights from David Maxwell who has analysed photographic sources of William F.P. Burton of the Congo Evangelistic Mission in Lubaland. Maxwell demonstrates the ambiguity and contradictions embodied within Burton’s texts and visual output. On the one hand, Burton ardently rejected the local use of fetishes, ancestor worship, witchcraft and divination. At the same time, he was intensely interested in these customs, and conducted scientific research and collecting expeditions, often producing sympathetic narratives. Maxwell argues that that missionary photography was ‘situated at the interface of different genres and their audiences, which ranged from supporters of the mission to museum curators and social anthropologists’.<sup>469</sup> Regarding Congolese actors, he further notes that ‘although missionary and anthropological photographs were created in a power relation within a colonial situation’, there is a need to consider ‘the “photographic event” – the dialogic period during which the subject and the

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<sup>469</sup> David Maxwell, ‘Photography and the Religious Encounter: Ambiguity and Aesthetics in Missionary Representations of the Luba of South East Belgian Congo’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 53:1 (January, 2011), p. 40

photographer come together’ in which ‘lengthy negotiations under conditions of elaborate technical preparation’.<sup>470</sup>

We do not know what Kaggwa’s role in this photograph was, or even if he knew that it had been taken. But we can access his voice through the objects themselves. Here again, we encounter the liminality of Kaggwa and his gifts. We have already seen that many of these objects such as bark cloth, pottery, and coffee beans represented a wider gift-giving practice of the pre-colonial Buganda court that expressed its power. Object labels at the MAA reveal that many of these objects had belonged to members of the royal family. The looped, chevron-shaped container at very back of this image, for example, is the umbilical cord holder of a former king (discussed in chapter two), illustrating a royal heritage.



**Figure 3.7: A selection of Kaggwa’s objects now in the British Museum. Photograph taken by Alison Bennett, courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum.**

At the same time, Kaggwa gave *lubaale* objects to the British Museum including an iron spoon allegedly used by ‘demon priests’ for ‘burning tongues’, ‘divination

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<sup>470</sup> Christopher Pinney ‘Introduction’, in Christopher Pinney and Nicholas Peterson (eds.), *Photography's Other Histories* (Durham, 2003), p. 10. Quoted in David Maxwell, ‘Photography and the Religious Encounter’, p. 41.

artefacts', 'charms', and 'amulets'. Objects associated with *lubaale* gods including Mukasa and Kibuuka are described by the Museum as 'fetishes', but as chapter two has demonstrated, missionaries and Ganda elites linked *Kibuuka* to an origin story. From this perspective, this narrative was not designed to undermine, but rather to bolster Buganda's historical legitimacy and power. The inventories of Kaggwa's gifts, listed in Appendix Tables 3.1–2, also list objects including cowrie shells, drinking vessels, adornments for children, a hoe, an axe, a shield, and tobacco pipes. Some of these can be seen in Figure 3.7, which illustrates objects currently in the British Museum stores.

Though difficult to interpret with certainty, these objects nonetheless offer interesting points of discussion for future research. The cowrie shells and hoe, for example, may have represented Buganda's power over other Ugandan regions such as Koki, which paid an annual levy of cowrie shells and iron products to the Ganda King.<sup>471</sup> They may also have represented Baganda efforts to preserve evidence of Ganda iron production and skill, which was being undermined by the colonial economy by the early twentieth century.<sup>472</sup> Benjamin Ray also notes that in many Ugandan Christian texts, the religious traditionalists were called 'Abafuta Njaji', or the 'hemp smokers' and 'drug addicts'.<sup>473</sup> Kaggwa brought medicine men and priests to Roscoe and may have acquired his vessel for smoking hemp in this way. Although Kaggwa's collecting methods and motivations require further research, they were entangled in a wider material and managerial strategy that spoke to both the local and colonial politics of his time.

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<sup>471</sup> Michael Twaddle, *Kakungulu and the Creation of Uganda, 1868-1928* (Athens, OH), p. 4.

<sup>472</sup> Reid, *A History of Modern Uganda*, p. 173.

<sup>473</sup> Benjamin Ray, *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship in Buganda* (New York NY, 1991), p. 27.

## Collections of the *Mukamas* of Bunyoro and Ankole

Kaggwa's method of historical memory production also influenced other Ugandan leaders in later years. For instance, when the missionary John Roscoe returned to Uganda between 1919 and 1921, other local leaders continued to collaborate with him. Roscoe sought to form a broader understanding of the material culture of Ugandan kingship, and this time he travelled to the pastoral kingdoms of Ankole and Bunyoro.<sup>474</sup> Upon arrival, he immediately made contact with their *Mukamas* as he had done in Buganda.<sup>475</sup> These practices set Roscoe apart from other missionaries and other anthropologists, but the encounters were also important for his informants who skilfully used their material culture to carve new reputations for their kingdoms in a hostile colonial climate, and to shape how they were remembered by future generations.<sup>476</sup>

Roscoe, like many of his contemporaries was particularly interested in the longer histories of Bunyoro and Ankole, which between approximately the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries fell under a vast empire called Kitara. According to oral history, Kitara had once been ruled by a powerful and semi-mythical dynasty named the Cwezi.<sup>477</sup> Bunyoro and Ankole (which later seceded the Bunyoro-Kitara Empire) both drew their legitimacy from their links to the Cwezi. Many nineteenth-century European accounts like Roscoe's argued that the Cwezi were light-skinned pastoral

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<sup>474</sup> For Roscoe's accounts of these trips, see John Roscoe, 'Preliminary report of the Mackie Ethnological Expedition to Central Africa', *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, 92:645 (June, 1921), pp. 209–219; John Roscoe, *Twenty-Five Years in East Africa* (Cambridge, 1921), *The Soul of Central Africa: A General Account of the Mackie Ethnological Expedition* (1922).

<sup>475</sup> Roscoe, *The Soul of Central Africa*, p. 56.

<sup>476</sup> Justin Willis offers an overview of the hostile climate faced by Bunyoro kings in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from British colonial powers, including their pre-colonial royal rituals. This will be described in greater detail later in the chapter. Justin Willis, 'A Portrait for the Mukama: Monarchy and Empire in Colonial Bunyoro, Uganda', *Journal of Imperial & Commonwealth History* 34:1 (March 2006), pp. 105–22.

<sup>477</sup> For further background see Shane Doyle, 'The Cwezi-Kubandwa Debate: Gender, Hegemony and Pre-Colonial Religion in Bunyoro, Western Uganda', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 77 (2007), pp. 559–81.

invaders of ‘Hamitic descent’ from the north, and that the present aristocratic classes of Bunyoro and Ankole called the Bahima were their descendants.<sup>478</sup>

Being a pastoralist group, the rituals of the royal court centred strongly on cattle. Indeed, the term *mukama* literally means ‘milkman’. When Ankole later seceded from Bunyoro, pastoralism continued to maintain a significant societal role. In Bunyoro, however, it became less defined, although the elite pastoralist Bahima there continued to regard themselves as important and persisted with the ritual of keeping of a royal herd (*nkorogi*), ceremonial milking and the offering of milk to the *Mukama* for his breakfast. The Muryoro *Mukama* had a royal milkman, two milkmaids and a dairy maid who were all painted white for important occasions. According to Roscoe, while Ankole had retained a strict milk diet, it had not retained the ceremonial part of the princely priesthood that marked out Bunyoro court.<sup>479</sup> Speke and other nineteenth-century commentators noted that the authority of previous *Mukamas* rested on their connection with different spirits (*embandwa*) through rituals.<sup>480</sup> The *Mukama*’s drums, spears and other regalia were central to these rituals, which were believed to be linked to rain, fertility, disease, and the general wellbeing of the community.<sup>481</sup>

These stories intrigued Roscoe, who had long been interested in royal ritual, and he began to plan a collecting expedition. With financial backing from a businessman and philanthropist Sir Peter Mackie (1855–1924) and institutional support from the Royal Society, the trip was launched.<sup>482</sup> This period of Roscoe’s work has received

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<sup>478</sup> J. H. Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Nile* (Edinburgh, 1863), p. 246; Harry Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate, Volume II*, p. 475.

<sup>479</sup> Letter from John Roscoe, Cambridge University Library, Department of Manuscripts and University Archives, Charles Gabriel Seligman: Ethnological Notes, MS Add.9396

<sup>480</sup> See also Justin Willis, ‘A Portrait for the Mukama: Monarchy and empire in Colonial Bunyoro, Uganda’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 34:1, (March, 2006), p. 107.

<sup>481</sup> Harry Johnston mentions the royal drum in connection with Lukedi, the first King of the Babito dynasty. Sir Harry Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate: An Attempt to Give Some Description of the Physical Geography, Botany, Zoology, Anthropology, Languages and History of the Territories under British Protection in East Central Africa, Volume II* (London, 1902), p. 596.

<sup>482</sup> Discussions about the Expedition among members of the Anthropological Institute can be found in 58/2/6/22 and 58/3/2.



little attention from historians, yet it offers an important opportunity to interrogate the development of his approaches to Ugandan material culture, as well as those of the Ugandan elite, within a changing imperial climate. When Roscoe first arrived in Uganda in 1891, British imperialism in eastern Africa was still in its early stages. When he returned in 1919, the colonial state was more fully developed, but anxious about what it saw as ‘secret’ Ugandan cultural practices and colonial disorder. A report in the Royal Society reveals that Roscoe’s collecting expedition in fact had a double motive, for it was underpinned by a government surveillance exercise. In a report to the Royal Society, Roscoe noted that,

over and above these matters [i.e. collecting, researching and interviewing] I was entrusted by the Government with the task of looking into some native questions which called for attention. I was engaged investigating native secret societies during the whole of the expedition, and it was only at quite the end of the time that I was able to give a satisfactory account.<sup>483</sup>

This report tells us that the colonial government engaged not only their own officials such as Harry Johnson in spying under the auspices of collecting expeditions, but missionaries as well. Research into other regions of eastern Africa reveals that the British felt ongoing unease with ‘secret’ cultural practices, which challenged their concept of governmentality, law and order throughout the second half of the twentieth century. For example, as Katherine Luongo has demonstrated, the colonial state developed an ‘anthro-administrative complex’ surrounding witchcraft in Kenya in the 1920s.<sup>484</sup>

In both Bunyoro and Ankole, Roscoe engaged the *Mukamas* and their *Katikkiros* to bring informants to the royal courts for objects and interviews about

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<sup>483</sup> Roscoe, ‘Preliminary Report of the Mackie Ethnological Expedition’, p. 209.

<sup>484</sup> Katherine Luongo, *Witchcraft and Colonial Rule in Kenya, 1900–1955* (Cambridge, 2011). According to Luongo officials on the ground sought to resolve these problems by collecting useable anthropological knowledge about the king’s role, but this was often misunderstood and misused. Luongo, *Witchcraft and Colonial Rule in Kenya*, p. 4.

sacred rites and religious practices, just as he had done with Kaggwa in Buganda.<sup>485</sup> In Bunyoro, he spent up to five hours a day with his informants. However, Roscoe noted that they were not always forthcoming:<sup>486</sup>

At first my visitors were careful to impart nothing but commonplace information, and some tact was required to persuade them to give fuller details. They were especially cautious with regard to the secrets of their sacred rites, on which the main value and interest of the inquiry depended. In due time, however, they became perfectly frank and gave the ceremonies without any pressure on my part.<sup>487</sup>

This reflection suggests a careful balance of power on the part of the Nyoro King, and an initial desire to keep their cultural heritage out of the hands of the European. The ‘secrecy’ of the Nyoro informants is not surprising. The British had a long history of conflict with the Bunyoro kingdom. In 1893, British forces allied with the expansionist Baganda to wage a prolonged war against Bunyoro and its *Mukama* Kabalega, who was eventually exiled in 1899. The war caused severe destruction across Bunyoro. Considerable areas of land were given to Buganda and its population was further diminished by people evading state labour and hut tax.<sup>488</sup> Thanks to missionary advocacy, Kabalega’s son, a Protestant convert called Andereya Duhaga II (1882–1924) was chosen as Kabalega’s successor in 1902, and was thus reliant on the continued good opinion of missionaries.<sup>489</sup> Duhaga was the *Mukama* when Roscoe arrived in Bunyoro in 1919, and presumably the focus of Colonial Office interest.

David Cannadine and Terence Ranger have shown that the idea of African monarchy was key to the British approach to informal rule.<sup>490</sup> Yet Bunyoro’s unsettled

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<sup>485</sup> Roscoe, ‘Preliminary Report of the Mackie Ethnological Expedition’, p. 216.

<sup>486</sup> One informant, ‘Paul’ was a messenger of the former Mukama, Kabarega who had spent much time going between the King and Samuel Baker. Roscoe, *The Soul of Central Africa*, pp. 136–37.

<sup>487</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>488</sup> John Beattie, *The Nyoro State* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1971), p. 13.

<sup>489</sup> Willis, ‘A Portrait for the Mukama’, p. 109. Archibald Ranulph Dunbar, *A History of Bunyoro-Kitara* (Oxford, 1965), p. 108; Beattie, *The Nyoro State*, p. 81.

<sup>490</sup> Terence Ranger, ‘Making Northern Rhodesia Imperial: Variations on a Royal Theme, 1924–38’, *African Affairs*, 79 (1980), pp. 349–73; Terence Ranger, ‘The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa’,

relationship with British authorities, combined with Roscoe's search for evidence of old rituals to support British anthropological theory, meant that kingship held a 'central but curious position' for all parties involved.<sup>491</sup> As Table 3.3 illustrates, Roscoe's resulting collections from both Bunyoro and Ankole were abundantly supplied with spiritual items of royal regalia, and offer a fascinating insight into their pasts, or at the very least, reproduced memories of those pasts. The spears collected by Roscoe, for example, were said to have been recently made. These objects suited Roscoe's theoretical ideas. The idea of a kings' poison, for example, was a key element of Frazerian theory that sought to find commonalities between African tribes, in this case by showing that many African kings committed suicide if they became ill.<sup>492</sup> They also allowed the Nyoro monarchy to safely subvert British power while reclaiming its once powerful image.

Reports of Speke and Grant from the 1860s had indicated that the *Mukama* was believed to be a figure of great ritual power, but as Justin Willis notes, by the time that Duhaga arrived on the throne in 1902, British and Baganda intrusion meant that the position of the *Mukama* had become almost irrelevant.<sup>493</sup> It is possible that Nyoro leaders had witnessed the success of Apolo Kaggwa's project of material heritage management at the beginning of the century, and sought to emulate it. The Nyoro court may not have been allowed to engage in spiritual ceremonies anymore, but by allowing its royal regalia to be placed in a European museum, these memories could be preserved, and a carefully crafted history of kingship displayed. Moreover, they did not give all their objects to Roscoe, for later colonial records state that Duhaga's son and

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in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983); Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*.

<sup>491</sup> Justin Willis, 'A Portrait for the Mukama', p. 111.

<sup>492</sup> John Roscoe, *Northern Bantu: An Account of Some Central African Tribes of the Uganda Protectorate* (London, 1915), pp. 14 and 50; J.G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Religion, Volume I* (London, 1894), p. 110.

<sup>493</sup> Hanning Speke, *Journey of the Discovery of the Nile*, p. 411; Willis, 'A Portrait for the Mukama', p. 110.

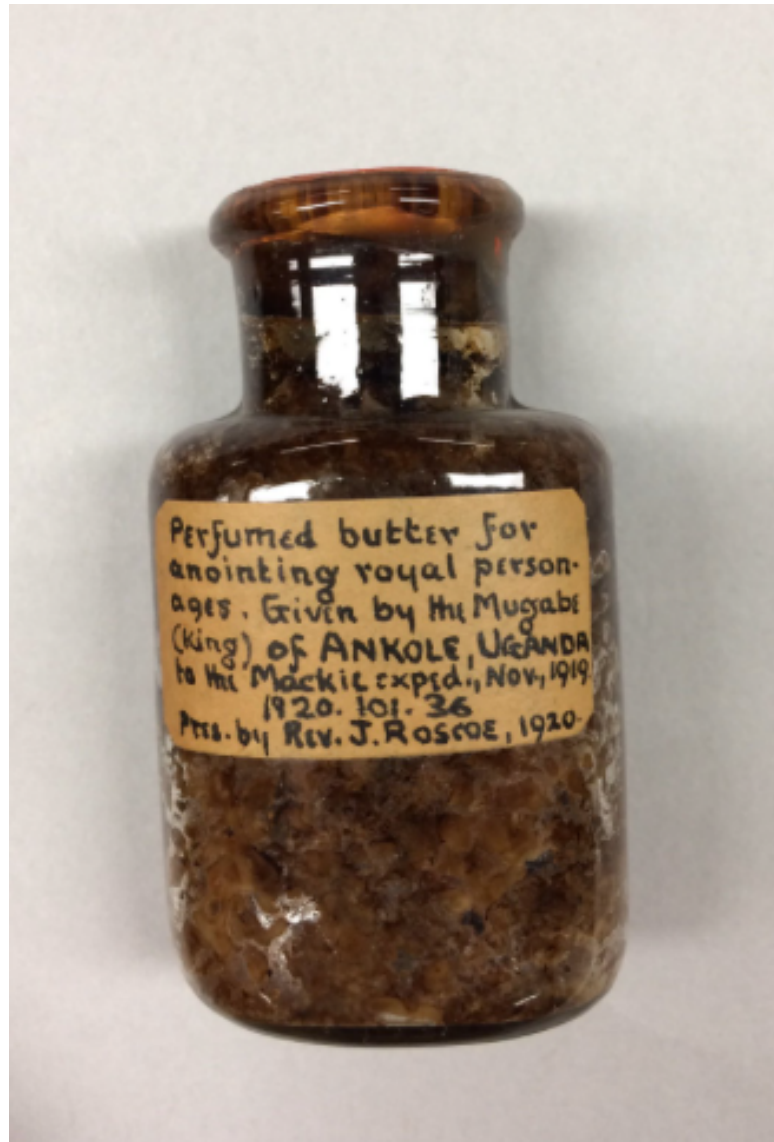
successor, Tito Winyi created a living museum within the palace to display the Court's historical royal regalia to European visitors, ensuring that this memory remained in Uganda, but was also exported to Britain.<sup>494</sup>

Though recast by Roscoe using a European lexicon and framework of understanding of monarchy, these objects nevertheless carved the powerful image that the *Mukamas* sought. Thrones, sceptres, and anointing oil (see Figure 3.8) spoke to British conceptions of ancient kingship. Whereas in Buganda, the succession of umbilical cords acquired by Roscoe served as physical sources of royal lineage, in Bunyoro, crowns seem to have served a similar function (see Figure 3.9). Roscoe noted that 'each king had his own crown, which was different from those of all his predecessors' and these crowns can be seen to have been visually ordered and curated in Figures 3.9 and 3.10.<sup>495</sup> As in Buganda, objects were key to legitimising royal history and authority. The photography of these objects served to promote visual access to these objects through their circulation in the published book.

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<sup>494</sup> Willis, 'A Portrait for the Mukama', p. 114.

<sup>495</sup> John Roscoe, *The Bakitara or Banyoro: The First Part of the Report of the Mackie Ethnological Expedition to Central Africa* (Cambridge, 1923), pp. 130-131.



**Figure 3.8: Perfumed butter for anointing royal personages. Given by the ‘Mugabe’ (King of Ankole), Uganda to the Mackie Expedition, November, 1919–1920. Presented by Rev. John Roscoe, 1920. Image taken by Alison Bennett courtesy of the Pitt-Rivers Museum.**



Figure 3.9: Bunyoro: Crowns worn by past kings. John Roscoe, *The Batikara*, plate XIV, p. 112.



Figure 3.10: Bunyoro: Crowns worn by past kings. John Roscoe, *The Batikara*, plate XIV, p. 112.

Other objects were understood by Roscoe to be signifiers of class distinction. Different colours of bark cloth signified rank, as did eating equipment. For example, in Ankole, only the *Mukama* was only allowed to consume milk. Other elites ate meat and vegetables.<sup>496</sup> In Bunyoro, crowns adorned with colobus monkey hair and beadwork were worn by an elite order named the *bajwara kondo* or ‘secret guild’ whom Margaret Trowell compared to the British peerage.<sup>497</sup> These contradictory descriptions illustrate the complex position that the Nyoro kingdom (and its material culture) held for colonial leadership. They also ascribe a sense of power that we do not otherwise have a record of.



**Figure 3.11: 'King in his ancient robes with chiefs of the Sacred Guild'. John Roscoe, *The Batikara or Bunyoro*, Plate III p. 17.**

<sup>496</sup> As Kaori O'Connor notes, 'Throughout history, and in all part of the world, feasts, feasting and drinking have been the medium and arena for the display of hierarchy, status and power; the performance of competition and conflict; the negotiation of loyalty and alliances; the mobilisation and exploitation of resources and the creation and consolidation of identity through inclusion and exclusion'. Kaori O'Connor, *The Never-Ending Feast: the Archaeology and Anthropology of Feasting* (London, 2015), p.9.

<sup>497</sup> Margaret Trowell and K. Wachsmann, *Tribal Crafts of Uganda* (London, 1953), pp. 22–23.

## Conclusion

Although operating across different regions and time periods, these Ugandan and Kenyan figures were keenly aware of the power of material culture in forging relations and their reputation. They were also aware of the need to preserve the past, or at least a version of it. By carving roles as mediators of local cultural practices Kaggwa and the Mukamas of Bunyoro and Ankole used material culture to articulate knowledge of the past, and in turn become something new. In her research on the material culture of the Toraja Tongkonan of Indonesia, Kathleen M. Adams offers a rich example of how ‘nations draw on an array of symbols and images culled from specific, selectively-chosen pasts to present visions of national identity and national heritage to both their citizenry and to the broader world’.<sup>498</sup> We can apply a similar argument to Uganda. Objects aided the formation of a collective tangible memory, but also mobilized state sponsored narratives and public discourses about the future. Here, the past was represented as a field of tradition, imagined and made tangible through objects to create a future identity. In these cases, we find a constant tension, or rather dialogue, between the past and the present. Objects were vehicles for navigating cultural memory, local and colonial power, civic debates, ideals and identity politics. Gifting added to the performance of these props and bolstered elite positions in important networks of power.

Analysis of the material significances of the objects given by Ugandan and Kenyan leaders provides important insights into the multiple meanings of these gifts. Gifting enabled local leaders to fashion a self-image through their own auto-ethnographies, and the gifts that they amassed from European imperialists enabled them

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<sup>498</sup> Kathleen M. Adams, ‘Identity, Heritage and Memorialization: The Toraja Tongkonan of Indonesia’ in Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello (eds.), *Writing Material Culture History* (London, 2015), pp. 94–99.



to form ethnographic collections and categorisations of their own. Viewing gifts as both physical objects and as the products of interpersonal acts thus provides new perspectives on the affective interactions and strategic methods enacted by Europeans and Ugandans in colonial relations.

Apolo Kaggwa also offers an important example of the ‘distinction’ examined in the previous two chapters. Though not from a white, middle-class background, and not possessing the same ‘habitus’ as his fellow official and missionary collectors, Kaggwa successfully penetrated the ‘fields’ of the European collector and the museum, developing an active understanding of their social structures. In doing so, he too gained cultural capital which opened up access to new networks and forms of colonial and metropolitan power in the metropole, in the colonial State, and in Ugandan political and social power structures. Moreover, Kaggwa possessed the deep ‘authentic’ knowledge, and personal ownership of material culture that European collectors and museums so desired in order to become ‘experts’, and even policed their access to them. Clearly examples like Kaggwa disrupt aspects of Bourdieu’s conception of ‘distinction’. In the preface to the English edition of *Distinction*, Bourdieu acknowledged the criticisms of his lack of emphasis on ethnicity and his over-polarization of tastes according to class.<sup>499</sup> Nevertheless, Bourdieu’s concepts of ‘habitus’, ‘the field’, ‘distinction’, and ‘cultural capital’ help to illuminate why these individuals invested so much time and effort in their collecting, and the ways in which empire offered unique opportunities for social, political, economic, political, and professional advancement and these individuals used collecting to do so. By underscoring how Ugandans made claims to power and positioned their identities through material culture and collecting, this chapter moreover challenges longstanding Eurocentric narratives drawn from external perspectives.

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<sup>499</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London, 1984), p. xxv.

## IV

### Unpacking the Collections: A Study of the British Museum and Uganda Museum

Attending to the moment of an object's collection illustrates a particular set of motivations, encounters, and values. However, as Annie Coombes has argued, 'once in the hands of the curator, it was the overall schema and environment provided by the institution that constructed the object's relation to the whole display, and subsequently some of its meaning for the viewer'.<sup>500</sup> This chapter shifts our gaze from the politics of collecting objects 'in the field' to the politics of studying, displaying, and 'using' them in museums. In particular, it builds on the debate first instigated by John MacKenzie in 1985 about the extent to which museums served as 'tools of empire'.<sup>501</sup> Since then, a rich body of research has sought to answer this question, offering a variety of different interpretations. This chapter addresses a gap in that literature by exploring the deployment of Ugandan museum collections for imperial purposes during the early decades of British rule. In particular, it reconstructs the activities of two key institutions: the British Museum (established 1753, with eastern African objects acquired from the 1860s) and Uganda Museum (established 1908). It considers what the imperial agenda for these collections looked like both as an ideal, and also on the ground in a national and a colonial museum. In line with other recent museum histories, it suggests that while these institutions were indeed key sites for the production of colonial knowledge, identities, and cultural power, closer attention reveals that they

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<sup>500</sup> Annie E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London, 1994), p. 159.

<sup>501</sup> John MacKenzie, *Museums and Empire: Natural History, Human Cultures and Colonial Identities* (Manchester, 2009), p. 7.

were also spaces of negotiation and tension between multiple actors, which often problematized and disrupted these aims.

To develop this argument, the chapter focuses on a variety of aspects of museum activity.<sup>502</sup> First, it examines how and through whom objects entered the museums. In doing so, it considers how much input museums had in the types of material that they acquired. Second, it explores the various ways that curators used these objects, whether through study and classification, visual reproduction, exhibitions and displays, educational resources, handbooks and catalogues and what this can tell us about the discursive techniques of these museums. Third, it considers the architectural space and design of the museums and how these contributed to their overall impact. Fourth, it considers administrative aspects of the museum, from funding to internal bureaucracies among staff and trustees. And finally, it examines what links these institutions had to the *realpolitik* of imperial governmentality. Though governed by the same overarching motivations for the accumulation and display of objects, these two museums offer two different insights into these questions.

The first section of this chapter provides a more detailed overview of its historiographical framing, illustrating the different arguments that previous scholars have put forward about the role of museums in empire. It suggests that approaches that acknowledge both the power and the limitations of museums during this period are most applicable to Ugandan collections. The second section of this chapter explores the history of these collections in the British Museum, which was the first major institution in Britain to acquire objects from Uganda in 1865. Between then and 1920, the Museum acquired approximately 885 further items.<sup>503</sup> This material added to a larger and

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<sup>502</sup> Tony Bennett, 'Thinking (with) Museums: From Exhibitionary Complex to Governmental Assemblage', *The International Handbook of Museums Studies* (April, 2015), p. 3.

<sup>503</sup> Figures according to British Museum CMS database as of 12.07.18.

steadily growing collection of ethnographic items already in existence at the Museum. This section traces the history of these collections through two main phases: the era of Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826–1897) who joined the Museum in 1851 as a curator and later became Keeper of the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography until 1896, and that of his successor, Charles Hercules Read (1857–1929), who led the Department until 1921.

Their leaderships represent two distinct phases in the life of the eastern African collections at the British Museum, partly because of their different working styles and personalities, and partly because of external changes in academic anthropology. Under their aegis, the Museum's focus shifted from a diffuse ethnographic approach that relied on trophy objects and the newly emerging auction market, to more systematic attempts to acquire, study, and publicize individual Ugandan material cultures as the Museum sought to contribute to public, scientific, and governmental forms of knowledge production. Underlying both phases was a racialized evolutionary framework that helped to justify imperial incursions. However, this neat framework was regularly disrupted by internal museum structures, lack of governmental support and funding, gaps in knowledge and material, and objects simply not fitting the evolutionary narrative, calling into question the Museum's authoritative power and real colonial impact.

The final section uses colonial government files in Uganda's National Archives that document the conversations among the colonial administration regarding the planning and development of the Uganda Museum. This material contrasts with the relatively opaque provenance of the British Museum's eastern African collections. These records span the period 1907–1927 and illustrate that the Museum was to be an important feature of the early governmental infrastructure — a testing ground for other imperial power structures and schemes, and an informal site for political debate. These

papers include not only the mundane administrative activities required for setting up a museum, but also the difficult negotiations that the colonial administration faced between competing bodies, both internally and with Ugandan leaders. These antagonisms mirrored broader political tensions between the Protectorate Government in Entebbe and leaders of the Buganda Kingdom in Kampala at this time. The Uganda Museum therefore offers a fascinating analytical lens on both the importance of the Museum in attempts at soft imperial power and the ruptures that occurred within it. Moreover, the Museum's foundation has traditionally been attributed to the Governor of the Uganda Protectorate, Sir Henry Hesketh Bell (1864–1952).<sup>504</sup> This chapter seeks to shed new light on that story and to reinstate the agency of Ugandan leaders such as Apolo Kaggwa in its creation.

Each institution had distinctive actors, objects, and circumstances that informed their specific aims and direction. Binding their histories together, however, were their shared desires to contribute to the imperial project. The chapter argues that these organizations were key constituents of imperial ideology: they functioned as imperialist cogs through their 'scientific' narratives of racial and cultural difference, their influence on the popular imagination, and, in Uganda especially, as key sites of the physical imperial infrastructure. However, they should also be understood through the tensions and fractures that emerged in their attempts at doing so. Both institutions suffered to varying degrees with difficulties of display space and research resources, as well as incomplete collections, financial restrictions, internal institutional bureaucracies, and temperamental support from the British government. At times, these issues prevented any coherent discourse about the collections being disseminated. These desires and tensions serve to complicate wider historiographical debates about the relative power of cultural imperialism.

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<sup>504</sup> Margaret Trowell, *African Tapestry* (London, 1957), p.71.

## Museums and Imperialism: A Historiographical Overview

The correlative development of museums and the British empire has been an area of historiographical interest since the 1980s. While historians of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century museums agree on their close entanglements, they have also disagreed about the exact nature of this relationship. Following MacKenzie's initial enquiries into the imperial frameworks of museums, a number of subsequent studies emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s seeking to explain the role of museums in empire through the framework of Postcolonial Studies. These works highlighted the role of 'Western' museums in advancing imperial agendas through their efforts at organising objects, information, bodies, and space.

Drawing on Michel Foucault's influential theories in *Discipline and Punish* (1975) some historians have examined colonial era-museums as spaces of nineteenth-century social control and disciplinary power.<sup>505</sup> Tony Bennett, for example, used a Foucauldian framework to demonstrate the power and knowledge relations that museums communicated to audiences through what he called their 'exhibitionary complex' or 'exhibitionary disciplines'.<sup>506</sup> He used these terms to explain the power of museum displays to affect the epistemological thought of their audiences, for example through their use of evolutionary hierarchies and arrangements, as well as their power to affect the physical behaviour of viewers by regulating the spaces in which they encountered these exhibitions.<sup>507</sup> Museums, he argued, were 'typically located at the centre of cities where they stood as embodiments, both material and symbolic, of a power to "show and tell" which, in being deployed in a newly constituted open and

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<sup>505</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York, NY, 1975).

<sup>506</sup> Tony Bennett, 'The Exhibitionary Complex', in Reesa Greenberg, Sandy Nairne and Bruce W. Ferguson (eds.), *Thinking About Exhibitions* (1995), p. 82; 'Museum, Field, Colony: Colonial Governmentality and the Circulation of Reference', *Journal of Cultural Economy* 2:1–2 (2009), pp. 99–116; 'Thinking (with) Museums', p. 4.

<sup>507</sup> Bennett, 'Thinking (with) Museums', p. 6.

public space, sought rhetorically to incorporate the people within the processes of the state'.<sup>508</sup> In this way, museums were 'technologies' for drawing in the British and colonial publics into the imperial narrative.

Scholars have also studied colonial-era museums through the representational paradigm of 'Orientalism' most famously associated with Edward Said.<sup>509</sup> The central premise of Said's work, of course, was that knowledge constructed through colonial texts created an imagined but powerful dichotomy between 'Western' authority and 'Eastern' inferiority. Applying this concept to the museum, some authors have explained 'Western' museums' attempts to know and represent the cultures of non-western 'Others' as cornerstones of the imperial project.<sup>510</sup> The epistemological structures through which knowledge was gathered, interpreted, and utilized for imperial purposes by museums were, for example, a concern in Bernard Cohn's study of colonial rule in nineteenth-century India.<sup>511</sup> Cohn used the term 'investigative modalities' to describe the different methods and spheres through which colonial knowledge was produced, citing the museum as a key example, alongside other activities such as cartography and census-making.<sup>512</sup>

In line with other recent studies, this chapter argues that although viewing museums as sites of investigative modalities, colonial knowledge production, and governmental discipline is important for understanding the ambitions and impacts of museums, these approaches can also have homogenizing tendencies and require deeper nuance of understanding through the close study of individual institutions, and their constituent departments, curators, collections, audiences, narratives, and day-to-day

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<sup>508</sup> Tony Bennett, *Culture: A Reformer's Science* (Sydney, 1998), pp. 99–100.

<sup>509</sup> See for example Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn (eds.), *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum* (London, 1998). More recently, see Ruth Adams, 'The V&A: Empire to Multiculturalism?' *Museum and Society*, 8:2 (2010), pp. 63–79.

<sup>510</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth, 1978); Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London, 1993).

<sup>511</sup> Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, NJ, 1996).

<sup>512</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.

administration. Annie Coombes put forward a more pragmatic view of nineteenth-century British metropolitan museums, specifically in relation to their dealings with West African collections, by suggesting that these large institutions were repositories ‘for contradictory desires and identities’. As a result, they offered several, often conflicting representations of Africa at any given time.<sup>513</sup> Kate Hill’s examination of smaller nineteenth-century municipal museums in Britain further illuminates the inconsistent, and sometimes haphazard pragmatics of museum life.<sup>514</sup> Hill’s work encourages us to acknowledge that although these institutions also undoubtedly had disciplinary ambitions and discursive functions in relation to empire, they too were corporate and peopled places, subject to external and internal politics, conflicting personalities and desires, and severe financial constraints.<sup>515</sup> This chapter draws on these insights to highlight many similar issues within the histories of the British Museum and Uganda Museum.

Scholars of museums in colonized locations have also highlighted the shortcomings of imperialism’s cultural hegemony through examinations of their day-to-day running.<sup>516</sup> Of specific relevance here is Sarah Longair’s study of the Zanzibar Museum (formerly known as the Beit-al Amani or Peace Memorial Museum).<sup>517</sup> Longair maps the fractures, contradictions, and tensions in its creation and maintenance onto the broader administrative landscape, allowing her to shed new light on the conflicted character of the ‘colonial mission’ in Zanzibar in the late nineteenth and early

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<sup>513</sup> Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, p. 2.

<sup>514</sup> Kate Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums, 1850–1914* (Aldershot, 2005). See also George Stocking, *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture* (London, 1985), p. 7.

<sup>515</sup> Kate Hill, *Museums and Biographies: Stories, Objects, Identities* (Woodbridge, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> John McAleer and Sarah Longair (eds.), *Curating Empire: Museums and the British Imperial Experience* (Manchester, 2013); Sarah Longair, *Cracks in the Dome: Fractured Histories of Empire in the Zanzibar Museum, 1897–1964* (Farnham, 2015); Jo Arnoldi, Christaud M. Geary and Kris L. Hardin (eds.), *African Material Culture* (Bloomington, IN, 1996), pp. 265–82; Mark Crinson, ‘Nation-Building, Collecting and the Politics of Display: The National Museum, Ghana’, *Journal of the History of Collections*, 13:4 (2002), pp. 231–50.

<sup>517</sup> Longair, *Cracks in the Dome*.



twentieth centuries. Longair's study has been crucial for illuminating similar issues within this study of nearby Uganda.

Claire Wintle's description of the Imperial and Commonwealth Institute also provides a way to understand the complex and uneven histories of museums as 'microcosms' of empire and other wider events.<sup>518</sup> Wintle highlights the 'tensions, collaborations and ambivalence, inherent in the relationship between museums and high politics' rather than focusing on them solely as machines of colonial dominance.<sup>519</sup> Responding to the critiques of his previous definition of the 'exhibitionary complex', Bennett also recently redefined the museum as 'a point of intersection between a range of dispersed networks and relations which flow into and shape its practices'.<sup>520</sup> These alternative definitions acknowledge the variety of people, forces, and narratives that were embedded in the activities of colonial-era museums and, as this chapter will now demonstrate, offer a more accurate way of explaining the complex museological treatment of Ugandan and Kenyan collections.

### **The Making of Ugandan Collections at the British Museum**

This section discusses the early life of Ugandan collections in the British Museum through two distinct phases, namely the curatorship of A.W. Franks, Keeper of the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography from 1851 until 1896, and that of his successor, Charles Hercules Read, who led the Department until 1921. It traces the Museum's changing values and uses of Ugandan material culture, from trophies and curios, to objects of science. Both of these phases can be associated

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<sup>518</sup> Claire Wintle, 'Decolonizing the Museum: The Case of the Imperial and Commonwealth Institutes', *Museum & Society*, 11:2 (2013), pp. 185 and 196.

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>520</sup> Bennett, 'Thinking (with) Museums', p. 13.

with imperial aims, yet they were also characterized by internal museum complexities that also disrupted their intended designs.

The ‘scientific’ collection and study of ‘ethnographic’ objects was only just gaining momentum by the time that Franks joined the Museum in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1865, the Museum received a bequest of prehistoric and ethnographic material from the prominent collector, Sir Henry Christy (1810-1865).<sup>521</sup> This gift established a new position for ethnography in the Museum. It also provided the Museum with its first items from mainland Uganda and surrounding regions: a fish-hook and dance-anklet from Buganda, a Luo shield, a Pokot tobacco measure, and some armllets simply labelled ‘Kenya’.<sup>522</sup> Though small in volume, and with little documentation, these items were remarkable for their time. The first British travellers to Uganda, John Hanning Speke (1827–1864) and James Augustus Grant (1827–1892), had only recently reached the court of Buganda in 1862.<sup>523</sup> Speke’s *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* published in 1863 offered the first documented account of Uganda in Britain. These objects acquired just after were the first material evidence brought back to Britain from the region.

Over the remaining decades of the nineteenth century, rather than instigating any firm ‘scientific’ classificatory system as later curators at the Museum would seek to do, Franks was largely directed by the lure of trophy objects, and what was available on the emerging auction market. Franks’ contemporary General Pitt-Rivers, who did not acquire any objects from Uganda until 1884, but whose own interests lay in objects of everyday utility rather than ‘curiosities’ and ‘trophies’, referred to the British Museum as an ‘ethnological curiosity’.<sup>524</sup> While Pitt-Rivers sought to develop a

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<sup>521</sup> J.C.H. King, ‘Franks and Ethnography’ in Marjorie Caygill and John F. Cherry (eds.), *A.W. Franks: Nineteenth-Century Collecting and the British Museum* (London, 1997), pp. 137–140.

<sup>522</sup> For Ugandan objects see Af.2583 and Af.2856–7. For Kenya see Af.991, Af.2867–8

<sup>523</sup> Richard J. Reid, *A History of Modern Uganda* (Cambridge, 2017), p. 7.

<sup>524</sup> John Mack, ‘Antiquities and the Public: The Expanding Museum, 1851–96’ in Caygill and Cherry, *A.W. Franks*, p. 44.

systematic collection during the second half of the nineteenth century, John Mack describes Franks' collecting policy as governed by his own personal interest in individual objects.<sup>525</sup> This was also true of his objects from Uganda.

For example, some of Franks' largest Uganda acquisitions for the Museum in the late nineteenth century were trophy objects associated with famous names from the Egyptian-Sudan region. In 1867 and 1878, Franks purchased objects belonging to Isma'il Pasha (1830-1895), Viceroy of Egypt and Sudan, at the 1878 Exposition Universelle in Paris.<sup>526</sup> Pasha was an ardent collector, and kept trophies of his conquests acquired during military expeditions, such as the Samuel Baker expedition of 1869.<sup>527</sup> The items chosen by Franks from the Exposition were largely elite objects: a dagger and sheath decorated with copper wire; a Bari or Bunyoro carved bowl, an Acholi stool, two ivory tobacco pipes, a Baganda shield, and a horn trumpet that had all supposedly been given to him by Muteesa during the 'Egyptian Expedition'.<sup>528</sup> The tobacco pipe illustrated in Figure 4.1 is visually striking, first for its size of nineteen inches, but also for its intricate ivory carving of dots, marking it out as an elite object.

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<sup>525</sup> Marjorie Caygill, 'Franks and the Museum – The Cuckoo in the Nest', in Caygill and Cherry, *A.W. Franks*, p. 76.

<sup>526</sup> Donald Malcolm Reid, 'The Egyptian Geographical Society: From Foreign Laymen's Society to Indigenous Professional Association', *Poetics Today*, 14:3 (Autumn, 1993), pp. 539-572; for Pasha and the Exhibition see Timothy Mitchell, 'Egypt at the Exhibition' in Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley, CA, 1988), p. 4; Peter Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas, The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World Fairs 1851- 1939* (Manchester, 1988).

<sup>527</sup> The results of this pillaging and collecting were also displayed in the African Hall of the Khedival Geographic Society in Cairo. Emmanuelle Perrin, 'Le Musee d'Ethnographie de La Societe de Geographie d'Egypte', *Gradhiva 2* (2005), pp. 5–29.

<sup>528</sup> British Museum, Isma'il Pasha Collection, Af.4401.a–b; Af.4423; Af,+994.a–b, Af,+995; Af,+1002.

**Figure 4.1: Tobacco pipe associated with Kabaka Muteesa, Af,+.994.a © The Trustees of the British Museum.**

In 1882, Franks also purchased a collection of forty-four items from Frank Lupton Bey, the British governor of Bahr-el-Ghazal in the Egyptian Sudan between 1881 and 1884. Drawn from Lango, Bunyoro, Buganda, and Sudan, his collection mainly consisted of knives and weaponry, but also vessels, iron jewellery, smoking pipes and stools.<sup>529</sup> Collected in the context of British military expeditions, these items illuminate the particular value of objects associated with famous names and events of empire, but also a new financial value for these items in metropolitan and European auctioneer markets.<sup>530</sup>

Many of Franks' Ugandan objects came from ethnographic dealers during this period.<sup>531</sup> As early as 1867, the Museum purchased pieces from Buganda and Acholiland via the London-based art, antiquities, and curios dealer, William Wareham

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<sup>529</sup> See AOA Christy Correspondence for a list of collection of weapons, with sketches, purchased from J.P. Hearne, March 1882. For further reference to the gift, see Frank Lupton and Malcolm Lupton, 'Mr. Frank Lupton's (Lupton Bey) Geographical Observations in the Bahr-el-Ghazal Region: With Introductory Remarks by Malcolm Lupton' in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography*, 6:5 (May, 1884), p. 252.

<sup>530</sup> Here I note Kopytoff's theory of objects weaving in and out of commoditization and gaining different forms of value along the way. Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process', in Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 64–91.

<sup>531</sup> Annie Coombes and Elizabeth Edwards have both noted the growth of this market from the 1880s. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, pp. 158-9; Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 73–76.

(1824-1887).<sup>532</sup> These objects included an iron bar sample which bore marks of hammering, along with other blacksmiths' tools made of iron (1867), and a smoking pipe thought to have been used by the Ganda royal family (1882). In 1870, a 'waistcoat' made of bark cloth was purchased from a private sale, and in 1894 a stool from Busoga was acquired from the dealer Eva Cutter.<sup>533</sup> These objects further reflect the emerging market value of eastern African material culture at this time, particularly objects of local prestige, and also an emerging interest in local materials.

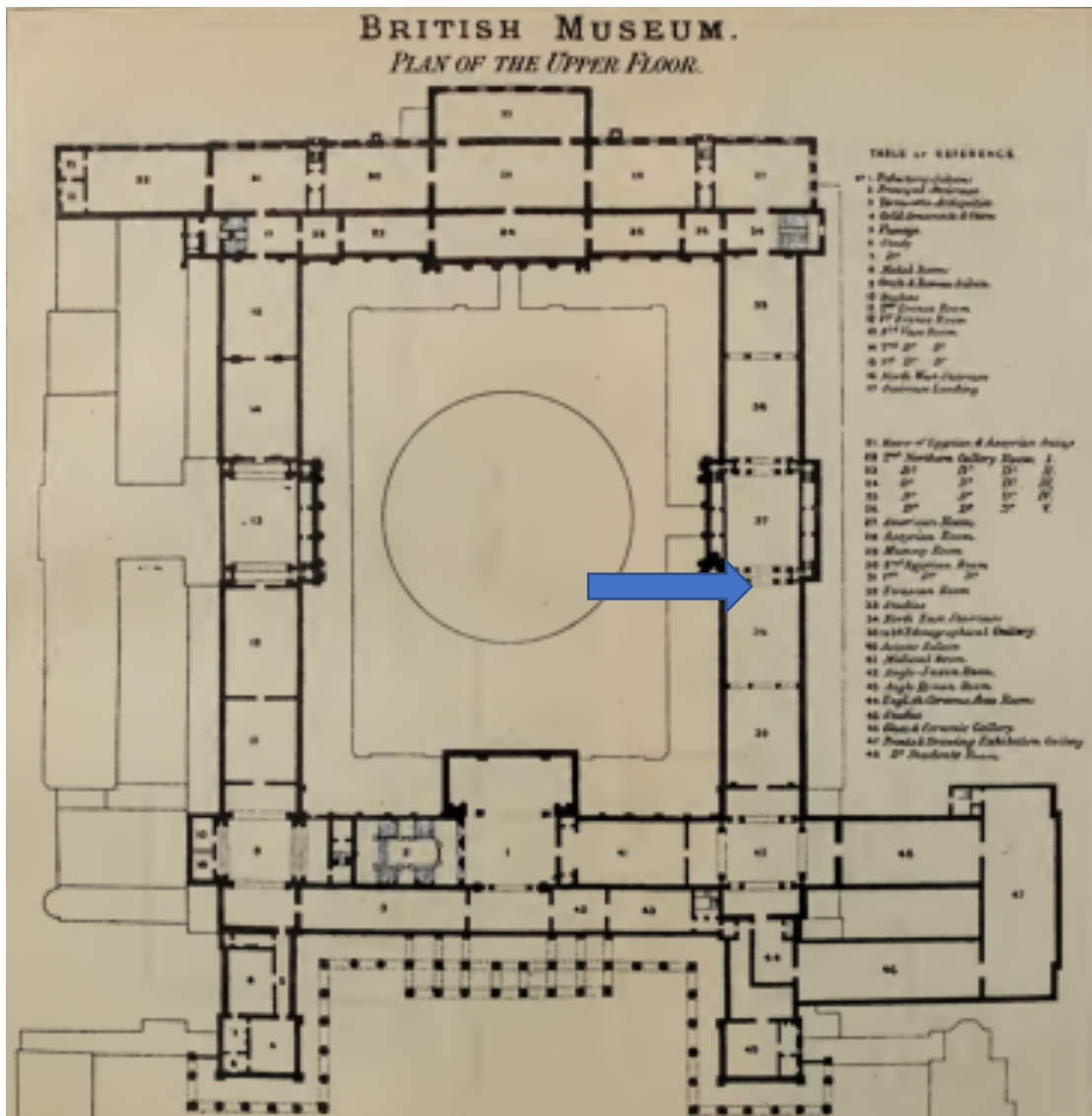
How did these early objects sit among the larger Museum collections? By the 1880s Franks had taken over a suite of galleries (35–39) on the upper-eastern side of the Museum to display the growing ethnographic collection.<sup>534</sup> Guides to the exhibition galleries were published in 1888, 1892 and 1894, and these provide important information about the place of Uganda and Africa within the Museum. The ethnographic collections occupied the full length of the gallery on the eastern side of the upper floor, as Figure 4.2 shows.

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<sup>532</sup> William Wareham Collection, British Museum. See M.W. Westgarth, 'A Biographical Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Antique and Curiosity Dealers', *Regional Furniture, XXIII*, (Glasgow, 2009); Janet Owen, 'Collecting Artefacts, Acquiring Empire', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 18:1 (2006), pp. 9–25.

<sup>533</sup> Eva Cutter and her family were well-known dealers in natural history and ethnography. Between 1867 and 1900 they were involved in hundreds of ethnographic acquisitions for the British Museum, particularly the Christy Collection being administered by Franks. Eva Cutter took over the firm in the 1890s.

<sup>534</sup> King, 'Franks and Ethnography', in Caygill and Cherry, *A.W. Franks*, p. 136.



**Figure 4.2: ‘British Museum, plan of the upper floor’, A Guide to the Exhibition Galleries of the British Museum, Bloomsbury (1888, London). Ethnography was housed in galleries 12-16.**

Franks was unhappy with the arrangement of the Africa Gallery. His 1888 *Guide* notes that it ‘occupied a somewhat incongruous position’ within the gallery spaces, between the Pacific Islands and North America.<sup>535</sup> In its explanation, the *Guide* suggested that it would have been ‘more convenient, topographically, for the Ethnographic Galleries to have commenced with Africa’, had it not been for the Asiatic Saloon sitting directly prior to the Ethnographic Gallery.<sup>536</sup> For continuity, the Asiatic series therefore

<sup>535</sup> *A Guide to the Exhibition Galleries of the British Museum* (London, 1888), p. 226.

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.*

occupied the first compartment, and then proceeded on to the Asiatic Islands and Oceania, which was arranged racially, by ‘black races and brown races’.<sup>537</sup> From here, the visitor was led into the Africa section, illustrating the racialized underpinning of the gallery’s design. Moreover, Franks’ desire to begin the topographical form of display with Africa rather than with Asia suggests an evolutionary display paradigm, previously discussed in detail by Tony Bennett.<sup>538</sup> Late nineteenth-century museum displays tended to be ‘based on the assumption that all historical and contemporary human cultures could be positioned on a hierarchical, racial scale of social “progress,” beginning in “savagery,” passing through “barbarism,” and culminating in an industrialized “civilization”’.<sup>539</sup> Africa was typically placed at the bottom of this racial scale. However, in this case, the Museum’s architectural structure prevented it from imposing this structure of colonial knowledge, in turn, disrupting the imperial narrative of order so often associated with museums.<sup>540</sup>

Within the Africa Gallery itself, West Africa held the most dominant spatial position. The visitor was greeted at the entrance to the Africa section by a small case containing ivory carvings produced in sixteenth-century western Africa.<sup>541</sup> More West African ivory carvings belonging to the Oba were situated in the centre of the gallery.<sup>542</sup> By 1897 this was perpetuated by the spectacle of the looting of Benin City within the British press. The Museum’s acquisition of many of the looted ‘Benin Bronzes’, and the discussions that followed regarding their aesthetic origins and skill, took up much of the Museum’s budget, scholarly attention, and display space for Africa in the years

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<sup>537</sup> Ibid, pp. 226-230.

<sup>538</sup> Tony Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory: Evolution, Museums, Colonialism* (London, 2004).

<sup>539</sup> Claire Wintle, ‘Decolonizing the Smithsonian: Museums as Microcosms of Political Encounter’, *The American Historical Review*, 121:5, (December, 2016), p. 1496.

<sup>540</sup> Claire Wintle also describes problems with the evolutionary framework through lack of space. Claire Wintle, ‘Visiting the Empire at the Provincial Museum, 1900–1950’ in McAleer and Longair, *Curating Empire*, p. 44.

<sup>541</sup> *A Guide to the Exhibition Galleries* (1888), p. 231.

<sup>542</sup> P. Girshick Ben-Amos, *The Art of Benin* (London, The British Museum Press, 1995).

that followed.<sup>543</sup> Museum professionals at this time associated these carvings with a ‘classical’ period of artisanal work dating back to the sixteenth century, but attributed the skill involved in creating them to Portuguese influence.<sup>544</sup> Eastern African artistic and aesthetic skill, however, were more often dismissed among these circles.<sup>545</sup> This is reflected in the 1888 *Guide*’s very brief description of the ‘East Africa’ display (case 106) which simply read ‘Spears, shields, bows, arrows, etc., from the Arab and other tribes of this part of Africa’.<sup>546</sup>

However, Muteesa’s ivory tobacco pipe was incorporated into Table Case 195 of the Gallery, which also included ‘antique’ objects from Egypt, and ‘swords of European make, with native mounting, from Khartoum’. The triangulation between ancient Egypt, Europe/Sudan, and Kiganda kingship speaks to the popular ‘Hamitic Hypothesis’, which at that time linked Buganda’s kings, and their supposedly superior material culture to what were thought to be the ‘light-skinned’ rulers of ancient Egypt (via Sudan). This combination also mapped onto the political context of the time, whereby the British elevated Buganda to a superior position in the imperial landscape.<sup>547</sup> The display of these objects thus illustrates the Museum’s different uses of Ugandan material culture to bolster particular imperialist visions and agendas.

Objects associated with elite indigenous figures provided popular display material for the Africa Gallery. Looted objects from Emperor Tewodros II (1818–1868) obtained during the British ‘Expedition to Abyssinia’ (now Ethiopia) of 1867–1868 were prominently displayed.<sup>548</sup> Muteesa’s ivory tobacco-pipe contributed to that theme, and by 1897 a large drum thought to have had a link to Mwanga was added to the

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<sup>543</sup> Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, p. 9. The 1900 *Guide to the Exhibition Galleries* describes the Benin Bronzes now occupying the entire centre of the floor. *A Guide to the Exhibition Galleries* (1900), p. 102.

<sup>544</sup> Spring, *African Art*, p. 6; Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, p. 25.

<sup>545</sup> Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, p. 77.

<sup>546</sup> *A Guide to the Exhibition Galleries* (1888), p. 231.

<sup>547</sup> That museum displays can be mapped on wider political events is an argument put forward more broadly by Wintle in ‘Decolonizing the Smithsonian’.

<sup>548</sup> *A Guide to the Exhibition Galleries* (1897, London), p. 279.



display in Case 106.<sup>549</sup> Mwanga was expelled after a long civil war, and his drum may well have been collected in this context.<sup>550</sup>

Analyzing these guides between 1888 and 1894 suggests that the Ugandan displays remained fairly static during this time. There is also little evidence of any systematic study of these objects by Museum curators. Of the 38,048 ethnographic artefacts recorded up to the end of 1896, when Read succeeded Franks as Keeper of the Department, just 110 of these were from Uganda.<sup>551</sup> Most of the African objects originated from West Africa, a collection built up over a much longer period of British engagement with the Atlantic slave trade.

In the 1890s, Uganda's ethnographic records became fuller thanks in part to Charles Hercules Read who was employed to work on the Christy Collection alongside two voluntary assistants, James Edge-Partington (1854-1930) and O.M. Dalton (1866-1945).<sup>552</sup> Franks laid the foundations for the acquisition and display of Ugandan and Kenyan material culture at the British Museum, but his successor (Read) developed this more rigorously.<sup>553</sup> He was twice elected President of the Anthropological Institute, and, like Franks, was editor of the Institute's monthly journal, *Man*. J.C.H. King notes that while Franks was influenced by evolutionary theories and his own personal interests, Read developed the collection by placing greater emphasis on anthropology and research into the objects themselves.<sup>554</sup>

Read's acquisition initiatives differed substantially from Franks. He took over as Keeper at a time when social anthropology was fast becoming a professionalized discipline at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford.<sup>555</sup> The Cambridge Expedition

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<sup>549</sup> Ibid.

<sup>550</sup> Reid, *A History of Modern Uganda*, p. 100.

<sup>551</sup> Figure taken from the British Museum database. Further figures about the ethnography collection under Franks' tenure can be found in King, *Franks and Ethnography*, p. 143.

<sup>552</sup> Ibid., pp. 143 and 154.

<sup>553</sup> Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>554</sup> Ibid.

<sup>555</sup> Dane Kennedy, 'Exploration, the Environment and Empire' in Andrew S. Thompson (ed.), *Writing Imperial Histories* (Manchester, 2014), p. 101.

to Torres Straits led by Alfred Cort Haddon (1855-1940) and others in 1898 set a new standard for ‘modern’ technical methods of ethnographical fieldwork. The Expedition combined object-collecting with new forms of ‘scientific’ research including psychology, observation and photography, and marked a watershed in the history of collecting.<sup>556</sup> There were no such university-backed expeditions to Uganda or Kenya at this time, but Read still wanted his collections to reflect the changing nature of anthropological research.<sup>557</sup> In the absence of any London university museum of ethnology, the British Museum relied instead on officials, private expeditions, and missionaries for information and objects.

In 1892 and 1899 Read and J.G. Garson revised two more editions of *Notes and Queries* using funding from the British Association for the Advancement of Science, for whom Read ran the anthropological section.<sup>558</sup> The new manuals emphasized the value of extended time in the field with a specific community.<sup>559</sup> He sent copies to A.C. Hollis, Harry Johnston and Charles Delme-Radcliffe, who were all based in Uganda and Kenya.<sup>560</sup> In this way, the Museum encouraged colonial officials to think about eastern African cultures, and thus their administrative actions, in a particular way that accorded with evolutionary and racialized schemas. The subsequent collections that they sent to the Museum were thus valued all the more for the publications that accompanied them, and which mirrored Read’s *Notes and Queries* template.<sup>561</sup> Read

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<sup>556</sup> H.J. Fleure, ‘Haddon, Alfred Cort’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (January, 2011).

<sup>557</sup> H.J. Braunholtz, ‘Presidential Address, 1938: Ethnographical Museums and the Collector: Aims and Methods’ *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 68, (January–June, 1938), p. 13.

<sup>558</sup> C.H. Read, ‘Presidential Address Delivered at the Anniversary Meeting of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. 30th January, 1900’, *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 30 (1900), p. 11.

<sup>559</sup> C.H. Read and J.G. Garson, *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (London, 1892), p. 87. The original version was published in 1874: *Notes and Queries on Anthropology for the Use of Travellers and Residents in Uncivilized Lands* (London, 1874).

<sup>560</sup> Braunholtz, ‘Presidential Address, 1938’, p. 13.

<sup>561</sup> Hollis sent collections from the Maasai in 1904, and the Nandi in 1908. See Alfred Claud Hollis, 23 March 1907, and 3 April 1908 Letters In, Department of Britain, Europe and Prehistory, British Museum. Johnston sent a large collection from Uganda in 1901. See Harry Johnston, 22 June 1901, Letters Out,

also accepted items from well-documented private expeditions such as the Scoresby Routledge's visit to the Kikuyu (1908).<sup>562</sup>

Building connections with men and women on the spot in eastern Africa was crucial to Read's plans to develop a Bureau of Ethnology, which he hoped would benefit both 'men of science' and the colonial government.<sup>563</sup> The Bureau would sit under the auspices of a government department, with fieldwork 'entirely carried on by the trained men already in Government employ in our distant possessions'.<sup>564</sup> Information would flow to a central establishment in England (preferably the British Museum), with the Bureau of Ethnology attached to Read's department. The Museum would then systematically arrange the information.<sup>565</sup> In an 1899 report, the British Association noted that 'The Bureau itself, the central office, would be of necessity in London – in no other place could it properly serve its purpose'.<sup>566</sup> Here Bruno Latour's concept of 'Centres of Calculation' illuminates the British Museum as an important site of colonial governance for eastern Africa. This phrase was coined by Latour in 1987 to describe sites where knowledge is accumulated through circulatory movements and connections with other places. Subsequent scholars such as Tony Bennett have come to see metropolitan, regional, and colonial museums as key sites for the circulation of knowledge, people, and objects.<sup>567</sup> The Bureau was supported by the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury (1830–1903) and the Foreign Office. Its very first letters were sent to Her Majesty's Commissioners in the Uganda and East and Central Africa Protectorates before any other colonial territories, signalling the region's growing importance to the

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Department of Britain, Europe and Prehistory, British Museum. See also Major C. Delmé Radcliffe, 1 July 1902, Letters Out, Department of Britain, Europe and Prehistory, British Museum.

<sup>562</sup> Braunholtz, 'Presidential Address, 1938', p. 13.

<sup>563</sup> Read, 'Presidential Address, 1900', p. 11.

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>565</sup> *Report of the Sixty-Ninth Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1899* (London, 1900), p. xcii.

<sup>566</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>567</sup> Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge, MA, 1987), pp. 215–257; Tony Bennett, *Museums, Power, Knowledge: Selected Essays* (New York, NY, 2018).

Museum.<sup>568</sup> Letters in the British Museum archives reveal that Read asked Johnston to give the scheme his ‘sympathy and help’ in 1901 and solicited support from Alfred Claud Hollis in 1902.<sup>569</sup>

However, Read’s requests for funds to better study and display object collections were rejected by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, citing the enormous cost of the South African campaign as an excuse for lack of funds.<sup>570</sup> Read later declared that he ‘lament[ed] the apathy of the State in anthropological science’.<sup>571</sup> Tony Bennett, Ben Dibley and Rodney Harrison, and separately Elizabeth Edwards have also discussed ‘the complex and ambivalent ways particular ethnographic technologies were folded into apparatuses of colonial rule’.<sup>572</sup> The disparity here between the support of textual and object-based information highlights this point further, and also develops arguments made about the limits of the colonial State in chapter one of this dissertation.

Frustrated at a distinct lack of funding, space and training, Read nevertheless continued to work to develop the ethnographic collections. The Museum’s Uganda collections now had to compete for display space in the crowded ethnography displays; however, they also took on more of a typological, comparative, and thus ‘scientific’ framework, as Figure 4.3 illustrates, with similar types of object in each display case.

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<sup>568</sup> *Report of the Sixty-Ninth Meeting*, p. lxxxix.

<sup>569</sup> Major C. Delmé Radcliffe, 1 July 1902, and Harry Johnston, 22 June 1901, Letters Out, Department of Britain, Europe and Prehistory, British Museum.

<sup>570</sup> Read, ‘Presidential Address’, p. 17.

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid*, p. 16.

<sup>572</sup> Tony Bennett, Ben Dibley & Rodney Harrison, ‘Introduction: Anthropology, Collecting and Colonial Governmentalities’, *History and Anthropology*, 25:2 (March, 2014). p. 143; Elizabeth Edwards, ‘Photographic Uncertainties: Between Evidence and Reassurance’, *History and Anthropology*, 25:2 (March, 2014), pp. 171–188.

**Figure 4.3: One of the British Museum's Ethnography Galleries, 1908.  
Image 01613301973 © The Trustees of the British Museum**

In 1903 and 1910, Read instituted a separate series of purely ethnographic registers of accessions. Ethnography was also given its own *Handbook*, compiled by James Edge-Partington and completed by T.A. Joyce.<sup>573</sup> The *Handbook* helped to disseminate early knowledge about the cultures and people of eastern Africa, and served as both a public and scientific research output for the Museum.

Although Read never carried out any fieldwork, he, Dalton and Joyce were the first to apply a systematic classificatory system for African collections and the 1910 *Handbook* included a significant section on the material culture of eastern Africa.<sup>574</sup> Its narrative was framed theoretically using racial categories based on 'the great ancient

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<sup>573</sup> *Handbook to the Ethnographical Collections* (London, 1910).

<sup>574</sup> David M. Wilson, *The British Museum: A History* (London, 2002), p. 224. *Handbook to the Ethnographical Collections* (1910), pp. 183–247.

civilizations and their sub-groups'. Eastern African civilizations were categorized as Libyan, Hamite, Semite, Negro and Bushman, categories broken down further into Bantu, Pygmy and others.<sup>575</sup> These groups were then described geographically by 'tribe'. The *Handbook* justified this approach as 'arbitrary and artificial' but necessary, because of the Museum's lack of knowledge on the inter-relations of interior tribes.<sup>576</sup> The 'tribes' described were chosen either because they were believed to be 'in themselves important or well represented in the Museum Collection', illuminating how reliant the Museum was on the objects themselves for information.<sup>577</sup>

Following this system, the section on Africa thus begins with Egypt, the Egyptian Sudan, Abyssinia, and Somali and Galla lands, and continues to describe tribes 'connected with the true Nilotes'.<sup>578</sup> From the 'tribes' of the Upper White Nile (Shilluk, Nuer, Dinka Jur, Dor, Jibbeh, Bari), the description travels down the Nile to the Madi, Lendu, Alur, then the Bari, Acholi and Lango.<sup>579</sup> Moving around Kavirondo Bay, the Nilotic tribes of the Ja-Luo, Dor and Jur appear.<sup>580</sup> The Maasai are then described as closely connected racially and geographically with the 'Nilotic Negroes' to the east of Lake Victoria, and also as the 'most interesting transitional tribe'.<sup>581</sup> The Turkana and Suk, and the Nandi and Lumbwa then follow as 'allies' of the Maasai and possessors of a similarly 'well-developed military system'; then the Dorobo as a 'Maasai hunting tribe of inferior status'; and finally the Karamoja who were described as 'physically Bantu' but classed as a Nilotic tribe 'on linguistic and ethnological grounds'.<sup>582</sup> Groups such as the Maasai were treated as 'transitional tribes'. This uneven classification of the Maasai links to the confused and contradictory stereotypes

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<sup>575</sup> *Handbook to the Ethnographical Collections* (1910), p. 183.

<sup>576</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>577</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>578</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 188 and 198.

<sup>579</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>580</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

<sup>581</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>582</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 198.

examined in chapter one of this thesis. On the one hand they were described as culturally ‘savage’; yet on the other, they were described as physically and militarily superior to other African ‘tribes’. Claire Wintle argues that museum collections and displays can be mapped onto the specific political contexts of imperialism.<sup>583</sup> The case of the Maasai corroborates this assertion.

The *Handbook’s* narrative then moves to the Bantu tribes. The Akamba, Wataita, Wachagga, Akikuyu and Wagiriana were all described as Bantu but that ‘had adopted the habits and customs of the Maasai’.<sup>584</sup> The next tribes described were those inhabiting the north shore of Lake Victoria: the Baganda and Basoga, followed by the Banyoro (between the Baganda and the Albert Nyanza), the Biro and Bankonjo. On the north-east of the Lake were the Bantu Kavirondo. The *Handbook* then moves on to lacustrine peoples and Tanzania. This structure is significant, because although arranged geographically, the museum’s frame of reference was clearly still influenced by the classificatory paradigm of the ‘Hamitic Hypothesis’.

At the same time, this narrative was based only on areas touched by British contact and in turn left out whole swathes of peoples and places. The *Handbook* did not, for example, represent those living under German rule. However, this text still provided much greater detail than the displays, where lack of space meant that objects from any part of the region came simply to represent ‘Uganda’ or ‘British East Africa’ despite stylistic differences among locales. There was therefore one set of racialized stereotypes produced for the public displays, and another for accompanying ‘scientific’ texts.

For each geographical region, the *Handbook* further examined three key themes: man and his relation to the natural world; man in relation to his fellows; and

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<sup>583</sup> Wintle, ‘Decolonizing the Smithsonian’, p. 1496.

<sup>584</sup> *Handbook to the Ethnographical Collections* (1910), pp. 198-199.

man in relation to the supernatural.<sup>585</sup> The first theme included objects like hunting weapons; the second personal adornment and objects of warfare, which signified relations with a family, tribe, clan or totem, as well as information on marriage, property, customary and ceremonial law and trade; and the third included objects relating to taboos, sacrifice and spiritual life.<sup>586</sup> Instruments, utensils, clothing, ornaments and weaponry would ‘indicate the stage of savagery or of primitive civilization in which he exists, and also the conditions, and more particularly the climate, of the land in which he inhabits’.<sup>587</sup> This suggests that museum curators believed that ‘culture’ and ‘race’ could be read visually from material objects.

However, this interpretation did not always work in a straightforward manner. The clothing of pastoral tribes such as the Maasai was described as consisting entirely of skin, while agricultural tribes such as the Baganda, Banyoro, Bair and Bakonjo wore bark-cloth that covered their bodies more.<sup>588</sup> The Bahima were thought to be direct descendants of a superior ‘Hamitic’ race, but were pastoralists and therefore wore skins.<sup>589</sup> Although to the Bahima their skins represented their power, status and wealth, for the British, nakedness was traditionally associated with savagery, thus confusing the racial framework.<sup>590</sup> The curators sought to resolve this dilemma by suggesting that the Bahima, and particularly the Hima elite, had more recently developed a preference for cotton-based European clothing.<sup>591</sup> In doing so, they not only illustrated the inherent

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<sup>585</sup> Ibid., pp. 1 and 277.

<sup>586</sup> Ibid., p.11.

<sup>587</sup> Ibid.

<sup>588</sup> Ibid., pp. 188-189.

<sup>589</sup> Ibid., p.191. Speke believed that their physical appearance showed them to be ‘Christians of the greatest antiquity’ who travelled to pasture-lands of Bunyoro and founded the great kingdom of Kittara. John Hanning Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*, pp. 241-245. See also John Roscoe, ‘The Bahima: A Cow Tribe of Enkole in the Uganda Protectorate’, *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 37 (January–June, 1907), pp. 93–118.

<sup>590</sup> For more on pastoralist conceptualizations of their elite identity, see David M. Anderson and Vigdis Broch-Due (eds.), *The Poor are Not Us: Poverty and Pastoralism in Eastern Africa* (Oxford, 1999). For nakedness see Raymond Corbey, ‘Alterity: The Colonial Nude’, *Critique of Anthropology*, 8:3 (December, 1988), p. 75.

<sup>591</sup> *Handbook to the Ethnographical Collections* (1910), p. 191.



Hima potential for ‘civilization’ and ‘modernity’, but also suggested the success of contemporary British attempts to import cotton manufactured in Britain.

The *Handbook* and other museum sources examined in this section offer important insights into the complex political, economic, and cultural web of knowledge with which British Museum curators were trying to align their collections in both the mid-to-late nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century. The uses of objects changed during this time according to wider political and academic circumstances, yet they were always part of an underlying imperial agenda. However, this section has illustrated that the Museum’s collections did not always fit the neat categorizations it aspired to adhere to. Moreover, it has exemplified the complexities and ambivalence of museums as technologies of imperial narrative and power. This issue is examined further in a different context in the following section.

### **The Making of the Uganda Museum: *Enyumba ya Mayembe* (‘The House of Fetishes’)**

In December 1907, plans were afoot amongst the colonial administration for the creation of a Protectorate Museum in Entebbe. The suggestion for a museum had been made by Sir Henry Hesketh Bell (1864–1952), who was then Commissioner and Governor of the Uganda Protectorate. Preliminary attempts to build collections had already been made by Harry Johnston in 1901, and his work seems to have provided some of the inspiration for Bell’s project.<sup>592</sup> However, most of Johnston’s acquisitions were, as we have already seen, ultimately sent back to museums in Britain. Anxious to start his own scheme in Uganda as soon as possible, Bell asked the Deputy Commissioner of Uganda, George Wilson, to begin making the relevant plans.<sup>593</sup> Bell

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<sup>592</sup> Letter, 31.12.07, A43/327, *Museum: Collections of*, Uganda National Archives.

<sup>593</sup> ‘The Uganda Museum’, *History in Progress, Uganda*

initially decided that one of its current buildings in Entebbe should be the site of the Museum, and allocated £150 for fitting up the office building.<sup>594</sup> He also set up a Botanical Forestry and Scientific ‘Grant for Ethnological, and Economical Collections’ and offered £200 for the acquisition of collections.<sup>595</sup> Donors, he asserted, should be assured that any articles on display would have a ticket bearing their name. Objects were described as even more valuable if they came with supplementary information, such as the local name of the article, whether it was presented or purchased, the name of the donor and the amount paid.<sup>596</sup>

Wilson thus drafted a circular and sent it to district commissioners outside of the Kingdom, as well as to missionaries and chiefs, to solicit contributions from their local regions and to request the collection of ‘local curios of all descriptions’. These were to be ‘articles of local historical interest, specimens of native weapons, manufactures and local products, vegetable and mineral; in fact, of all articles of historical, ethnological or industrial interest’.<sup>597</sup> The different components of these collections had different intended functions. He hoped that the mineral section in particular would spark business interest in the region, thus linking the functions of the museum to the economics of empire.<sup>598</sup> Moreover, the minerals, it was suggested, could be collected by locals, though the records do not specify whether they would be paid for this work.<sup>599</sup> Regarding ethnographic items, only articles ‘characteristic’ of, and ‘peculiar’ to Uganda, which were ‘practically unique’, were to be collected, and Wilson offered £10 for particularly rare or ‘special interest’ articles that could only be obtained

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<https://www.facebook.com/HIPUganda/photos/a.1347628355313007.1073741980.154821697927018/1383071531768689/?type=3&theater> accessed 12.07.2016.

<sup>594</sup> Letter, 22.12.07, A43/273, *Proposed Organisation of the Museum at Entebbe*, Uganda National Archives.

<sup>595</sup> Ibid.

<sup>596</sup> Ibid.

<sup>597</sup> Ibid.

<sup>598</sup> Ibid.

<sup>599</sup> Ibid.

by purchase.<sup>600</sup> Thus, the creators of the museum sought to incorporate Uganda into the colonial economy while maintaining colonial and local difference.

In addition to the funds put forward by the colonial state, Bell also requested that additional donations be arranged through the *Lukikko* ('native' parliament) of the Uganda Kingdom.<sup>601</sup> Wilson sent a letter directly to the Sub Commissioner of the Kingdom informing him about plans for the Museum.<sup>602</sup> A reply arrived from the Sub-Commissioner of the Buganda Kingdom along with an enclosed letter from Mr. J.C.R. Sturrock, the young *Kabaka's* (King's) tutor.<sup>603</sup> The Sub-Commissioner informed the Governor that the 'natives' of his province believed that the capital of the Kingdom, Kampala, was where the Museum should be situated.<sup>604</sup> Sturrock's letter further explained that a year prior, he, Mr Leakey, the Regent (Sir Apolo Kagwa) and other chiefs had also thought it desirable that some attempt should be made to form a museum of articles of local interest.<sup>605</sup> Kagwa and the chiefs had been enthusiastic about the idea and suggested raising a sum of money among themselves, with a view to putting up a small museum building in the *Lubiri* (Mengo Palace of the king) near the *Lukikko*.<sup>606</sup> To start the fund, these chiefs had also sent a paper to the European community inviting those who were interested in the matter to make subscriptions.<sup>607</sup> Rs. 287 were collected and Kagwa and the other chiefs followed quickly with their own subscriptions.<sup>608</sup> The fund at the time of Sturrock's writing amounted to Rs. 1361.60, in the bank at Entebbe.<sup>609</sup> A building had not yet been considered as the amount subscribed was not yet sufficient, but many chiefs were still expected to send

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<sup>600</sup> Ibid.

<sup>601</sup> Ibid.

<sup>602</sup> Letter, 31.12.07, A43/327 *Museum: Collections of*, Uganda National Archives.

<sup>603</sup> Letter, 23.01.08, A43/327 *Museum: Collections of*, Uganda National Archives.

<sup>604</sup> Ibid.

<sup>605</sup> Ibid.

<sup>606</sup> Ibid.

<sup>607</sup> Ibid.

<sup>608</sup> Ibid.

<sup>609</sup> Ibid.

in large contributions.<sup>610</sup> Sturrock warned that should the Government decide to supersede or amalgamate the ‘native museum’, the chiefs would ‘certainly be sorry to see their objects, especially those connected with their *Kabaka*, leave their native capital’.<sup>611</sup> Kaggwa’s involvement can be of little surprise, given the high regard and enthusiasm that he and Hamu Mukasa had displayed in their vivid descriptions of their visits to museums during their travels around Britain in 1902, and indeed Kaggwa’s own donations to the MAA and the British Museum. With that, it became clear that two competing museum schemes were in progress and that their constituent leaders were much invested in the projects. Unfortunately, the colonial archive does not reveal any specific information about either Bell’s or Kaggwa’s particular aspirations for their disparate collections. Nevertheless, the antagonisms described still offer a fascinating analytical lens on the broader tensions within imperialism between European and ‘native’ governing elites at that time.

The parallel museum plans worried Bell who ‘intensely desire[d] cooling native enthusiasm’.<sup>612</sup> In his response to the Sub-Commissioner, Wilson relayed Bell’s fears, noting that if kept apart, ‘two imperfect museums instead of one very good one’ would be the result, illustrating Bell’s personal investment in the creation of a museum.<sup>613</sup> Wilson also stressed that the Government Museum would represent the whole of Uganda, rather than just the area covering the Buganda Kingdom. Part of the contest here was thus geographical, over where the heart of Uganda lay, and who controlled it — British colonial, or Ugandan, elites. The letter continued that a building and £200 for furnishing and glass cases had been supplied. Going forward, this scheme would receive ‘hearty Government support’, which he compared with the ‘uncertainty’ of

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<sup>610</sup> Ibid.

<sup>611</sup> Letter from J.C.R. Sturrock to the Sub-Commissioner of the Uganda Kingdom, 18.01, 1908, A43/327 Museum: Collections of, Uganda National Archives.

<sup>612</sup> Letter, 03.02.1908, A43/327, Uganda National Archives, Kampala.

<sup>613</sup> Ibid.

continued cash contributions from the chiefs and argued that their involvement could prove more ‘irksome’ than their present cash donations were worth. The ‘cordial spirit of cooperation on the part of the Buganda Chiefs’, would, he stated, be more valuable to a Protectorate Museum than their money would be to the original plan. He requested complete withdrawal in favour of the Governor’s scheme, if the former had not already been developed too far. Otherwise, if amalgamation was favoured, he asked what conditions would be proposed to include Kampala’s representation in the Protectorate Museum.<sup>614</sup>

The *Katkiro*, however, still wished neither to withdraw nor to amalgamate, illustrating the dynamics of power at play in the uneasy situation.<sup>615</sup> Once again, Sturrock emphasised that

the natives appear to be very firm on the point and are... very much against falling in with our wishes to amalgamate. I suggest that it would not be wise to press the point at the present, as the feeling is very strong but we might be able to come to some arrangement later.<sup>616</sup>

The Protectorate scheme was in a weak position to negotiate. European subscriptions to their project amounted to only £20, and by February 1908, it had received only one collection: a group of objects from Kibale, most of which had been acquired by the police, and the precise nature of that acquisition was not made clear.<sup>617</sup> By May, the only sums paid for the purchase of curios were: Entebbe, Rs. 13, Kampala Rs. 92.25, Fort Portal Rs. 15.10, and Jinja Rs. 1.26, totalling Rs. 121.61, with the most material acquired in Kampala.<sup>618</sup> Sturrock himself declared that he found it ‘very hard to get really good old curios now-a-days as those who have them don’t wish to part with

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<sup>614</sup> Letter, 03.02.1908, A43/327, Uganda National Archives.

<sup>615</sup> Letter, 10.02.1908, A43/327, Uganda National Archives.

<sup>616</sup> Letter, 16.03.08, A43/327, (26) Uganda National Archives.

<sup>617</sup> Letter, 24.02.08, A43/327, (25) Uganda National Archives.

<sup>618</sup> Letter, 16.5.08, A43/327, (34) Uganda National Archives.

them'.<sup>619</sup> This illustrates that the colonial state and local people both invested regimes of value into the possession of similar objects. One of the ways that the colonial state thought it could acquire these objects was via monetary exchange. When it failed to do so, it resorted to forcible extraction. Kaggwa and the chiefs were key to the acquisition of the finest items, and the Government was thus forced to capitulate to the chiefs' request not to press the point about the Museum's ownership at that time. It is significant to note that while a 1905 judicial amendment of the Uganda Agreement saw the subordination of the Native Courts in the Kingdom of Uganda to the High Court, here was an arena of 'soft' diplomacy in which the members of the Native Courts could exercise power and persuasion.<sup>620</sup>

However, by the end of April 1908, for reasons that the official archives do not document, the Sub-Commissioner wrote to Wilson to explain that, although still keen on having their own museum, the Buganda 'Chiefs' had agreed to negotiate. The Sub-Commissioner warned Bell that the matter still required very careful handling, for the chiefs still feared the loss of some of their national curios through handing them over to government.<sup>621</sup> Wilson was 'surprised' at this development but agreed to the museum being located in Kampala, although he disapproved of appearing 'forced' to agree.<sup>622</sup> The chiefs were asked to subscribe £200 towards the cost of the building, in addition to £200 from the Government, who would also contribute a further £200 for the purchase of curios, although Wilson hoped that the chiefs would lend articles rather than sell them, thus reducing the cost.<sup>623</sup> However, Bell did not approve of the *Katikkiro's* suggestion that the museum should be built on Mengo Hill inside the *Lubiri*. Instead, he proposed that it should be in a small Doric temple on Lugard's Old Fort enclosure

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<sup>619</sup> Ibid.

<sup>620</sup> *Uganda Protectorate, Report for 1905-6*, p. 22.

<sup>621</sup> Letter, 23.04.08 (29), A43/327, Uganda National Archives, Kampala.

<sup>622</sup> Letter, 28.09.08, A43/327, (27), Uganda National Archives, Kampala.

<sup>623</sup> Ibid.

at Kampala, thus asserting a colonial influence on the Museum's image.<sup>624</sup> Kampala Hill was where Lugard had earlier built a stockade and fortification, and during the religious wars of the early 1890s the Hill was the centre of several British military operations. The British flag was raised there in 1893 when the Imperial Government took over the administration of Uganda from the British East African Company. The site and architecture of the Museum were therefore crucial to underline formal British imperial power over eastern African elites.

In August 1908, a new Government file was created for the establishment of the Museum at Kampala.<sup>625</sup> This file offers a deeper insight into the importance of the Museum's architectural design. On 27 August 1908 a special warrant was approved for the erection of a Museum building in this little pseudo-Greek temple in Kampala (Figure 4.4), which, although far smaller, bore a striking architectural resemblance to the British Museum, albeit in miniature.<sup>626</sup>



**Figure 4.4: Lugard's Fort: the original site of the Uganda Museum. Photograph courtesy of Uganda Museum**

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<sup>624</sup> Ibid.

<sup>625</sup> A44/250 *Museum at Kampala: Establishment of*, Uganda National Archives.

<sup>626</sup> Letter, 27, 08. 08, A44/250, Uganda National Archives.

A later drawing (Figure 4.5) displays the same three-columned porch in a neo-classical style, with the addition of the arms of Buganda: a shield with crossed spears on the frieze, in an act of colonial hybridity.<sup>627</sup> The deployment of classical forms had been popular in the first half of the nineteenth century in Britain and in the colonial state architecture of other imperial locations. As Sarah Longair notes in relation to Zanzibar, classical architecture was associated with the projection of imperial authority. It also saw a revival in the early twentieth century.<sup>628</sup> However, similarly noting the ‘compromises and contingencies that were inherent in colonial architecture in tropical regions’, Longair further suggests moving beyond a simple Orientalist reading of classical colonial architecture and associated notions of colonial power.<sup>629</sup> This case study also seems to demand such a reading, not least because this ‘temple’, designed to reflect British authority and learnedness, soon suffered from a leaking roof amongst other structural problems, and required constant alterations in order to repurpose it as a functioning museum.<sup>630</sup> Despite being renovated, the museum alterations were still made on a restrictive budget and it would continue to suffer from degradation throughout its lifetime due to limited governmental funding following the outbreak of the First World War.<sup>631</sup> Here we find parallels with other colonial museums described by John MacKenzie, which also suffered from lack of repair.<sup>632</sup> Thus, however much the classical facade projected power, the lack of state funding ensured that this projection was undercut by the lack of repair to the structure.

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<sup>627</sup> Letter, 23.10.08, Museum at Kampala: Establishment of, A44/250 (12), Uganda National Archives, Kampala.

<sup>628</sup> Sarah Longair, ‘Visions of the Global: The Classical and the Eclectic in Colonial East African Architecture’ in *Cahiers d’Etudes de l’Afrique de l’Est* (51), p. 164; see also Mark Crinson, *Empire Building: Orientalism and Victorian Architecture* (London, 1996), pp. 7-8.

<sup>629</sup> Longair suggests that there were ‘many competing factors which impinged upon the decisions made by architects in the colonies’. Longair, ‘Visions of the Global’, p. 162.

<sup>630</sup> Trowell, ‘The Uganda Museum’, p. 78.

<sup>631</sup> Ibid.

<sup>632</sup> MacKenzie, *Museums and Empire*.



**Figure 4.5: ‘Plan of the Kampala Museum’, Uganda National Archives, Kampala, A44/250, 11.09.08, *Museum at Kampala: Establishment of*.**

What of the collections? The records for 1908–1920 (the period of interest in this chapter) are fractured, caused in part by a burglary in 1923 in which the Museum catalogue was stolen.<sup>633</sup> However, a small number of later commentators have offered some retrospective insights. In 1934, J.W.F. Marriott described a 1914 Museum inventory that listed 290 ‘curios’ then in the Museum’s possession.<sup>634</sup> Marriott suggested that most of these objects were associated with the ‘occult’, reflected by the

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<sup>633</sup> J.W.F. Marriott, ‘The Kampala Museum’ *The Uganda Journal*, 2:1 (July, 1934), p. 81. Government records do not record the purpose of the burglary. It is interesting, however, that the catalogue was stolen. This could, for example, have been to help the sale of stolen objects, or it could have been part of a protest against the museum.

<sup>634</sup> Ibid. Marriott described some of the Museum’s objects on display in 1934. These included ‘a full-size bed hewed from a solid block of wood and reputed to have belonged to Kintu, the first ‘King’ of Buganda; an imitation of an executioner’s axe; a number of curious pieces of diseased ivory; a Bari smelting pot; an earthenware pot used by Bari Chiefs to put their charms in; a long decorated stick with the straw matting at the top carried by Bari women in their dance to celebrate the drawing of the four lower incisor teeth; and a small horn generally worn by every Madi and Acholi youth and blown at dances’.

fact that many had been seized by police in court cases and given to the Museum.<sup>635</sup> Marriot also noted that a large number of ‘charms’ were presented by the Buganda *Lukikko*.<sup>636</sup> In 1957, the Museum’s Curator Margaret Trowell described the original Museum as a ‘Madame Tussauds’ style of attraction; a place that local people allegedly called *Enyumba ya Mayembe* (‘House of Fetishes’) because it housed rich collections of Ganda and Soga fetishes and other ‘witchcraft’ material.<sup>637</sup> Trowell further asserted that ‘the collection seems to have been of no interest to the African’.<sup>638</sup> More recently, Derek Peterson has suggested that the early Museum was ‘a place where subversive objects could be taken out of circulation’ and be transformed into ‘objects of scientific study and aesthetic interest’.<sup>639</sup> This certainly seems to have been the case for the colonial government, but as this chapter has demonstrated, Ugandan chiefs such as Kaggwa also played a central role in collecting and donating and were very much interested, despite what Trowell described. The evidence presented in chapters two and three suggest that there was something more to this on the Ugandan chiefs’ part than simply removing dangerous items from society. They were also performing elements of heritage management and historical knowledge production, as well as using the collection and donation of objects for the purposes of soft diplomacy. Stolen, seized, and donated, these ‘curios’ clearly held important and multiple forms of meaning and power to different people during the early twentieth century, and the wider debates around the Museum, its design, and function, reflect this.

Over the following years, members of the colonial government itself debated the nature of the collection and whether it should continue to focus on ethnographic

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<sup>635</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>636</sup> Marriot, ‘The Kampala Museum’, p. 81.

<sup>637</sup> Trowell, ‘The Uganda Museum’, p. 72.

<sup>638</sup> Ibid.

<sup>639</sup> Derek Peterson provides the example of drums, citing the change in their meaning from objects or politics and power, to ethnographic specimens and music instrument. The ‘voice’ of the drum shifted from a political to a musical one. Derek R. Peterson, Kodzo Guava, and Ciraj Rassool, *The Politics of Heritage in Africa: Economies, Histories, and Infrastructures* (Cambridge, 2015), p. 6.

objects, or develop a new focus on items associated with agriculture and capitalist development. They also reignited the Kampala/Entebbe debate in a new form. These debates illustrate that in addition to the tensions between British and Ugandan elites, the history of the Museum also illuminates internal rivalries within the British colonial service itself, thus complicating the simple colonizer/ colonized dichotomy suggested by the Saidian paradigm. By 1912, the museum was administered the Botanical, Forestry and Scientific Office in Entebbe, even though the museum itself was situated in Kampala. Heated discussions were taking place with the Department of Agriculture in Kampala, which had requested that the Museum be passed over to its entire control. The Director of Agriculture in Kampala, S. Simpson, argued that to keep the administration of the Museum in its current location was unsustainable, not least because staff employed by Entebbe tended to report to the Agricultural Department anyway for help and advice.<sup>640</sup> Simpson argued that the Museum was confined to objects of interest in ‘native’ life and wished to see it made ‘more instructive and useful to the community’.<sup>641</sup> He wrote a letter to the Governor, now Frederick Jackson, to request the transition of power to Kampala.<sup>642</sup> He also forwarded to Entebbe an earlier suggestion of Jackson’s that hinted at the creation of an agricultural museum.<sup>643</sup>

However, the Chief Forestry Officer in Entebbe, W.R. Rutter, maintained that his Department was too keenly interested in the museum at Kampala to hand it over, and demanded that Simpson refrain from ‘interfering with any works or employees of his department’.<sup>644</sup> Rutter referred to the original purpose of the Museum, which was the collection and exhibition of all articles of historical, ethnological and industrial interests pertaining to Uganda, and argued that the collections should continue to be

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<sup>640</sup> Letter, 29.08.12, A44/250, Uganda National Archives.

<sup>641</sup> Letter, 29.08.12, A44/250, Uganda National Archives.

<sup>642</sup> Letter, 5.9.12 (44), A44/250, Uganda National Archives.

<sup>643</sup> Governor F.J. Jackson in his minute of 12.6.12, S.M.P. No.2604, Uganda National Archives.

<sup>644</sup> Letter, 30.08.12, A44/250, Uganda National Archives.

viewed ‘more from a scientific view than as a means of advertising the agricultural potentialities of this country’.<sup>645</sup> These principles had been ‘the basis for the chiefs giving money and objects’, and he did not wish to go back on them, emphasising that,

the museum was inaugurated from a scientific point of view and its inaugurator, the late governor Sir H.H. Bell rightly invested the control of the museum to the Scientific Department which has piloted it through its initial stages up to its present satisfactory state.<sup>646</sup>

Rutter explained that it had long been his intention to enlarge and improve the collections of economic interest, but that he had been prevented from doing so by a lack of funds.<sup>647</sup> Referring to Jackson’s idea for an agricultural museum, he suggested that Jackson’s plan had in fact been to create an agricultural Museum annexed to the office of the Director of Agriculture, who would be on the spot to explain the various products and thus supply the planters with any information they required, rather than to focus the current Museum on agriculture.<sup>648</sup> The Museum thus highlights a number of internal contradictions within the early colonial state: first, the question of where the governmental epicentre lay, and second the importance of colonial capitalist development versus Ugandan cultural interests.

Despite Rutter’s protest, in 1913, the Governor announced that the Museum’s leadership would be handed over to the Agricultural Department in Kampala.<sup>649</sup> By 1914, plans were being made for an extension of the Museum to include biological and economic products, and forestry exhibits. The image of the Museum featured in *Farmer’s Journal*, Nairobi (Figure 4.6) illustrates that the Museum was now being publicized as a source of agricultural information. However, sufficient funding was still

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<sup>645</sup> Letter, 16.09.12, A44/250 (49), Uganda National Archives.

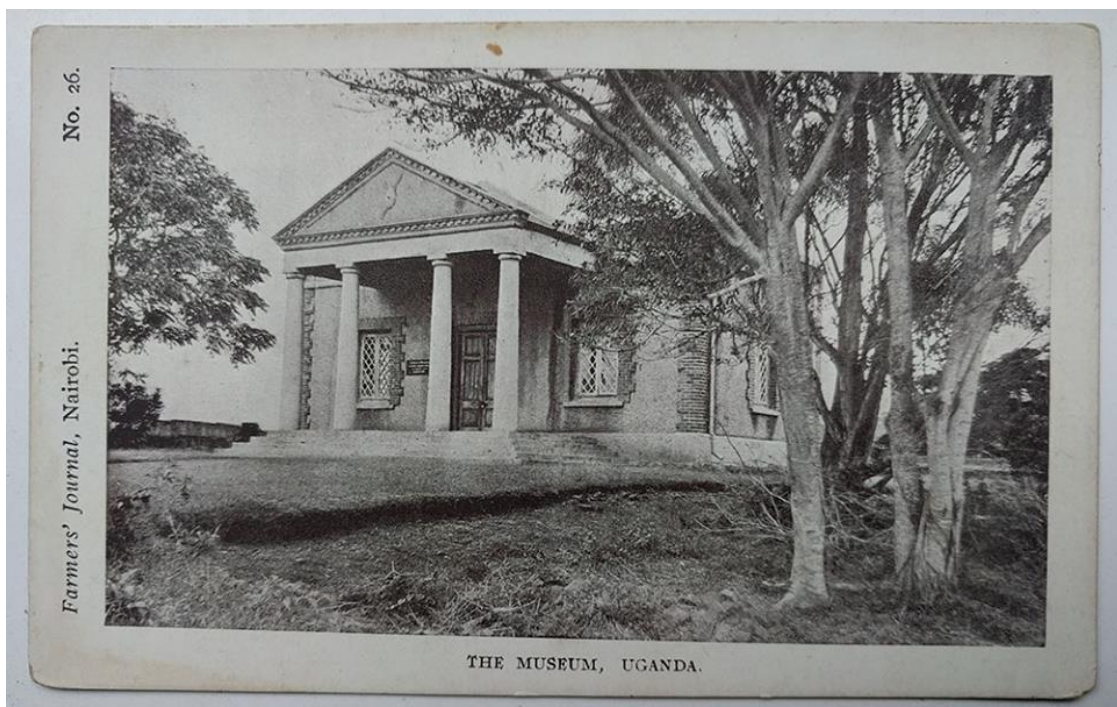
<sup>646</sup> Letter, 16.09.12, A44/250, (49), Uganda National Archives.

<sup>647</sup> Letter, 16.09.12, A44/250, (49), Uganda National Archives.

<sup>648</sup> Letter, 16.09.12, A44/250 (49), Uganda National Archives.

<sup>649</sup> Excerpt from a minute by His Excellency the Governor, 25.9.1913, Minute 58 of S.M.P.1191, (57).

not forthcoming and only £50 was provided, which would only supply new cases.<sup>650</sup> Further complaints were made by staff about the now leaking corrugated iron roof and rotten labels. The Director of Agriculture agreed that a moderate building scheme to extend over two years, if necessary, should be prepared in conjunction with the Director of Public Works and included in the estimates for the following year.<sup>651</sup> The Government (the word ‘Economic’ crossed out) Entomologist was announced (name unknown) as the first salaried Curator of the Museum with effect from 1 April 1914, signalling a new phase in the life of the Museum.<sup>652</sup> However, records are patchy for the period leading up to and including the First World War, and it is therefore difficult to know how the museum operated and used its collections during this time, and also what the continuing role of local leaders was in the decision-making.<sup>653</sup>



**Figure 4.6: ‘The Museum, Uganda’ in *Farmer’s Journey*, Nairobi (date unknown). Postcard reproduced from Private Collection Stan Frankland, and made available by [www.HIPUganda.org](http://www.HIPUganda.org)**

<sup>650</sup> Letter, 16.4.14 (65), Uganda National Archives.

<sup>651</sup> Letter, S.M.P. 1191/08, Uganda National Archives.

<sup>652</sup> Letter, S.M.P. 1191/08 (68), Uganda National Archives.

<sup>653</sup> Kaggwa’s records in the Africana section of Makerere University’s Special Collections may reveal more information on this topic. These records are written in Luganda and thus the author of this thesis was unfortunately unable to analyse them within the time constraints of the thesis.

Sources produced by visitors to the Museum offer one alternative window. During the 1920s, several European visitors attended the Museum, and returned with mixed reviews. In 1922, John Roscoe wrote of the Museum:

the fort during the first years of the Uganda Protectorate has now been turned into a museum for native objects of interest. There does not seem to be much enthusiasm connected with this museum and it does not grow rapidly, nor do the best objects for preservation find their way to it.<sup>654</sup>

Roscoe's comments suggest that despite the Museum's best efforts, it was not viewed as highly as metropolitan institutions. Henry Balfour (1863-1939) also visited the Museum during his 1928 tour of Uganda and noted that it was in need of a new building, was poorly organised and very short of funds, but also that it contained 'several interesting specimens'.<sup>655</sup> Roscoe's and Balfour's comments reflect the difficulties that the Museum faced during this transitional period, as it sought to develop from a small institution with a limited audience, whose original purpose was to accumulate 'curios', to one that would benefit the economic aims of empire while also demonstrating the qualities of a 'modern' museum, such as 'scientific' methods, and public exhibitions and displays. Their comments also reflect the continued bias of collectors such as Roscoe, who chose to send objects to Britain rather than keep them in Uganda.

Disagreements about the function and running of the Museum continued throughout the 1920s. The Provincial Commissioner of Education suggested that the Committee should consist of the Director of Education, the Provincial Commissioner of Buganda, a representative from each Mission and two members of the native Buganda Government. He also suggested that all Provincial Commissioners of other

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<sup>654</sup> John Roscoe, *The Soul of Central Africa: A General Account of the Mackie Ethnological Expedition* (London, 1922), p. 44.

<sup>655</sup> 21 July and 3 August 1928, *Balfour Diaries*, 1, Kenya and Uganda, Pitt Rivers Museum.

provinces become ex-officio members.<sup>656</sup> However, the Principal of Makerere College questioned whether the inclusion of the members of ‘native’ government, the missions and general public was essential and suggested that the Chief Secretary or Director of Education should act as Chair, as he believed the Museum was a Protectorate one and not a Buganda one. In doing so, he questioned whether the Museum was Government-owned or held in trust.<sup>657</sup> The Director of Education disagreed and argued that ‘influential natives were essential’, echoing the original debates of 1908.<sup>658</sup>

Eventually, the Committee appointed to administer the Kampala Museum was made up of the Provincial Commissioner of Buganda (Chairman), the Directors of Agriculture and Education, a member of the Native Government (appointed by the Kabaka) and a member of Makerere College staff as Secretary (nominated by the Principal), thus reducing the proposed local representation and excluding missionary contributions altogether.<sup>659</sup> On 1 March 1927 the Museum was officially handed over to the Secretary of the Museum Committee, thus inaugurating a new era for the Museum. Margaret Trowell was employed as the Museum’s first proper curator, and reorganised the collections according to ‘some sort of scientific basis’, a task that she noted early officials had attempted insufficiently.<sup>660</sup> In her book *African Tapestry*, Trowell explained that she soon ‘realised the fascinating possibilities of working on tribal and racial distribution through the study of the materials, techniques, and forms of the artefacts used in the material cultures’.<sup>661</sup> She also explained her methods:

After gleaning what little information was available on the few tattered labels... the first task was to sort the material into great heaps of agricultural implements, clothing and adornment, magico-religious articles, food utensils and so on. Then an enormous list was made out, with every artefact which might possibly be

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<sup>656</sup> Letter, 26.12.26, A44/250, *Museum at Kampala: Establishment of*, p. 82. Uganda National Archives.

<sup>657</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.1.27.

<sup>658</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.1.27.

<sup>659</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.1.27. (83).

<sup>660</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>661</sup> Trowell, *African Tapestry* (London, 1957), p. 73.

used by any tribe carefully noted; and from this, tribal lists were put together...<sup>662</sup>

These encyclopaedic interventions in the early colonial collections changed the way that they would be remembered by future generations: from objects of curiosity, economic value and imperial domination, to sources of ‘tribal’ history and culture, albeit organised and categorised through a European lens. Little has changed among the displays since the 1950s and 1960s and they now sit as part of a larger history of modern ‘tribal’ politics in Uganda.<sup>663</sup>

## **Conclusion**

By demonstrating the different discursive and practical efforts by both the British Museum and Uganda Museum to contribute to the early decades of the colonial project in Uganda, this chapter helps to modify our understanding of the impact and power of museums during the colonial period. Despite their best efforts to influence public, scientific, and governmental understandings of Uganda, ethnographic curators at the British Museum, for example, faced pivotal barriers through a lack of governmental funding, gaps in their collections, and spatial constraints. Expanding these insights still further, the history of Uganda Museum offers another important physical and discursive site through which to analyse the debates, negotiations and conflicting visions around the newly established Protectorate on the ground in Uganda. Conceived in the early days of formal colonial administration when large-scale, institutional state structures were only just being created and experimented with, it was also subject to conflicting personalities and ideas from within and beyond the colonial state. Being a smaller

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<sup>662</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>663</sup> Reid, *A History of Modern Uganda*, p. xxvi.



institution, these tensions were more visible to viewers at Uganda Museum than they were at the British Museum, as Roscoe's comments illustrate. They reflected wider grievances about the logistics of Uganda's colonial administration. They also reflected the multiple use-values of a museum as perceived within different spheres of Ugandan society. These ranged from a safe house for dangerous objects, to a site for Uganda's historical cultures, a showcase for natural and economic resources, an agricultural training centre, and a centre for scientific research and public education. Together, these two important case studies help to situate the individual objects discussed in earlier chapters within both an institutional context and ongoing discussions about the political and public power of museums in the colonial period, thereby developing our understanding of the workings of imperialism in Uganda at this time.

## Conclusion

Eastern Africa is a region of rich and dynamic material cultural traditions. Sitting at the intersection of key international trading routes, from the Swahili coast in the east to the Great Lakes in the west, it has for millennia participated in material encounters and exchanges that have influenced both its own cultures and those of its visitors.<sup>664</sup> Britain's colonial encounters with and distinct interest in eastern African material culture are manifest in the thousands of objects that reside in museums across Britain, Uganda, and Kenya today. This thesis has historicized the people, methods, motivations, and impacts of their acquisition and display. By paying due attention to these processes and drawing on approaches from material culture studies which situate objects as key participants in social and political processes, it has made significant contributions to three key areas of historical knowledge. First, it has broadened our understanding of the geographical scope of colonial collecting. Second, it has illuminated the previously unacknowledged material underpinnings of early empire in Uganda and Kenya, offering a new narrative of imperial relations, knowledge, and power. And third, it has deepened our knowledge of the imperial pasts of museums.

By drawing attention to the rich and complex history of colonial collecting and display in Uganda and Kenya, this thesis has expanded the current field of collecting history which has hitherto overlooked these key sites of empire. It has demonstrated that Kenya and Uganda were important locations for European collecting interests and that items collected there played important roles in broader evolutionary paradigms of European knowledge production about the non-European world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, where previous histories of collecting have

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<sup>664</sup> Kiprof Lagat and Julie Hudson (eds.), *Hazina: Traditions, Trade and Transitions in Eastern Africa* (Nairobi, 2006), p. 1.

overwhelmingly focused on European forms of acquisition, this thesis contributes to the insights of authors of other colonized regions such as Chris Gosden, Chantal Knowles, Nicholas Thomas, Chris Wingfield, Claire Wintle, and Christina Riggs who have illuminated the importance of non-Europeans in collecting processes.<sup>665</sup> Reconstructing the biographies of many of the objects from Uganda and Kenya provides rich new windows on the role of powerful local elites in their acquisition and knowledge dissemination, thus offering an essential way to rethink dominant colonial narratives.

The extensive literature on the imperial histories of Uganda and Kenya has previously discounted the material underpinnings of this period, focusing attention predominantly on the textual and oral remnants of empire. This thesis documents a crucial new object-based archive for studying the imperial histories of these regions. It has used these sources and the histories of their collection and display to develop a new framework that acknowledges the importance of the material world to the formation of colonial relationships, knowledge, identities, and power structures in Uganda and Kenya. Extending previous research on the material cultures of pre-colonial Uganda by historians such as Richard Reid, Venny Nakazibwe, and others, to the colonial period, it has argued that collecting and display were common and important practices for a wide variety of colonial actors and institutions.<sup>666</sup> In the operations of colonial officials, missionaries, Ugandan and Kenyan elites, and metropolitan and colonial museums, the

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<sup>665</sup> Chris Gosden and Chantal Knowles, *Collecting Colonialism: Material Culture and Colonial Change* (Oxford: Berg, 2001); Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA, 1991); Chris Wingfield, Karen Jacobs and Chantal Knowles (eds.), *Trophies, Relics and Curios? Missionary Heritage from Africa and the Pacific* (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2015); Wintle, *Colonial Collecting and Display*; Christina Riggs, "Shouldering the Past: Photography, Archaeology, and Collective Effort at the Tomb of Tutankhamun," *History of Science* 55–3 (2017), pp. 336–363.

<sup>666</sup> Richard J. Reid, *Political Power in Pre-Colonial Buganda* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 77–79; Richard J. Reid, *War in Pre-Colonial Eastern Africa* (London, 2007); Venny Nakazibwe, 'Bark-Cloth of the Baganda People of Southern Uganda: A Record of Continuity and Change from the Late Eighteenth Century to the Early Twenty-First Century' (PhD dissertation, Middlesex University, 2005).

strategic deployment of the material world through exchanging, collecting, and displaying, helped these figures to mediate the radical changes, opportunities, and challenges of empire in Uganda and Kenya.

Finally, museums have come under increasing pressure over the past decade to reveal more about the colonial histories of their institutions and collections. This thesis also provides vital new information about a previously overlooked, but important region of interest and activity for museums at this time. In line with the findings of other historians, such as Annie Coombes, Kate Hill, and Sarah Longair, who have used histories of museums to demonstrate the complex, shifting, and uneven nature of imperial power, this thesis further complicates our understanding of empire in eastern Africa in key ways.<sup>667</sup>

It shows that there was often a distinction between imperial governments' intentions of collecting and display, and their actual outcomes. This disparity was due to a variety of factors, including a lack of support and funding from the metropolitan state, the role of local elites in re-directing collecting practices and forms of knowledge production, and the circumstance that objects did not always fit neatly into imperial narratives of categorization and display. Further, objects were acquired from local people by a variety of means that ranged from violent extraction, to negotiation, and gift exchange, illuminating the range of different power relations involved in colonial relations. Local elites also participated in collecting and the giving of objects to museums, demonstrating their own agency in the process. Moreover, people that collected and gave objects to museums did so for a variety of professional and personal

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<sup>667</sup> For further elucidation, see Annie E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London, 1994); Kate Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums, 1850 – 1914* (Aldershot, 2005); Sarah Longair, *Cracks in the Dome: Fractured Histories of Empire in the Zanzibar Museum, 1897–1964* (Farnham, 2015).

reasons that included, but also often extended beyond a simple desire to develop the imperial project.

Chapter one focused on the most recognisable of imperial institutions: colonial officialdom. This chapter demonstrated a distinct lack of interest and support for officials' collecting by the metropolitan state. Collecting in Uganda and Kenya was thus not fundamentally integrated into practices of governing at the highest levels of imperialism in the metropole. However, it was an important activity for individual imperial agents on the ground. Colonial officials used ethnographic collecting to aide multiple areas of their professional duties and personal reputations. The objects that they collected played vital roles in the political praxis between officials and local people, whether through gift exchange or violent extraction. The collection of objects was also key to the ways that officials understood their local communities, and officials used them to overturn and re-cultivate local (often gendered) identities for administrative purposes. Collecting also contributed to officials' own auto ethnographies, allowing them to bolster their career status with cultural distinction.

Chapter two problematized the dominant idea of missionaries as empire's supposed 'cultural imperialists' and propagandists. On the one hand, it found that their collections of fetishes and local medical equipment were often bound up in imperialistic, racialized, and 'scientific' evolutionary frameworks of understanding. However, these objects had multiple meanings and values and did not always simply reflect a desire to undermine traditional beliefs and ways of life, but also a desire to study and learn from them. Missionaries were often surprised at the sophistication of many of the objects that they encountered. They also relied heavily on the cooperation and guidance of local male elites in their acquisition, who tempered their understandings of these items according to their own historical constructions. The missionaries examined in this chapter also used opportunities for collecting in the

colonial mission field to build new prestigious careers in the professional realms of metropolitan science.

Chapters two and three touched on the role of empire's supposed 'go-betweens', or local elites, and their influence on colonial relations, knowledge and power through their deployment of the material world. Chapter three explored these figures on their own terms, illuminating how local leaders fashioned their own self-images through their giving of eastern African objects. They also developed conceptions and categorizations of British material culture as they acquired British collections of their own, challenging dominant theories of colonial knowledge production as operating in a singular direction. This chapter also highlighted the role of elite women in the diplomatic exchange of objects, complicating concepts of political diplomacy as simply part of the male domain.

Chapter four interrogated the idea of museums as institutional 'tools of empire'. Focusing on the British Museum and Uganda Museum, it illuminated the desires of both institutions to help consolidate imperial expansion, but also demonstrated the difficulties that both had in doing so. Although these museums both sought to provide 'scientific' and popular narratives of racial and cultural difference to bolster imperial ideology, they were fraught with financial, spatial, ideological, and bureaucratic tensions that often hindered the actual outcomes of these ambitions.

By examining the different contexts of collecting among these groups and institutions, and the individuals among them, this thesis has not only shown how material culture underpinned, reflected, and helped to bring in to being imperial relationships, knowledge, identities, and power structures, it has also highlighted the broadly shared, as well as the more distinct motivations and methods of collecting. By doing so, it has revealed both the connections and disjunctures behind ethnographic collecting in a colonial context.

Understanding the complicated provenance of these collections is now more important than ever.<sup>668</sup> European appropriation of African material culture continues to mediate the postcolonial relationship between these two continents, reflected, for example, in Emmanuel Macron's 2017 pledge to return a large percentage of France's colonial-era museum collections, and more specifically for this thesis, in recent calls for British restitution from Ugandan leaders.<sup>669</sup> Curators are also critically aware of the need to pay sensitive consideration to how non-European material cultures are exhibited aesthetically, but with due acknowledgement of former erasure and silencing of colonized voices, as a recent conference of British museum curators of African cultural heritage suggested.<sup>670</sup> This thesis contributes to these wider discussions, by offering new contextual information about the colonial provenance of objects taken from Uganda and Kenya. However, there is still much work to be done to address these issues, and ultimately, the chapters in this dissertation only offer a partial view on the history of collecting in Uganda and Kenya. There are many future directions, themes, and sources for further research.

To develop the section on colonial officials, greater research must be conducted into the wider European context of collecting. In the traditional field of imperial history, eastern Africa has been understood as a hotbed for Anglo-German imperial rivalry

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<sup>668</sup> Nicholas Thomas discusses this in greater depth in Nicholas Thomas, *The Return of Curiosity: What Museums are Good For in the 21st Century* (London, 2016), p. 16.

<sup>669</sup> 'Emmanuel Macron Says Return of African Artifacts Is a Top Priority', *New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/29/arts/emmanuel-macron-africa.html>, accessed 29 November, 2017. Debates about British ownership of Ugandan material culture emerged during the independence movement in the 1960s with calls for the repatriation of museum objects.<sup>669</sup> On 2 November 1961, A.K. Mayanja, the Ugandan Minister for Education for the Buganda kingdom's government questioned Kaggwa's authority in giving away parts of Buganda's material heritage and asked the Vice-chancellor of the University of Cambridge for the return of the *Kibuuka* (God of War) relics from the University's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Abu Mayanja, AA 4/5/15, archives, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge. More recently, in 2014, Kabaka Solomon Iguru of the Bunyoro kingdom asked for the return of objects from the Pitt-Rivers Museum which he believed had been looted in 1894. 'Ugandan King battles Oxford museum over lost throne', *The Guardian*, <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/14/uganda-king-oxford-pitt-rivers>> accessed 21 November, 2017.

<sup>670</sup> 'Representing Africa in British Museums', *Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery*, 8 June, 2018, discussed the criticisms and challenges of current display practices, as well as future directions for the 'decolonization' of African collections.

between the ‘Scramble for Africa’ and the First World War.<sup>671</sup> Meanwhile, ‘new’ imperial history (which is cultural in its focus, but also predominantly textual) has tended to group European nations together in its quest to expand upon the ‘self’ and ‘other’ dichotomy posited by Edward Said. Future research could move beyond these approaches to European imperialism and Anglo-German relations by taking a material approach which uses objects, and their biographies, to illuminate both the competitive and collaborative exchanges of things and ideas between the two powers. Chapter one of this thesis laid some groundwork for this research but recovering these histories in greater depth will allow us to gain a fuller, and more nuanced picture of the makings of European imperialism and its cultural tools.

Further research is also required of missionary collections from Uganda and Kenya. Chapter two examined two of the largest collections acquired by missionaries and focused on particular types of objects. Other than the ‘fetish’ objects and medical equipment described in this thesis, many of the other objects found in missionary collections might be classed as mundane and of utilitarian value. However, these items still deserve attention. Anna Johnston has demonstrated that missionary texts focused heavily on issues of gender and domesticity.<sup>672</sup> It would be interesting to examine if and how their object collecting also contributed to these other spheres, and what their impacts were.

Regarding African collectors and perspectives, although this thesis drew figures such as Apolo Kagga into its narrative, it has focused upon his collections and published works that were aimed primarily at a British audience. Further research should be conducted into Kagga’s speeches and discussions in the *Lukikko* (Buganda government) and the *Bataka* (society of hereditary clan heads), as well as Kagga’s

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<sup>671</sup> Astrid Swenson offers a broad comparative approach in Astrid Swenson, *The Rise of Heritage in France, Germany and England, 1789–1914* (Cambridge, 2013).

<sup>672</sup> Anna Johnston, ‘Gender, Domesticity, and Colonial Evangelization’ in Anna Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800–1860* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 38–60.



private papers held in Makerere University in Kampala. These additional sources could be utilized to explore not only Kaggwa's contributions to colonial knowledge production, but also how Kaggwa presented and framed his collecting activities to his peers in Uganda. Doing so would provide a more detailed and connected picture of the entanglement between collecting and colonial politics – in both Britain and Uganda.

Another line of enquiry could move away from elite African narratives to explore the roles of non-elites in the collecting process. This thesis has focused primarily upon British and eastern African elites. Once objects were placed in the museum, the roles played by non-elite Africans within the networks were typically ignored and forgotten. Non-elites were central to the collecting process, and their contributions must be more rigorously researched and reinserted into the historical narrative about British scientific practice and colonial knowledge production in eastern Africa. The hard labour, intimate work practices, and complex social life of collecting expeditions, and particularly the role of porters and headmen (and women) in the navigation, labour, and transportation process require greater attention. Groups such as the Nyamwezi and Wakamba were highly skilled in this arena and made their living from portage, while Swahili headmen exerted their authority through knowledge of routes and communications.<sup>673</sup>

The published texts of collectors and official colonial reports occasionally record the names and brief descriptions of porters on their eastern African expeditions. In 1975, Donald Simpson, a Librarian of the Royal Commonwealth Society at the University of Cambridge collated a 'Who's Who' of hundreds of eastern African

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<sup>673</sup> For further information on these groups, see R. J. Cummings, *Aspects of Human Portage with Special Reference to the Akamba of Kenya: Toward an Economic History, 1820–1920*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of California (Los Angeles, CA, 1975); Stephen Rockel, 'Wage Labour and the Culture of Portage in Nineteenth-Century Tanzania: The Central Caravan Routes', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 15:2 (1995), pp. 14–24.

porters mentioned in the Library's archives in relation to exploratory expeditions.<sup>674</sup> These sources could serve as a starting point for such research. More recently, Felix Driver has challenged historians to 'find new ways of deciphering even the most unpromising of materials' produced by colonial explorers to uncover the collaborative nature of expeditions, and to consider other source mediums which help us to do so.<sup>675</sup> Future research should address this challenge. A particularly fruitful example can be found in the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford in the papers of Ernest Gedge (1862–1935).<sup>676</sup> Gedge and Frederick Jackson (1860–1929) conducted a large collecting expedition during their time with the Imperial British Eastern Africa Company. Gedge photographed the expedition and left a rich, yet unexplored record of the life and work of porters on such trips.

Finally, with regard to museum histories of collecting, much more research is required about the early history of ethnographic collections in the Nairobi National Museum. The Museum has inhabited various names, guises, and locations since Sir Frederick Jackson acquired its founding collection of 460 objects in the late nineteenth century.<sup>677</sup> In 1909, Jackson founded the East Africa and Uganda Natural History Society (currently the East African Natural History Society [EANHS]) which supported the collection of natural specimens. In 1910, these collections required space to be stored and displayed, and a museum was built at the present Nyayo House in Nairobi.<sup>678</sup> The original ethnographic collections were also transferred and amalgamated into the natural history specimens, but appear to have taken a secondary position.<sup>679</sup> In 1922,

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<sup>674</sup> Donald Simpson, *Dark Companions: The African Contribution to the European Exploration of East Africa* (London, 1975).

<sup>675</sup> Felix Driver, 'Intermediaries and the Archive of Exploration' in Shino Konishi, Maria Nugent and Tiffany Shellam (eds.), *Indigenous Intermediaries: New Perspectives on Exploration Archives* (Canberra, 2015), p.19.

<sup>676</sup> Papers of Ernest Gedge, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 290, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

<sup>677</sup> 1886.1- 1906.300, Frederick Jackson Collection, Nairobi National Museum.

<sup>678</sup> Karega- Munene, 'Origins and Development of Institutionalised Heritage Management in Kenya', in Annie Coombes, Lotte Hughes, and Karega-Munene (eds.), *Managing Heritage, Making Peace: History, Identity and Memory in Contemporary Kenya* (London, 2013), p. 17.

<sup>679</sup> Ibid.

the collections were transferred again, to a building where the Nairobi Serena Hotel currently stands.<sup>680</sup> In 1929, a new museum – the Coryndon Museum – was built by the colonial government in honour of Sir Robert Coryndon, a former Governor of Kenya, on Museum Hill where the current museum is also located.<sup>681</sup> Following Kenyan independence, the Coryndon Museum was re-named the National Museum of Kenya (NMK) in 1963, and was given its current name, the Nairobi National Museum, in 2008.

Even though its early records are much more fragmented than those of the Uganda Museum, we can discern that Nairobi National Museum and Uganda Museum have closely related histories. Both were established through collections of ‘curios’ in the late nineteenth century, followed by a general shift in interest towards naturalia in the early twentieth century and then tribal ethnography in the second half of the century. Whereas Chapter one has already pieced together the histories behind the collection by Jackson, very little is known about the way that the early collections were used by the Museum, partly because the only surviving museum records that describe the collection appear to date from the 1960s onwards when efforts began to be made to ‘preserve and collect the products of indigenous crafts and techniques and to record traditional ways of life’.<sup>682</sup> However, further research should be conducted to clarify whether this is indeed the case.

In offering these conclusions and avenues for further research, this thesis underlines the value and scope of the historical study of museum collections from Uganda and Kenya. By drawing on the material culture turn in imperial history, it has elucidated new forms of meaning and information about the imperial encounter which other sources and historiographies have not been able to fully acknowledge. Perhaps

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<sup>680</sup> Jean Brown, ‘Natural History in a Cage: The Story Behind the Kenya National Museum’, *East Africa Journal*, 4 (1967), p. 22.

<sup>681</sup> *Ibid*, p. 23.

<sup>682</sup> ‘Papers on the Nairobi Ethnographic Project’, MUS/F/E/2/2 Ethnology 1963, Nairobi National Museum. A 1917 folder entitled ‘Curios’ lies empty.

the most important example of this in the thesis is the way that it has illuminated the ability of Ugandan and Kenyan elites to use the material world to mediate imperial encroachments in the face of radical change. Continuing to explore the significance of the material world in the colonial context will help to reconfigure both past and future understandings and presentations of these rich and diverse regions.

## Appendix Object Collections

### 1.1. List of gifts acquired by Frederick Jackson from eastern African chiefs. National Museums of Kenya, Frederick Jackson Collection, 1886.1–1906.300.

<b>Museum no.</b>	<b>Description from Museum Catalogue</b>
1886.1	'Spear presented by Micreali of Kilimanjaro'
1887.2	'Spear presented by Chief Mandara of Moshi'
1887.26	'Stool presented by Chief Mandara of Moshi'
1895.1	'Royal spear presented by Mwanga'
1902. a-b	'Earrings of Leitwonga, most powerful and friendly chief in Nandi'
1902.4	'Fetish presented by Apolo Katikiro in 1902 on Sir Frederick Jackson's leaving Uganda'
1902.1	'Uganda stone chopping tool given by chiefs on Sir Frederick Jackson's leaving Uganda'
1902.8	'Wicker bottle for berries for game of Mbau. Given by chiefs on Sir Frederick Jackson's leaving Uganda'
1902.9	'Acholi chair given by chiefs on Sir Frederick Jackson's leaving Uganda'
1902.11	'Wicker bottle for coffee beans given by chiefs on Sir Frederick Jackson's leaving Uganda'
1902.12	'Ceremonial shield from Royal Tomb, ornamented 4 wooden bosses, given by chiefs on Sir Frederick Jackson's leaving Uganda'
1902.13	'Bark cloth mallet given by chiefs on Sir Frederick Jackson's leaving Uganda'
1902.14	'Fetish "trial by jury" used by medicine man, given by chiefs on Sir Frederick Jackson's leaving Uganda'
1902.15	'Earthenware bottle, given by chiefs on Sir Frederick Jackson's leaving Uganda'
1902.17	'Drinking cup of small calabash given by chiefs on Sir Frederick Jackson's leaving Uganda'
1902.18a-d; 1902.19a-d	'Women's and children's bracelets of ivory, given by chiefs on Sir Frederick Jackson's leaving Uganda'
1902.2	'Pipe of black pottery, given by chiefs on Sir Frederick Jackson's leaving Uganda'

**2.1. Selection of objects collected by John Roscoe associated with Gods of the Baganda and Bahima in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge (MAA), and Pitt-Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (PRM).**

<b>Museum Number</b>	<b>Museum</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Description from Museum Catalogue</b>
E 1904.316 A-B	MAA	Baganda	'Used in warfare by chief of army (formerly property of King of Koki). Accession Register adds 'used in warfare by the general of the army, carried by the priest of the god of war as fetish'.
E 1904.340	MAA	Baganda	'Fish basket, in which one placed small sprats as an offering to the God of the Lake Mukasa'.
E.1904. 347	MAA	Baganda	'Charm for protection against animals. The charm consists of a snail shell, pierced near open end, and fastened to a long cord of plaited fibre, which is wound round some oval object. It is used by the people on the shores of the lake to secure the protection of Mukasa, the God of the lake, against lightning striking their cattle'.
E 1907.264	MAA	Baganda	'Cylindrical charm encased in leather, the ends set respectively with a crystal and a crocodile tooth (for the exorcism of evil spirits) through the god Kaumpula, from a disused temple'.
E 1907.296	MAA	Baganda	' <i>Nsiriba</i> (charm) of god Kauli. A perforated cylinder of wood used for curing any pains in the stomach'. <sup>683</sup>
E 1907.297	MAA	Baganda	' <i>Jembe</i> (charm) of the god Eisinga consisting of a bundle of interwoven strands of a creeper. It is used by canoeing men to control the weather'.
E 1907.298	MAA	Baganda	'Disc-shaped <i>jembe</i> charm in leather covered with a central perforation. Used by thieves to gain help of the god Jemi Zinga'.
E 1907.289	MAA	Baganda	'Small basket for carrying fish for the god of the lake, Mukasa'.
E 1907.290	MAA	Baganda	'Small basket for offering fish to the god of the lake, Mukasa'.
E 1907.291	MAA	Baganda	'Small basket for offering fish to the god of the lake, Mukasa'.
E 1907. 294	MAA	Baganda	'Waist string of cowrie shells, seeds of wild bananas and two ovals of sheet iron.

<sup>683</sup> See John Roscoe, *The Baganda: Their Customs and Beliefs* (London, 1911), fig. 51, p. 330.

			It is worn by the priest of the small-pox god’.
E 1907.222	MAA	Bahima	‘A head fillet with glass bead pendants (cult of the god Wamala) worn by priests when ascertaining the diseases of cattle. It consists of a circlet of different coloured beads, each ending in a circular glass bead’. <sup>684</sup>
E 1907.223	MAA	Bahima	‘Neck amulet of the god Wamala. It consists of a small cylinder covered with coloured glass beads arranged in patterns, and pierced. Through the hole is a crude fibre string’.
E 1907.224	MAA	Bahima	‘Neck amulet of the god Kyomya, consisting of a cylinder covered with glass beads arranged in patterns. The amulet is pierced across, and through it passes rough fibre strands’.
E 1907.226	MAA	Bahima	‘Neck amulet of the god Ndaula. It consists of a small horn plugged with small pieces of wood, and covered with coloured glass beads arranged in a lozenge pattern. At pointed end of horn is a tuft of fibre, fastened through a perforation in the horn’.
E 1907.227	MAA	Bahima	‘Neck amulet of god Nakiruru’.
E 1907.229	MAA	Bahima	‘Amulet of the god Ibone, consisting of a pair of double beads made up of two cylinders of reed, each being covered with glass beads arranged in patterns’.
E 1907.232	MAA	Bahima	‘Fetish horn of the god Nambaga. It is also used as a medicine horn. To drive out evil spirits beer, butter and medicine etc. are drunk out of it’. <sup>685</sup>
E 1907.233	MAA	Bahima	‘Fetish of the god Nambaga. Antelope horn’. <sup>686</sup>
E 1907.234	MAA	Bahima	‘Fetish of the god Nambaga. Fetish horn, antelope’. <sup>687</sup>
E 1907.265 (10)	MAA	Baganda	‘Leopard skin, the emblem of royalty, on which rested the relics of Kibuka, the Buganda war-god’.
E 1907.299	MAA	Baganda	‘Balongo. Charm containing umbilical cord of deceased king. This is the most ancient of the set, and is egg-shaped, provided with a broad leather strap-loop. It is encased in leather covered with cuts,

<sup>684</sup> John Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu: An Account of some Central African Tribes of the Uganda Protectorate* (Cambridge, 1915), plate XII, p. 132.

<sup>685</sup> *Ibid.*, plate XIII, p. 134.

<sup>686</sup> *Ibid.*, plate XIII, p. 134.

<sup>687</sup> *Ibid.*, plate XIII, p. 132.

			white cowries and old blue and yellow glass beads’.
E 1907.300	MAA	Baganda	‘Balongo or Omulongo. Charm containing umbilical cord of deceased king. It is of cylindrical form, made up of tightly rolled brown bark cloth, with long loop handle "served" with string’.
E 1907.301	MAA	Baganda	‘Balongo charm containing umbilical cord of deceased king. It is of cylindrical form, made up of tightly rolled brown bark cloth, with long loop handle "served" with string’.
E 1907.302	MAA	Baganda	‘Balongo or Omulongo. Charm containing umbilical cord of deceased king, apparently most recent of set. It is cylindrical of form, made of tightly rolled bark cloth with a long loop handle’.
E 1907.303	MAA	Baganda	‘Deity vessel. A globular vessel of brown earthenware, bearing a faint pattern of incised lines, with the clay between pinched up into raised lumps. The central plain-rimmed orifice is surrounded by eight upstanding spouts which project from the rounded shoulders. It is used for giving criminals drugged beer before execution, to give the king power over their ghosts. Obtained from the chief Kimbugwe, a former keeper of the Balongo’. <sup>688</sup>
E 1907.295	MAA	Baganda	‘An amulet: a pair of cylinders, covered with coloured glass beads arranged in a pattern. Worn by late King of Koki’. <sup>689</sup>
E 1907.292	MAA	Baganda	‘Set of 14 oblong-shaped hide dice-cards used in diagnosing diseases. The one with bell attached is the "king". One end of each is corrugated, and some are decorated with incised line pattern’.
E 1907.293	MAA	Baganda	‘Set of oblong hide dice-cards used for diagnosing diseases. The one with bells is the "king". One end of each is corrugated, and some are decorated with incised line pattern. Two have cowries and metal bells attached to one side. These dice are thrown on a hide board’.
E 1912.1	MAA	Baganda	‘Balongo or Omulongo. Charm containing part of the umbilical cord of a deceased king of Uganda. It is encased in

<sup>688</sup> Ibid., fig. 53, p. 335.

<sup>689</sup> Ibid., fig. 51, p. 330.



			an oval leather receptacle decorated with cowry shells and ancient glass’.
E 1912.2	MAA	Baganda	‘A narrow, oblong mat of brown barkcloth decorated with close-set cowry shells and yellow and green (ancient) glass beads. On this mat were placed the Balongo (1908.623 (1)) of Kibuka, the Buganda war god’.
1920.193/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	‘Grass fibre (NB. Originally described as "hemp", but crossed out) rope carried by the king’s guard for binding anyone they were ordered to capture. It is made of plaited bands of hemp, with a running noose at one end’. <sup>690</sup>
1920.369/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	‘Kabaka or King of Uganda. Case containing the umbilical cord of a deceased king (Kamanya?). The case is ovoid, covered with hide and completely covered with cowrie shells regularly interspersed with blue and yellow beads: in the front, there is a triangular decoration of blue and red beads. A hide loop is attached decorated with a triangular pattern of blue beads and cowrie shells. Upon this loop are threaded thirteen rings of cowrie shells, and a long string of blue beads is attached. To this relic, the ghost of the king was supposed to attach itself, and was addressed by the people who regarded the king as present with them’.
1920.379/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	‘Eland horn used by king or chiefs as an amulet to avert evil, or in warfare’.
1920.460/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	‘God Namulere's stick for assisting the oracle. It is roughly circular in section, with a spiral effect towards one end, and is coloured black’.
1920.461/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	‘Stick for the god Namalere, held by a medium to give oracle. With spiral effect at one end’.
1920.462/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	‘The god Wanama's stick for a medium to hold when giving the oracle and one large and one small stick bound together and cowry attached, also a black seed’.
1920.463/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	‘Stick with two cowrie-shells and barkcloth attached, for medium to hold when giving an oracle of a god. The stick is carefully trimmed, one end is a circular knob, facing one side. The other end terminates in a circular rim’.

<sup>690</sup> Ibid., Fig.41, p. 265.

1920.465/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	'Sticks for priest to hold when the god is using him to give the oracle. Three bound together with fibre-string and mudded over. One cowrie and seed attached. It has a good patina and has been well cared for'. <sup>691</sup>
1920.466/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	'Pipe head for smoking when about to be possessed by a god. It is bowl-shaped with fine linear incised pattern around edge of rim'.
1920.469/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	Chain of small snail-shells and small black seeds strung on fibre string. It is worn by priests when giving the oracle of Kaumpuli, the god of Plague.
1920.470/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	'A chain made of cowrie-shells, seeds and pieces of wood strung on a string, worn by priest when giving oracle for the god Kagulo'.
1920.472/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	'Plain headdress of fibre-cloth with a few cowries attached. Worn by priests when in attendance on the god'.
1920.474/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	'Miniature shield of Kaumpuli, the god of Plague. Diamond-shaped, with handle, copper'.
1920.475/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	'Shield of Kaumpuli, the god of plague. Miniature, diamond-shaped, made of brass with handle (exchanged with Copenhagen)'.
1920.476/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	'Miniature shield of Kaumpuli, god of plague. Diamond-shaped with handle of brass'.
1920.477/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	'Small diamond-shaped shield of Kaumpuli, god of plague. Made of iron with brass handle'.
1920.478/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	'Shield of small diamond-shaped piece of copper of Kaumpuli, the god of Plague (exchanged with Copenhagen)'.
1920.479/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	'Ngato. Leathers for throwing to obtain the decision of the god Mwanga. They are eight in number, flat and rectangular, one end being corrugated'.
1920.480/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	'Set of eight oval plates of leather (seven of which have two cowrie shells sewn on them) for throwing to obtain the decision of the god Mwanga in illness etc. The leathers are contained in a leather bag with a string handle. Only six plates have 2 cowries. One plate has only 1 cowrie'.

<sup>691</sup> Tim Insoll notes that the mudded-over surface is done with sacrificial materials such as blood, animal fat or beer.

1920.208/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	'Black-bowled clay pipe with incised red and white lines running around it. Two blunt legs or knobs beneath, and short wooden stem. Used by medium to become possessed by the god. Rim broken, 3 fragments present'.
1920.219/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	'Black clay pipe with cylindrical bowl set on pentagonal platform, decorated with incised lines in red and white and dots near the stem. Used by medium to become possessed by the god'.
1920.250/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	'Spear with leaf-shaped socketed iron head surrounded by seven leaf-shaped iron points (one broken off): wooden shaft decorated with spiral band of dark colour, and shod with socketed iron point. Dedicated to a god (Lubare)'.
1920.319/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	'Drum belonging to Dunggu, god of the chase. The body is wooden, cylindrical, with conical lower part, encased in leather. The head is covered with ox-hide fastened by a lacing of thin twisted strips of leather to the leather casing on the lower part: two leather handles on the head. [A hole has apparently been cut in the head of this drum]'. <sup>692</sup>
1920.325/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	'Drum used in dances to the gods. The body is of wood, with bulbous head, short cylindrical centre, and slightly widened base. The whole is supported on three straight rounded wooden legs, around which a length of twisted fibre rope is tied. The head is covered with an irregularly shaped piece of hide stick to the wood by a type of gum as glue. A fetish drum'. <sup>693</sup>
1920.356/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	'Large split-pea shaped bell, with twisted fibre attached. Bell of Dunggu, god of the chase. Bell made of iron, with round iron ball loose inside'. <sup>694</sup>
1920.357/Roscoe	PRM	Baganda	'Two hollow iron spheres, split and perforated with two holes at top, and metal balls inside. Twisted fibre joining the two bells and fastened through holes. Bells of Dunggu, god of the chase'. <sup>695</sup>

<sup>692</sup> Roscoe, *The Baganda*, fig. 50, p. 311.

<sup>693</sup> Roscoe, *Northern Bantu*, plate XX, p. 252.

<sup>694</sup> Roscoe, *The Baganda*, Fig., 63, p. 382.

<sup>695</sup> Ibid.

### 3.1: Gifts presented to the British Museum by Apolo Kaggwa in July 1902.

Museum No.	Description
Af1902,0718.27	'Cup'
Af1902,0718.26	'Cup'
Af1902,0718.25	'Cup'
Af1902,0718.24	'Funnel'
Af1902,0718.32	'Cowrie shell'
Af1902,0718.31	'Child's Waist Ring'
Af1902,0718.30	'Broom'
Af1902,0718.29	'Sample'
Af1902,0718.23	'Vessel/bottle'
Af1902,0718.22	'Cupping horn'
Af1902,0718.21	'Hoe'
Af1902,0718.20	'Axe'
Af1902,0718.19	'Charm'
Af1902,0718.18	'Shield; charm'
Af1902,0718.3.a	'Tobacco pipe'
Af1902,0718.2	'Container'
Af1902,0718.6.b-c	'Toothbrush; fly whisk'
Af1902,0718.6.a	'Priest's Charm'
Af1902,0718.7	'Hunting Whistle'
Af1902,0718.5	'Smoking Indian hemp cup made of pottery, pigment'
Af1902,0718.4	'Smoking Indian hemp cup made of pottery, pigment'
Af1902,0718.1	'Bark-cloth'
Af1902,0718.16	'Priest's staff, charm made of wood, hide, string (vegetable fibre), shells (cowrie), beads (glass)'
Af1902,0718.15	'Spoon-shaped ritual object, ritual object made of iron, wood'
Af1902,0718.14	'Amulet consisting of a section portion of buffalo horn'
Af1902,0718.10	'Divining artefact (with bell) made of leather, hide, wire (copper), iron'
Af1902,0718.8	'Chair, also used as shield, made of wood, cord (hide)'
Af1902,0718.9.a	'Ankole war bow of pale, hard, not very lustre wood. The tips are sharpened and beat well forward. The bow is quite plain and has no grip'
Af1902,0718.13	'Head band, charm (against spirits and headache) made of string (fibre), leather, shells, wood, wire (copper)'
Af1902,0718.17	'Staff (?), charm (?) made from the twisted branch of a tree. Forked at top; upper section has cover made from bark fibre'

**3.2: Gifts presented to the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge by Apolo Kaggwa in 1903.**

<b>Museum No.</b>	<b>Description from Museum Catalogue</b>
E 1903.467; Z 32771	'A string of large black seeds (and one white cowry shell) used as money before the introduction of the cowry shell. It was one of the armlets of the Royal family'
E 1903.466	'Necklet worn by royal bodyguard when in king's presence'
E 1903.468	'Sanctuary of the Lubare (deity) during campaigns, when visiting a sick person etc'
E 1903.469	'The sanctuary of the Lubare (deity) when required to leave his temple'
E 1903.470	'Small light brown leather covered crescent shaped fetish'
E 1903.471	'Brown leather covered fetish'
E 1903.472	'Conical brown leather covered stopper-shaped fetish on thong of woven rawhide and fur'
E 1903.473	'Fetishes on fibre cord. A loose label on the specimen says, "The Lubare Mukasa's cow charm used to secure protection of Mukasa against lightening striking cattle"'
E 1903.474	'Fetish: globular object encased in hide with a leopard's claw projecting at one end'
E 1903.475	"Conical shaped brown leather covered fetish with furry rawhide cord"
E 1903.476	'Flat oval fetish covered in brown bark cloth with rawhide cord and strips of skin attached'
E 1903.477	'Large oval fetish covered with skin of light brown colour with double plaited fibre cord attached'
E 1903.478	'Fetish: A stick-like object enclosed in plantain leaves and bound round with fibre: globular head'
E 1903.479	'Fetish of elongated shape, swelling bulbously in centre and covered with skin, the fur being outside'
E 1903.480	'Fetish: two similar globular objects encased in hide with a leopard's tooth (or warthog/pigs tusk) projecting from one end of each'
E 1903.480 A	'A fetish consisting of a bundle of sticks, the majority bound with fibre and several with a fibre covered bulbous head'
1920.256/Roscoe	'Official staff of office of the Katikiro, made of smoothed wood decorated with four bands of copper wire and one of brass wire: a small knob at the bottom'

### 3.3 Selection of objects given by Roscoe to the Pitt-Rivers Museum between 1920 and 1922 relating to Nyoro and Ankole kingship

<b>Museum no.</b>	<b>Description in Museum Catalogue</b>
1920.101.36	'Sample of perfumed butter for anointing royal personage. (in a small glass bottle sealed with red wax)'.
1920.101.37 .1-2	'Ox-horn containing butter, in a bark bag, for anointing king'.
1920.101.47	'Annular stand for milk vessel, made of very fine basketry, for royal use, Bunyoro'.
1920.101.52- 3	'Valve of shell from Lake Albert used in the royal enclosure for eating vegetables'.
1920.101.55- 6	'Long, slender two-pronged brass fork for feeding the King ceremonially'.
1920.101.56	'Coloured string-work bag, used by royalty'.
1920.101.57	'Prepared skin of young lion, used for covering the King's throne'.
1920.101.59	'White goat-skin carefully dressed and worn by princes and princesses'.
1920.101.64	'Three large pieces of bark-cloth (one ordinary, one dyed brown and one dyed black. The two latter were for royalty and chiefs'.
1920.101.66	2 armlets of black hair (giraffe?) worn by princesses with two crescentic brass beads
1920.101.69	'String of half-moon shaped copper and brass beads worn by princesses
1920.101.70	Royal neck ornament of blue and yellow trade beads, worn by the King'.
1920.101.74	Brass armlet of the early Kings of Bunyoro. Made from a thin brass strip with a pattern of punch-marks over the entire surface except for a border of an engraved line
1920.101.74	'Royal manicure knife with copper handle'.
1920.101.75	'Royal needle for bleeding on the forehead and for scarifying'.
1920.101.87	'Two Kyisabizo bundles of papyrus strips bound with natural, and red- and blue-dyed fibres to form 'waisted' wands. These are put on the points of the queen's sceptre, pointing east and west, to indicate the position of the sun'.
1920.101.88	'Very small case for coffee-berries used for hanging on the sceptre of a princess'.
1921.9.41	'Two crocodile eggs such as were used to hold the poison potion for the kings of Ankole and Bunyoro when they were about to end their lives'
1921.9.42-8	'Seven royal spears. Stated at the time of collection to be of recent make. The royal spears (which had to remain upright) were carried at various ceremonies and would represent the king in his absence. One was placed by the throne at night'.
1921.9.51	'King's circular hide shield worn with the lion-skin mantle'.
1921.9.53-4	'Lion skin and <i>Busitama</i> (royal sword) used by King Kabalega. Collected on a former expedition. It should have a strip of

	leopard skin to add to its dignity. Worn on the right shoulder by a page in attendance on the king and concealed by a lion skin. Should someone offend him whilst in the royal enclosure, or he required silence in court, the king held out his hand and the page placed the sword in it, for him to deal with the matter’.
1921.9.55.1	‘Royal sceptre ( <i>oruhoso</i> ). Two-pronged iron rod which stood before the throne of the queen (the <i>kalyota</i> ) who is the king's official sister (actually a half-sister) and head of the bito 'princesses'. The king passed through the queen's throne room to meet with his chiefs’.
1921.9.63	‘Royal meat and vegetable dish of wood supported by eight pairs of legs on a base. The bowl has been stained a reddish colour (with a type of Bauhinia root) and has characteristic carved decoration round the rim, indicative of royal use. This, together with the legs and base are burned black with a hot iron. Such bowls were found among all the tribes associated with Bunyoro-Kitara and, it is said, were presented to chiefs who owed allegiance to the kingdom. The number of legs varied from two pairs to nine (the Nyoro sacred number) according to the size and importance of the bowl. Legged bowls were only used by chiefs, that with eight pairs being used by the king of Bunyoro. The king had his own carpenter ( <i>ababajja</i> ) who made his drums, milk pots and meat bowls’. See also 1920.101.48–51 and 1921.9L64
1921.9.66	‘Throne ( <i>nyamyalo</i> ) of King Kabarega used in Samuel Baker’s time. Large, eight legged wooden stool. This stood on an earthen platform about two foot high, at the back of the throne room (part of the court house - the principal construction within the royal enclosure). Skins would be arranged by a male attendant. As the throne could not be left unattended, two of the king’s wives stayed with it and slept by it at night’.
1921.9.68	‘Mat ( <i>mukaito</i> ) on which the king walked between various parts of the royal enclosure’.
1921.9.70	‘Very old large black pottery beer pot made and used by the mother of Kabarega’.
1921.9.75–6	‘Sacred wooden milk pots ( <i>kisahi</i> ) with lids. These were used on ceremonial occasions such as at the birth of a child and at weddings and funerals, as well as on the occasion of bestowing a crown on a new member of the sacred order (the <i>bajwara kondo</i> )’.
1921.9.79.1–2	‘Royal beer pot for rites of passage ceremonies and informal parties’.
1921.9.96–7	‘Princess’s belt of string work with v-shaped pattern collected on a former expedition, and necklace of red glass European beads and he tail hair of a giraffe or an elephant’.
1921.9.201–210	‘Objects relating to twin birth ceremony: basketry trays, crown, bark cloth, gourd ladle’.
1922.38.1	‘Royal crown ( <i>ekondo/Muhundi</i> ) of coiled basketry covered outside with bead-work decoration, and with a false beard of white cow hair attached, worn by the king. Covered with red, white and blue glass beads, with a beadwork chin-strap and a beard of colobus-monkey hair’.

1921.9.101-3	'Royal drums carried before the king on his daily round of office. Other musical instruments including flutes and bugles relating to the new moon ceremony include 1921.9.104-106'.
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## Bibliography

### OBJECT COLLECTIONS

#### British Museum, London

Af,+8266.A– Af,+8361	J.P. Hearne Collection
Af+994a–Af4423	Isma'il Pasha Collection
Af.3928–Af.5853	William Wareham Collection
Af1894,1121.1–425	Sir Harry Johnston Collection
Af1896,1224.1–33	Rev John Roscoe Collection
Af1902,0718.1–31	Sir Apolo Kagwa Collection
Af1904,1210.1–394	Col Charles-Delmé Radcliffe Collection
Af1908,0723.1–429	Sir Alfred Claud Hollis Collection
Af1947,16.1–548	Charles William Hobley Collection
Af1983,31.1–76	Rev and Mrs A.B. Fisher Collection

#### Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

E 1903.466-480A	Sir Apolo Kagwa Collection
E 1903.466–1947.2322.A	Rev John Roscoe Collection

#### National Museums of Kenya, Nairobi

NMK1886.1–1906.300	Frederick Jackson Collection
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#### National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh

1908.306.1–72.1	Dr R.W. Felkin Collection
A.1901.521.1–52	Harry Johnston Collection

**Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford**

1920.101.1–1921.9.10      Rev John Roscoe Collection

1966.1.1–1335              Frederick Jackson Collection

**Royal Collection Trust, Windsor**

RCIN 69353–69656          Uganda Collection

**Royal Geographical Society, London**

RGS700081                  Duplicate of the throne presented in 1891 to Mwanga by  
the Imperial British East Africa Company

**Science Museum, London**

A623612                      Dr R. W. Felkin Collection

A51263–A669210          Rev John Roscoe Collection

**Uganda Museum, Kampala**

E.56                          Wellcome Collection

## **ARCHIVAL SOURCES (Archives, Libraries, Museums)**

### **British Library, London**

- Add 78720                      Hesketh Bell Papers
- EAP656                          History in Progress Uganda, Part 1: The Ham Mukasa  
Archive (Endangered Archives Collections)

### **British Museum, Anthropology Library Archive, London**

- Af,A45.1-84                      Charles William Hobley Photograph Collection
- H-K 947                          Letters from Frances Hobley to Hermann Justus  
Braunholtz
- Ethdoc 4                          Letter John Roscoe, Kampala, to T A Joyce, 22 Dec.  
1908
- Ethdoc 21                          Letter from Charles William Hobley to Hermann Justus  
Braunholtz
- Add SS 17AOA                      A.W. Franks Notebooks (fols., 1-6), Christy  
Correspondence

### **British Museum, British, European and Prehistory Archive, London**

Letters in and out,1901–1908

### **British Museum Central Archive, London**

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