INTRODUCTION

The 1870s, 1880s and 1890s were the time of a great flowering of European invented tradition – ecclesiastical, educational, military, republican, monarchical. They were also the time of the European rush into Africa. There were many and complex connections between the two processes. The concept of Empire was central to the process of inventing tradition within Europe itself, but the African empires came so late in the day that they demonstrate the effects rather than the causes of European invented tradition. Deployed in Africa, however, the new traditions took on a peculiar character, distinguishing them from both their European and Asian Imperial forms.

By contrast to India many parts of Africa became colonies of white settlement. This meant that the settlers had to define themselves as natural and undisputed masters of vast numbers of Africans. They drew upon European invented traditions both to define and to justify their roles, and also to provide models of subservience into which it was sometimes possible to draw Africans. In Africa, therefore, the whole apparatus of invented school and professional and regimental traditions became much more starkly a matter of command and control than it was within Europe itself. Moreover, in Europe these invented traditions of the new ruling classes were to some extent balanced by the invented traditions of industrial workers or by the invented ‘folk’ cultures of peasants. In Africa, no white agriculturalist saw himself as a peasant. White workers in the mines of southern Africa certainly drew upon the invented rituals of European craft unionism but they did so partly because they were rituals of exclusiveness and could be used to prevent Africans being defined as workers.

By contrast to India, once again, Africa did not offer to its conquerors the framework of an indigenous imperial state nor existing centralized rituals of honour and degree. Ready connections
between African and European systems of governance could only be made at the level of the monarchy; Africa possessed, so the colonisers thought, dozens of rudimentary kings. Hence in Africa the British made an even greater use of the idea of 'Imperial Monarchy' than they did within Britain or India. The 'theology' of an omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent monarchy became almost the sole ingredient of imperial ideology as it was presented to Africans. For the Germans, too, the Kaiser stood as the dominant symbol of German rule. The French had the more difficult task of incorporating Africans into a republican tradition.

But serviceable as the monarchical ideology was to the British, it was not enough in itself to provide the theory or justify the structures of colonial governance on the spot. Since so few connections could be made between British and African political, social and legal systems, British administrators set about inventing African traditions for Africans. Their own respect for 'tradition' disposed them to look with favour upon what they took to be traditional in Africa. They set about to codify and promulgate these traditions, thereby transforming flexible custom into hard prescription.

All this is part of the history of European ideas, but it is also very much part of the history of modern Africa. These complex processes have to be understood before a historian can arrive at any understanding of the particularity of Africa before colonialism; many African scholars as well as many European Africanists have found it difficult to free themselves from the false models of colonial codified African 'tradition'. However, the study of these processes is not only a part of historiography but of history. The invented traditions imported from Europe not only provided whites with models of command but also offered many Africans models of 'modern' behaviour. The invented traditions of African societies - whether invented by the Europeans or by Africans themselves in response - distorted the past but became in themselves realities through which a good deal of colonial encounter was expressed.

EUROPEAN INVENTED TRADITION AND THE AFRICAN EMPIRE

The traditions which were invented in Europe in the nineteenth century were very unevenly carried into Africa. In the 1880s and 1890s many whites were arriving in southern Africa from Europe,
Canada and Australia to work in the mines; very many Africans were being drawn into the labour migrant network. But European proletarian or artisanal invented traditions were not available to fit African workers into their place in the labour hierarchy, still less to help them define themselves as artisans or workers. Instead, the revived and invented rituals of craft unionism were used by white workers to exclude Africans from participation. Elaine Katz in her study of white trade unionism in South Africa shows how the white miners claimed craft status. Dominated by British and Australian miners, their union was ‘organized on the basis of an exclusive membership restricted to white underground miners in possession of a blasting certificate’. Union leaders urged an often lethargic membership to follow the Craft Banner and the brass band in Labour Day processions – rituals of worker solidarity which in that context proclaimed élite status. As John X. Merriman, prime minister of Cape Colony, remarked in 1908, white workmen who had been regarded in Europe as the ‘lower classes’ were ‘delighted on arrival here to find themselves in a position of an aristocracy of colour’.1

An extensive recent literature has shown that in the 1880s and 1890s Africans throughout East, Central and southern Africa were becoming peasants, their agricultural surplus expropriated through unequal terms of trade, tax or rent and their subordinate role in a shared cultural system defined by mission Christianity.2 But there was little opportunity for African peasants to borrow from the invented traditions by which European peasants had sought to defend themselves against the intrusions of capitalism. Almost everywhere in Africa white agriculturalists saw themselves not as peasants but as gentlemen farmers. Only through some of the mission churches did European peasant formulations reach Africans, and only then in transformed shape.

The closest thing to a peasant missionary church was the Basel Mission. The product of Württemberg pietism, the Basel missionaries carried with them to Africa a model of rural society derived from their defence of pre-industrial German peasant life. They proclaimed, against the threat of the industrial town, an ideal ‘Christian model village’, a reconstituted rural ‘tradition’ based on ‘the pre-industrial

combination of crafts making use of natural products, [and] the extended family'. They stood for 'a social and economic setting "traditional" in the sense that there was direct relationship between local food production and local food supplies'. The original impulse of their entry into Africa was the desire to find free land to which German peasant communities could escape. In their approach to Africans they were 'a mission from the village to the village'. In Germany itself the pietist model only imperfectly reflected a past that had been much less organic and coherent. In Africa there had not existed 'villages' of this size or stability. The Basel Mission villages, so far from offering African cultivators a means of protecting their values, operated rather as mechanisms of authoritarian European control and of economic innovation.3

Few other mission churches expressed so clearly European peasant aspirations. But many carried with them features which had been produced through European ecclesiastical responses to peasant aspiration. Thus the Church of England had responded to the tensions of an increasingly class-based rural society by developing rituals of 'traditional' community, and now it introduced these harvest festivals and rogation-tide processions through the fields into Africa.4 The Roman Catholic Church had responded to the anarchic proliferation of local peasant shrines, cults and pilgrimages by authorizing a popular Marian veneration, and centralizing it at a few shrines to which the flow of pilgrims was directed.5 Now into Africa were introduced replicas of Fatima and Lourdes. Such centralization of ritual and cult, introduced before there was any African popular Christianity for them to respond to, acted rather to circumscribe than to stimulate African peasant imagination.

It was not the invented traditions of European workers and peasants, but those of gentlemen and professional men which were most important to whites in Africa, and which had the greatest impact upon blacks. There were two main reasons for the importance of these neo-traditions. By the 1880s and 1890s there was a surplus

of neo-traditional capital in Europe waiting to be invested overseas. Production of men for service in the extended governing class of industrial democracy had been almost too successful. Younger sons, well-born orphans, the sons of the clergy had experienced the ‘traditions’ of the public school, the regiment, the university, but were not guaranteed secure advancement in British administrative hierarchies. Such men were deployed in Africa as soldiers, hunters, traders, store-keepers, concession-seekers, policemen, missionaries. Very often they found themselves engaged in tasks which by definition would have been menial in Britain and which only the glamour of empire building made acceptable; the emphasis which they placed on their neo-traditional title to gentility became more intense.

The second reason was that there was a desperate need in the last decades of the nineteenth century to make European activity in Africa more respectable and ordered. While life was being restructured in Britain itself, with the rise of the bureaucracy and of the service traditions in school, army, church and even commerce, most European activity in tropical Africa, whether official or unofficial, had remained tatty, squalid, rough and inefficient. With the coming of formal colonial rule it was urgently necessary to turn the whites into a convincing ruling class, entitled to hold sway over their subjects not only through force of arms or finance but also through the prescriptive status bestowed by neo-tradition.

Steps were therefore taken to ensure that the military and administrative services in Africa were related to the dominant traditions. Much use was made in the early period of colonial administration of officers of the newly efficient and honourable British army. Lugard relied upon them for ‘gentlemanly’ administrators in Nigeria. In 1902 Lady Lugard, writing from Lokoja on the Niger, was able to describe a veritable festival of neo-tradition. To celebrate Coronation Day – the day of the first elaborate ‘traditional’ coronation:

we had the table patriotically decorated with roses... and we drank the King’s health, with the band playing ‘God Save the King’, and a black crowd of servants and others clustering round the open windows ejaculating, ‘Good King! Good King!’ I was myself struck with the thought as I looked down the table and noted the fine type of English gentleman’s face which presented itself in rows on either side, that it really is a phenomenon of our Empire that we should be able in the heart of Africa to bring together for dinner
twenty well-bred English officers of as fine a type as you would
hope to meet in the most civilised centres of London.\(^6\)

Meanwhile the educational system of England began to turn out
civilian colonial administrators. The headmaster of Harrow declared
that

an English headmaster, as he looks to the future of his pupils, will
not forget that they are destined to be the citizens of the greatest
empire under heaven; he will teach them patriotism... He will
inspire them with faith in the divinely ordained mission of their
country and their race.\(^7\)

The recruiters for the colonial service testified to the success of these
endeavours. 'As to the Public Schools', wrote Sir Ralph Furse, one
of the chief architects of the colonial service,

they are vital. We could not have run the show without them. In
England universities train the mind; the Public Schools train
character and teach leadership.\(^8\)

But the universities too came to play their part, and soon
the District Commissioner had to be a man of many parts. To
qualify for appointment to the administrative branch of the
Colonial Service he had to hold an honours degree in Arts from a
recognised university... It helped the applicant's cause if, in
addition to a good degree, he had some kind of athletic record.\(^9\)

All this produced administrators who ran their districts like lordly
prefects, inventing their own little traditions to keep the fags on their
toes. 'D was in the habit', we are told of the district commissioner
of Tunduru in southern Tanganyika,

of going for a long walk every evening, wearing a hat. When,
towards sunset, he came to the point of turning for home he would
hang his hat on a convenient tree and proceed on his way hatless.
The first African who passed that way after him and saw the hat
was expected to bring it to D's house and hand it over to his
servants, even if he was going in the opposite direction with a long
journey ahead of him. If he ignored the hat he would be haunted
by the fear that D's intelligence system would catch up with him.\(^10\)

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\(^7\) Cited by Cynthia Behrman, 'The Mythology of British Imperialism, 1890–1914'

\(^8\) Sir Ralph Furse, quoted by R. Heussler, *Yesterday's Rulers: The Making of the
British Colonial Service* (London, 1963), p. 82; see also, D. C. Coleman,

\(^9\) E. K. Lumley, *Forgotten Mandate: A British District Officer in Tanganyika*

\(^10\) Ibid., p. 55.
But it was not enough in itself to ensure the gentility of soldiers and administrators in Africa. There was also a need to believe that many of the white settlers were also actually or potentially inheritors of the neo-traditions of governance. In the end some settler communities were successful enough to set up in Africa itself replicas of the schools whose traditions validated the British governing class. Thus in 1927 a plan was discussed with Eton College to found the ‘Kenya Public School’, under the joint auspices of Winchester and Eton, with reciprocal staffing arrangements and scholarships for the children of poorer white parents. After a trip to Britain to test support for the project, the Director of Education decided to ask ‘all the leading public schools to present us with pictures of their school buildings so that the boys may be constantly reminded of the great schools at home and old boys visiting the school may likewise remember their Alma Mater’.

As a finishing touch the school was to be named after King George V, ‘as a reminder to the backward races of their participation in the Empire’. But to begin with the transformation was brought about mainly by a complex system of reformulations which affected the way in which white men in Africa were regarded and the way in which they regarded themselves.

This process operated in two ways. The fact that the surplus of neo-traditional capital was being invested in Africa, combined with the fortune-hunting involvement of members of high society, made it possible for commentators to stress the gentlemanly element among white settlers, and to suggest that the colonial experience in itself fitted the rest to acquire gentility. Lord Bryce was struck ‘by the large proportion of well-mannered and well-educated men whom one came across’ in the ‘tropical wilderness’ of Rhodesia in the mid-1890s, and added that the colonial experience fostered ‘personality developing itself under simple yet severe conditions, fitted to bring out the real force of a man’. In such circumstance Bryce was prepared to condone the rather vulgar neo-traditional enthusiasms which he himself deplored in England. He was much struck by white southern African enthusiasm for cricket, ‘the national game’.

Even one who thinks that in England the passion for athletic sports has gone beyond all reasonable limits, and has become a serious injury to education and to the taste for intellectual pleasures, may

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find in the character of the climate a justification for devotion to cricket... Our countrymen are not to be scared by the sun from the pursuit of the national game. They are as much Englishmen in Africa as in England.\textsuperscript{12}

Alongside this process of affirming and making gentility there ran another – a redefinition of occupations, so that it became gentlemanly to be a store-keeper or a prospector. Young gentleman who migrated to Rhodesia or to Kenya may have dreamt of one day establishing a landed estate, but in the early days running a farm store and buying African agricultural produce was far more profitable than trying to grow crops oneself. It was in any case assumed that English-speaking 'farmers' would be gentleman farmers, not working the land themselves, but drawing on their neo-traditional powers of command in order to manage labour. So to begin with they relied on African – or Afrikaner – knowledge of the land and creamed off the surplus of African peasant producers through trade. By so doing they performed a vital function since the labour forces of the early colonial economies depended entirely on African produced food. Hence, for a time, it was gentlemanly to run a store or to buy grain and cattle from Africans.\textsuperscript{13} Lord Bryce found 'cultivated and thoughtful minds' in young white store-keepers in Rhodesia in 1896, or in prospectors searching for gold. The atmosphere of these early days – and the buoyancy of the neo-traditions of gentility – emerges strikingly from Colin Harding's autobiography. Harding grew up as the son of the lord of Montacute House, a young man whose main concern was with the heroics of the hunting field. But

\begin{itemize}
\item the death of my father revealed the unwelcome fact that neither myself nor other members of my family was as opulent as expected... Neither I nor my brothers had any profession, nor yet the means to qualify for one.
\end{itemize}

Still, 'hunting teaches a man a lot'. Harding arrived in Bulawayo in 1894 to find that 'farming was a washout' and 'men like myself were a drug on the market'. 'Experienced and reliable storekeepers', however, 'could command almost any wage they desired'. But the young gentleman did not go under. Harding set out with an old friend from the hunting field to prospect for gold. Soon he found himself


\textsuperscript{13} For the reliance of Rhodesian whites on African food production, see Palmer, 'The Agricultural History of Southern Rhodesia', in Palmer and Parsons (eds.), \textit{The Roots of Rural Poverty}. 
set to dig a mine shaft. 'It was useless for me to remind my friend that I knew little or nothing about sinking a shaft, for he shut me up with the observation that digging out gold was much the same as digging out a fox.' Soon Harding was in the British South Africa Police and on his way to a properly gentlemanly administrative career.  

Fairly soon conditions in Rhodesia and Kenya developed towards a more securely gentlemanly society. Asians and Greeks and Jews took over the task of store-keepers and 'kaffir-traders'; political action deliberately undercut African peasant production and put labour at the disposal of the gentleman farmer. M. G. Redley thus describes the nature of Kenyan white society just after the first world war.

The main source of British immigrants with capital after the war was what has been called the 'new upper middle class'. Family wealth derived from enterprise in manufacturing, commerce and the professions had blurred the class distinctions of Victorian society. Public school education had provided the basis for those who could lay no direct claim to gentility common with those who could. The background to post-war settlers owed much more to the mill and the factory owner's mansion, the rural rectory and the Indian Army officers' mess than to aristocratic lineage...However, gentility was a way of life with which they felt a close identity and in which they took an obsessive interest...The upper middle class complexion of European settlement was its greatest recommendation for those who felt their status and individuality threatened in British society.

Redley describes how neo-traditions functioned to hold together the small and dispersed white rural society. Team games brought neighbours together regularly in an approved and structured way. They also allowed for symbolic expressions of protest in an idiom familiar to both settlers and administrators. Redley describes a 'fancy-dress charity football match' in Nairobi in 1907 patronized by the governor, which was disrupted by leading settlers dressed as colonial officials with rows of medals made of tin lids and red tape who pegged out quarantine, forest, native and game reserves until the entire pitch was 'out of bounds'.

On the other hand, every project to increase the numbers of the white settler population by bringing in thousands of small yeomen or artisans foundered on the determination of those who controlled Kenyan society to keep it in the hands of ‘the public school educated with a patrimony, a military pension, investment income or an assurance of family support’.

**BRINGING AFRICANS INTO THE TRADITIONS OF GOVERNANCE**

The radical Kenyan journalist, J. K. Robertson, was savagely critical of Kenyan whites because he believed them to obstruct productive industry. He created a fictional settler career history to make his point.

John Smith, a London warehouse clerk, finds a clerking job in a certain office in British East Africa. John Smithers-Smith laboriously pores over books and ledgers. 'Tis the same John, only more so... He has realized the value of a double-barrelled name... John goes the pace. It is the custom of the country. He seldom pays his bills... He lives on chits and the wonderful stories of the blue blood of his ancestors. John is quite an institution in the land [and] insinuates himself into the very heart of Nairobi society.17

More generally, the strength of European invented traditions of governance in colonial Africa helped to produce soldiers and administrators and settlers dedicated to the 'feudal–patriarchal' ethic rather than to the 'capitalist–transformative' one.

But in many ways this is very misleading. The invented traditions of nineteenth-century Britain were a way of running an immensely complex industrial society, a way of managing and accommodating change. In Africa, too, whites drew on invented tradition in order to derive the authority and confidence that allowed them to act as agents of change. Moreover, insofar as they were consciously applied to Africans, the invented traditions of nineteenth-century Europe were seen precisely as agencies of 'modernization'.

There were two very direct ways in which Europeans sought to make use of their invented traditions to transform and modernize African thought and conduct. One was the acceptance of the idea that some Africans could become members of the governing class of colonial Africa, and hence the extension to such Africans of training

in a neo-traditional context. The second—and more common—was an attempt to make use of what European invented traditions had to offer in terms of a redefined relationship between leader and led. The regimental tradition, after all, defined the roles of both officers and men; the great-house tradition of rural gentility defined the roles of both masters and servants; the public school tradition defined the roles of both prefects and fags. All this might be made use of to create a clearly defined hierarchical society in which Europeans commanded and Africans accepted commands, but both within a shared framework of pride and loyalty. Thus if the traditions which workers and peasants had made for themselves in Europe did not exercise much influence on Africans under colonialism, invented European traditions of subordination exercised a very considerable influence indeed.

The best illustration of the first idea—that some Africans might be turned into governors by exposure to British neo-tradition—is perhaps the famous school, King’s College, Budo, in Uganda. The fullest account is by G. P. McGregor, who perceptively points out that the provision of elementary education was only just being taken seriously in Britain itself in the 1870s as part of the process of bringing the majority of the population to its place in the vocational and educational hierarchy. Hence the spread of elementary schools in Buganda at the end of the nineteenth century was a remarkably little-delayed extension of the same process to the African empire. But in Buganda, while this sort of education seemed appropriate enough to the peasant cultivator majority, the Anglican missionaries did not feel that it was suitable for the Ganda aristocracy.

So far little or nothing had been done for the children of the upper classes [wrote Bishop Tucker], who in many respects were worse off than the children of the peasants. We felt strongly that if the ruling classes of the country were to exercise in the days to come an influence for good upon their people and to have a sense of responsibility towards them, it was essential that something should be done for the education of these neglected children, on the soundest possible lines...by the discipline of work and games in a boarding school so as to build character as to enable the Baganda to take their proper place in the administrative, commercial and industrial life of their own country.  

In short, in Buganda the missionaries aimed to place on top of

British-style elementary education a structure of British-style secondary education of a neo-traditional kind. They were always clear that their aim was 'the adaptation of our English Public School method to the African scene'. They succeeded to an extraordinary extent King's College was built on the Coronation Hill of the Baganda kings, so that both Coronation Services of this century have been held 'in the college chapel; 'though some of the traditional ceremonies were observed', the service 'followed many of the features of the English coronation service'.10 The English Public School house spirit [was] quickly established', and the Gandan members of Turkey House petitioned that its name be changed to Canada House so as to go with England House, South Africa House and Australia House – Turkey seemed 'distinctly unimperial'. The school motto, again said to have been chosen at the request of the pupils, was a Gandan version of Cecil Rhodes's dying words, 'So little done – so much to do.'

McGregor quotes a letter from a Gandan pupil written in the first year of the school's existence, which enables us to see this remarkable process of socialization through Gandan eyes.

First in the mornings when we have got up we arrange properly our beds. If you do not arrange it properly there is judgement or rebuke when the Europeans make a visit . . . On the front of our cups there is the likeness of a lion. That it is by which the scholars of Budo may be known. And no-one may eat any thing in the cubicle, nor coffee which they chew, but only in the verandah where food is eaten. We sing one hymn and pray and then we learn English . . . When we come out at four, we go and play football, on one side eleven and on the other side eleven, and we arrange every man in his place, goal-keeper and back men and ba-half-back and ba-forward.20

Everyone agreed that Budo had managed to create that intangible thing, 'the spirit of the school'. It was present at Budo at its best, as we have breathed it in England after generations of experiment – the spirit of the team, of discipline, of local patriotism – and very remarkable has been the translation of it into the heart of Africa.

Sir Phillip Mitchell thought that Budo was 'one of the few places here which has a soul'. Expatriate teachers later came to criticize 'the

10 Ibid., pp. 35–6.

20 Ibid., pp. 17–18.
Budonian habit of defending worthless traditions merely on the grounds that they have always been there'.

Whatever the tensions of doing so within the imperial framework which so firmly subordinated the Gandan ruling class to British administrative officers, and the Gandan monarchy to the imperial crown, there is no doubt that the missionaries created at Budo a successful complex of new traditions, which worked themselves out parallel to an increasing ceremonialism of the role of the Kabaka and the other Ugandan kings so as to achieve a synthesis not unlike that accomplished in nineteenth-century England. The Golden Jubilee ceremonies of the college – 'We had four Kings at the high table' – were also a ritual expression of the commitment of a large section of the Gandan ruling class to these by now hallowed invented traditions. But the Budo experiment was not to become a general model; the British themselves came to regret their original alliance with the Ganda chiefs, and to believe that real modernizing change could not be brought about through their agency. Real modernizing change would be the product of European commanders loyally supported by African subordinates.

Various traditions of subordination were available. One was the tradition of the hierarchy of the great house. Part of the self-image of the European in Africa was his prescriptive right to have black servants – at the height of the labour crisis in the South African mines, there were more black men employed in Johannesburg as domestic servants than as mine workers. In 1914 Frank Weston, bishop of Zanzibar, contrasted Islamic community in Africa with Christian differentiation. The African Christian, he wrote, has nothing to adhere to but ' a few Europeans who pass him in the street; he is beneath them; they may be kind to him; he may perhaps be a steward in their dining room, or a butler... but Brotherhood? Well, it is not yet'. There was no impulse towards 'Brotherhood' in colonial Africa. For most Europeans the favoured image of their relationship with Africans was that of paternal master and loyal servant. It was an image readily transferred to industrial employment. Throughout southern Africa, African employees were not defined as

21 Ibid., pp. 54, 117, 124.
22 Ibid., p. 136.
workers but instead controlled and disciplined under the terms of Masters and Servants Acts.

Few whites in Africa, however, maintained domestic establishments of a size which would have allowed the full ‘traditional’ panoply of the British servant hierarchy. A more elaborate application of European neo-traditions of subordination came with the restructuring of African armies. In Sylvanus Cookey’s fascinating account of this process, the French emerge as the first and most imaginative manipulators of the military invented tradition. Faideherbe in the 1850s disbanded his demoralized pressed levies and attracted African volunteers with ‘seduisant’ uniforms, modern arms, Koranic oaths of allegiance and crash courses in the military glory of the French tradition.

It was even suggested from Paris, as a means of instilling at an early age a sense of the military mode in the young Africans and preparing them for a military career, that the children of the tirailleurs should be provided uniforms and miniature equipment similar to those of their parents.26

The British were slower to follow such a policy. But in the face of the French threat they also moved to regularize their African regiments. Lugard devoted his meticulous passion for detail to the transformation of his Nigerian levies from a ‘rabble’ to a disciplined and effective fighting force. Soon he came to esteem them highly; official praise was lavished on them for their conduct in campaigns in the Gold Coast and northern Nigeria; a regimental tradition was being built up as rapidly as the spirit of Budo. Lugard’s administration was largely staffed by army officers; in East Africa, too, ‘governments were largely military in character during these early years’, and Professor George Shepperson has commented on

the narrowness of the line between the civilian and the military... It was through its forces as much as its missions that European culture was brought to the indigenous inhabitants of British Central Africa.26

This kind of admittance of Africans into the European military tradition had both the same ambiguities and the same degree of success as did the operation of the spirit of Budo. Sometimes the two

forms of socialization came together, as in the case of Kabaka Edward Mutesa. Mutesa became Kabaka while still a schoolboy at Budo, and remained there to complete his studies; his coronation was solemnized in the school chapel; he led the Golden Jubilee procession. But he was also admitted into the regimental tradition of the British army.

He joined the Cambridge Officers’ Corps soon after arrival at the University and became an officer... He then formally applied to join the army, specifying the Grenadier Guards as his first choice... It was King George VI who, as a personal gesture of good-will, suggested that Mutesa be made a captain. Mutesa went to Buckingham Palace for the ceremony.27

Ali Mazrui remarks that the Kabakaship had become ‘an Anglo-African institution’, a fact brought out by nothing so clearly as in the ceremonies which attended Mutesa’s death. He was given two funerals – one in London and one in Kampala, both marked by full military honours.

There had been a last post in the first burial of Mutesa in London in 1969. On that occasion the military component of the burial was handled by the British Grenadier Guards. Now [in Kampala] the Grenadier Guards were only part of the ceremony. The bulk of the military component was the Ugandan army. And yet the universe of discourse between that trumpet in London in 1969 and the trumpet in the Kasubi tombs in Uganda in 1971, was indeed a shared universe.28

But the acceptance of Mutesa into the officer ranks was a rare exception. Much more general was the production of men like Mutesa’s successor as president of Uganda, Idi Amin. Mazrui argues that the rise of Amin and his ‘lumpen-militariat’ can be seen as a revival of pre-colonial military traditions, in abeyance since the colonial conquest. But in fact, Amin’s career provides us with an excellent example of socialization through the colonial army. As Mazrui tells us, when Amin was recruited into the King’s African Rifles in 1946, he showed

all the signs of colonial conditioning into dependency... Within seven years he was promoted to lance corporal and was displaying the qualities which so endeared him to his British superiors – instant

28 Ibid., pp. 177, 190, 191.
obedience, fierce regimental pride, reverence towards Britain and
the British, a uniform which crackled with razor sharp starched
creases and boots with toe-caps like black mirrors.²⁹

Black mirrors of English privates and non-commissioned officers
were precisely what African soldiers were intended to be. As Keegan
has shown, European armies had drawn freely on the dress and
romantic aura of the 'warrior' races they encountered. They do not
seem to have done this in Africa, nor as a result of their military
encounters with Africans. It was left to Baden-Powell, a critic of the
drill-square mentality, to draw on Matabele scouting abilities so as
to provide white youth with a flexible training, richly situated in
Kiplingesque myths of the jungle. For a long while southern Africa
presented the paradox of young Africans being trained into regimental
rigidities and young whites being trained in bush-craft.³⁰

Admittance of Africans into what were intended as replicas of the
neo-traditions of Britain did not end with butlering or with schools
like Budo or with recruitment into the army. Bishop Weston's
hypothetical African Christian, in search of Brotherhood, might if
he were very fortunate 'conceivably learn to be a typist',³¹ and many
mission-educated Africans were taken into the lower ranks of the
bureaucratic hierarchy. African clerks came to value the rubber
stamp and the row of pens in the breast pocket; African dance
societies made use of purloined rubber stamps to authenticate their
correspondence with each other, and danced in full bureaucratic as
well as military array.³² Graham Greene's madman on the river boat,
with his sheaves of papers and his constant scribbling of minutes as
he strove to set an uncaring world to rights, was a tribute paid to
the imaginative power - if also a dramatization of the impotence - of
the forms of colonial bureaucracy. And, of course, the African
Christians, who were taken up as clergy into the imperfect brother-
hood of the Christian churches themselves, were trained to perform
the invented and re-invented rituals of nineteenth-century European
ecclesiology.

There was a rough periodization in all this. European invented
traditions were important for Africans in a series of overlapping

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 206-7.
³⁰ For a discussion of the ambiguities of setting up Boy Scout troops in Africa and
then seeking to exclude Africans from them, see Terence Ranger, 'Making
Northern Rhodesia Imperial: Variations on a Royal Theme, 1924-1938', African
Affairs, lxxix, no. 316 (July 1980).
phases. The military neo-tradition, with its clearly visible demarcations of hierarchy and its obvious centrality to the workings of early colonialism, was the first powerful influence. Its impact reached a climax – particularly in eastern Africa – with the campaigns of the first world war. Thereafter, especially in British Africa, the military presence declined.\textsuperscript{33} The military mode became less influential than the modes of missionary employment or the bureaucratic build-up of Africans in state and business employment. But the debate over the sequence of influence or the debate over which neo-tradition was in the end most influential – a debate that sways to and fro as African kings, surrounded by neo-traditional trappings, dominate some new African states; as bureaucratic élites triumph in others; and Mazrui’s ‘lumpen-militariat’ control yet others – is less important in the end than an assessment of the overall effect of these processes of neo-traditional socialization.

This was surely very large indeed. European invented traditions offered Africans a series of clearly defined points of entry into the colonial world, though in almost all cases it was entry into the subordinate part of a man/master relationship. They began by socializing Africans into acceptance of one or other readily available European neo-traditional modes of conduct – the historical literature is full of Africans proud of having mastered the business of being a member of a regiment or having learnt how to be an effective practitioner of the ritual of nineteenth-century Anglicanism. The process often ended with serious challenges to the colonial power, often couched in terms of the socializing neo-traditions themselves. (The boys at Budo moved from loyal celebration of the ‘modernized’ coronation ceremony of Edward Mutesa to riot and protest because the Kabaka was not treated by the authorities as though he was a ‘proper’ king.) This is a pattern worked out by Martin Channock for the school-teacher traditionalists of Nyasaland, and in greater detail by John Iliffe for Tanganyika.\textsuperscript{34} In its varying forms it underlay a good deal of what we call nationalism. It is distressing, but not in the least surprising, that Kenneth Kaunda in his search for a personal ideology to help him on the road to national leadership found solace and inspiration in Arthur Mee’s Books for Boys.\textsuperscript{35}


\textsuperscript{34} Martin Channock, ‘Ambiguities in the Malawian Political Tradition’, \textit{African Affairs}, lxxiv, no. 296 (July 1975); John Iliffe, \textit{A Modern History of Tanganyika} (Cambridge, 1979).

If we return for a moment to the question of ‘modernization’ through the use of European invented traditions, both their advantages and their limitations to the colonisers become plain. They did serve to separate out Africans into relatively specialized categories – the askari, the teacher, the servant and so on – and to provide a rudimentary professionalization of African workers. Embedded in the neo-traditions of governance and subordination, there were very clear-cut requirements for the observance of industrial time and work discipline – the neatly, even fanatically, prescribed segments of the schoolboys’ day at Budo; the drill square as source and symbol of discipline and punctuality. On the other hand, the invented traditions which were introduced to Africans were those of governance rather than of production. Industrial workers may have been categorized as ‘servants’, but for a very long time the true domestic servant commanded a much greater prestige and could manipulate the reciprocities contained in the master/servant relationship from which the industrial worker was cut off. Industrial workers and peasants never had access to the clear-cut and prestigious ceremonials of the soldier, the teacher, the clerk – except insofar as they assumed them for themselves in the costumes of carnival or competitive dance. And as we have seen, where craft union traditions did exist Africans were specifically excluded from them. African industrial workers were left to work out for themselves a consciousness and mode of behaviour appropriate to their condition.

This was one of the many reasons for the relatively high prestige among Africans in colonial Africa of non-productive employment. And at the same time, if the new traditions of subordination had begun ‘usefully’ to define certain sorts of specializations, they gave rise later to profoundly conservative conceptualizations of these specializations, making African teachers, ministers and soldiers notoriously resistant to subsequent attempts at modernizing change.

36 Ranger, Dance and Society in Eastern Africa.
NEW TRADITIONS OF MONARCHY IN COLONIAL AFRICA

Colonial governments in Africa did not wish to rule by a constant exercise of military force and they needed a wider range of collaborators than those Africans who were brought into the neo-traditions of subordination. In particular, they needed to collaborate with chiefs, headmen and elders in the rural areas. This collaboration was in essence a very practical affair of exchanged benefits. But the colonial rulers felt the need for a shared ideology of Empire which could embrace whites and blacks alike, dignify the practicalities of collaboration and justify white rule. The British and the Germans found this in the concept of Imperial Monarchy.

In German East Africa the notion of the centrality of monarchy had two aspects. On the one hand, the Germans believed that Africans themselves had a rudimentary idea of kingship and especially in the first stages of interaction with African rulers they were prepared to play up to African assertions of kingliness and to decorate them with some of the stage props of nineteenth-century European ceremonial drama. Thus a German officer reported to the Kaiser in 1890 that he had presented gifts from the emperor to Chief Rindi of the Chagga: 'While the soldiers presented arms, I...encircled his shoulders with the coronation cloak...from the Berlin Opera House and placed on his head the helmet under which Niemann once sang Lohengrin'. On the other hand, the Germans believed that African ideas of personal rule by a monarch could be infinitely enlarged so that the figure of an all-powerful Kaiser could come to personify German imperial authority. As John Iliffe tells us:

The ceremony that epitomised German rule was the annual celebration of the Kaiser's birthday. At every district office the askaris paraded before a massive crowd. After inspection and drill, the Senior German official addressed the gathering, extolling his Emperor's virtues and leading a three-fold 'Hurrah' for Kaiser and Reich. And then the people danced, in circles strewn across the parade ground.

But it was the British who carried the monarchical ideology to its

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39 Iliffe, A Modern History of Tanganyika, p. 100.
greatest elaborations. The British king had nothing like the very real executive power of the German Kaisier. But the British king/emperor was spoken of more in mystical than in practical terms. J. E. Hine, bishop of Northern Rhodesia, found the coronation of King George V 'a great ceremonal act of religion'. Aspects of the ritual, he found 'too theatrical and suggestive of a scene at the opera', and there was 'far too much music "especially written for the occasion", modern music, to me noisy and unmelodious'. But
as a whole the Coronation was a splendid sight. It was no mere piece of medieval pageantry, out of touch with modern life and the spirit of the twentieth century; no theatrical display of well staged magnificence... It was symbolism of the utmost splendour, but there was reality behind it all - the sacred unction of the Lord's anointed, an act quasi-sacramental in character, followed by the laying on the head of this one man of the Crown which is the outward sign of the awful but grand responsibility of the Government of all the English people and of the many nations beyond the seas which owe allegiance to the English King.41

In northern Rhodesia itself, the acting administrator summoned all the Ngoni chiefs and their people to a Coronation Day fête; the 'native police' band played; the Anglican 'representative robed and said the special prayer chosen for the occasion, standing near the saluting flag'. The enraptured missionary reported on the celebrations of that evening.

In the valley were four huge bonfires, around which some hundreds of dusky natives capered and danced. Some had bells on their feet, and almost all carried knobkerries... The Europeans, sheltered by a grass screen, sat in a semi-circle, and between them and the fire danced the inhabitants of the soil... Then the police band came forward and in the dying flames regaled us with 'The March of the Men of Harlech', 'Onward Christian Soldiers' and other tunes.42

It was not only the established church, however, which spoke of the monarchy in religious terms. Secular administrators, in fact, carried the discourse still further. Their speeches presented to African audiences a king who was almost divine; omnipotent, omniscient and

omnipresent. A series of official speeches to the Sotho, for example, stressed the royal knowledge of their situation, the royal concern for their well-being and the royal responsibility for decisions which in reality had been taken by the cabinet. In 1910 Prince Arthur of Connaught told the Sotho Paramount Chief that the new King George V ‘remembers the representations you made to His late Majesty, King Edward’, and that he knew ‘that, if and when, He decides that the time has come for Basutoland to be included in the South African Union you will loyally obey His decision’. In 1915 Lord Buxton assured the Paramount Chief that ‘His Majesty never ceases to take an interest in the welfare of the Basuto’, and that he appreciated their support for ‘the great armies which the King has sent out against His enemies’. In 1925 the Prince of Wales told the Sotho that he was very pleased that you still cherish the memory of my great-grandmother Queen Victoria... She is no longer with us but the King continues to watch over you with fatherly care. You must show yourselves worthy of his protection by listening to the words of the officers he has appointed to guide and educate you.

And in 1927 Colonel Amery, secretary of state for the colonies, told the Sotho that ‘His Majesty the King who has sent me on this journey through His dominions takes the keenest interest in every one of His people – small and great’.

When the king addressed the Sotho directly – as in the Royal Message of 1910 – the officials put into his mouth words of a high patriarchal tone:

When a child is in trouble he will go to his father, and his father after hearing all about the matter will decide what must be done. Then the child must trust and obey his father, for he is but one of a large family and his father has had great experience in settling the troubles of his older children and is able to judge what is best not only for the young child but for the peace and advantage of the whole family... The Basuto nation is as a very young child among the many peoples of the British Empire.

It was little wonder in view of all this that old Chief Jonathan greeted

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43 Prince Arthur of Connaught, reply to Address, 9 Oct. 1910, file S3/28/2/2, National Archives, Lesotho, Maseru.
44 Lord Buxton, reply to Address, Apr. 1915, S3/28/2/3, Maseru.
45 Prince of Wales, reply to Address, 28 May 1925, S3/28/1/9, Maseru.
46 Colonel Amery, reply to Address, Aug. 1927, S3/28/1/12, Maseru.
the visit of the Prince of Wales to Basutoland in 1925 in terms which struck some of the missionaries present as almost blasphemous:

To me this is a red-letter day. I rejoice on this day like old Simeon of the Holy Scriptures who rejoiced because he had seen the Lord Jesus before he had slept in the graves of his fathers.  

Everywhere else in British Africa the same rhetoric was employed. An acute observer of the governor's indabas with chiefs in northern Rhodesia in the 1920s remarked that they were 'designed as a parade (in the Kintergarten sense) of His Majesty's benignity towards his untutored African subjects'. Certainly the governor was very much concerned to derive his authority and that of the district administrators directly from the King.

All you here are one people – subjects of the King of England. It is the King's wish that all his subjects shall live together in peace... It is to ensure this that Governors are sent out... The Governor who lives in Livingstone and has a large country to administer cannot always be in one place but the District Commissioners... are representatives of the Governor and the King, and their work is that the King's wishes should be carried out.

To give credibility to these claims colonial administrators regarded the ceremonial side of the monarchy as crucially important. When in 1919 the Paramount Chief of Basutoland petitioned for permission to visit the Vatican as well as Buckingham Palace on his journey to Europe, the high commissioner feared that he 'might be unduly impressed by the pomp and state of reception at Vatican and might form conclusion that Pope was more important than the King!' Permission was refused. When the Prince of Wales visited southern and eastern Africa in 1925, his notorious dislike of ceremony was overcome by the entreaties of colonial administrators who told him that if he did not appear in full scarlet before the assembled African masses it would be better for him not to appear at all. The effect was properly gratifying. 'The Prince's arrival was a splendid affair', reported the Daily Telegraph from Basutoland; 'His Royal Highness was ablaze with medals, a sight which deeply impressed the great, silent masses'. From the Solwezi sub-district of Northern Rhodesia

48 Chief Jonathan's speech, 28 May 1925, S3/28/1/9, Maseru.
49 Winfrid Tapson, Old Timer (Capetown, 1957), p. 65.
50 Governor Sir James Maxwell, speech at Ndola Indaba, 6 July 1928, file ZA1/9/59/1, National Archives, Zambia, Lusaka.
51 High commissioner, cable to secretary of state, 19 May 1919, S3/28/2/4, Maseru.
52 Daily Telegraph, 30 May 1925, 'Picturesque Scenes'.
came the report that the two chiefs who had attended the indaba with the Prince
were highly excited when expressing the pleasure it had given them
to meet the Prince... The two chief impressions which seem to have
been registered on their minds... were firstly the pomp and
ceremony connected with the visit – in Kapijimpanga’s words, ‘the
Bwana shone so brightly in his uniform that we could not look
upon him’ – and secondly that they were able to meet in a friendly
way with all the other chiefs of the Territory.58
It was the Northern Rhodesian administration’s boast that the indaba
had dramatized the oneness of all the peoples of the territory, not
because they were all Africans, still less because they were all
Northern Rhodesians, but because they were all subjects of one
mighty king. Against this background it was more a sign of waning
self-confidence than of arrogance when the Northern Rhodesian
government was obliged to issue printed instructions to Africans for
the royal visit of 1947 telling them that
King George is the biggest King in the world. He is not like an
African chief. He does not like people crowding close all round
Him, He expects to see His subjects on their best behaviour.54
But royal visits were necessarily rare occasions in colonial Africa.
In the intervals the royal cult had to be sustained by locally invented
rituals. Men could make their careers by inspired contributions to
these. A prime example is the career of Edward Twining, later
governor of Tanganyika. Twining’s biographer relates that his
mother was held by her family to have married beneath her; his
clergyman father was thought no gentleman. Twining’s not very
distinguished military career and his transfer to the colonial service
was a search for convincing distinction, carried out in the time-
honoured way in the imperial peripheries of gentlemanly society.
Twining found his distinction in the end – and it is quite clear that
he found it through his capacity whole-heartedly to invent tradition.
While still an administrative officer in Uganda, Twining wrote and
published a pamphlet on the English coronation ceremony, of which
The Times Literary Supplement remarked that while it was ‘hardly
a book that anyone would be tempted to consult for archaeologial

53 Annual Report, native commissioner, Solwezi sub-district, 1925, ZA7/1/9/2,
Lusaka.
54 ‘Northern Rhodesia. The Royal Visit. 11 April 1947. Details of the Programme
and Broadcasting Arrangements’, P3/13/2/1, Lusaka.
detail’, nevertheless for ‘allowing the modern rite to be followed step by step nothing better could be desired’. Thus having paid tribute to other people’s invented tradition, Twining proceeded in the coronation year of 1937 to invent his own. Twining was, in fact, first brought to favourable official attention by his successful organization of the 1937 celebrations in Uganda, a triumph of ceremonial creativity, vividly described by its author:

In the evening we had the combined Tattoo and Firework Display, which was very much my own personal show, having invented it, trained 2 of the items myself, organised the whole, built a stand, sold all the tickets myself... The Governor on arrival pressed a button which did nothing actually, but pretended to set off a maroon which in turn set off an enormous bonfire across the lake which in turn set off 50 rockets. The Buglers then sounded Retreat in the dark and then on went some 40 odd spotlights, floodlights and footlights, and the drums and the band beat tattoo and the audience settled down to enjoy themselves... Then some school-boys did the Parade of the Toy Soldiers. I got the particulars of this from the Duke of York’s School at Dover, and adapted it to local conditions. The boys wore white trousers, red tunics, and white pill box hats, the officer a bear-skin... The tattoo then proceeded. Fireworks. A war dance by 120 warriors in Leopard Skins. Ostrich feathers and spears and shields. Then ‘From Savage to Soldier’ showing the process of turning native warriors into real soldiers.

The central event, and the sensation of the evening, was a relay of the voice of the new king/emperor, broadcast to the gathering through concealed loudspeakers. And next day there was a ceremony at the high court, which involved the Kabaka, the judges, the governor, the chiefs and the bishops – ‘also my invention and it turned out to be a most dignified ceremony’. 55

The rest of Twining’s adequately distinguished career displayed the same concern for invented ceremonial. He was a flamboyant governor of Tanganyika. At the end he became one of the first creation of life peers – that supreme example of invented tradition – selling off his Grand Cross Mantle of the Order of St Michael and St John in order to buy ‘a second-hand robe trimmed with real ermine’. 56

Everywhere in British colonial Africa such rituals were taken very

seriously, if only rarely with Twining's exuberance. In a recent discussion of 'State and Peasantry in Colonial Africa', John Lonsdale remarks that 'the question of the statishness of the colonial state in Africa' can perhaps best be penetrated 'by looking at its festivals'.

All over the Empire [he writes] there were celebrations on 6 May 1935, the silver jubilee of King George V, even in little Kakamega, a district headquarters in the hills of western Kenya... The power of the state was on view with a parade of police... The majesty of rule was invoked with a speech from the governor, read by the district commissioner, who observed that King George was present, even to the meanest of his subjects, in his image on their coins, on the medals of their chiefs. He was 'a very great ruler and dearly loves his people and sees that they are ruled justly. He has always shown a very deep personal concern in your welfare' – and the schoolmaster-leaders of peasant opinion were even then acting on the principles of peasant legitimism by by-passing the king's servants and petitioning his House of Commons for redress of grievances... The royal family was still further linked to the material improvement in peasant citizenship. In Queen Victoria's day 'very few people had any clothes except skins and blankets and hardly any knew how to read. Now you have railways and roads, schools and hospitals, towns and trading centres, which give you the opportunity for development which civilization and good government bring in their train'. Colonial improvement was linked to peasant recreation. The day's proceedings included a display by the local boy scout troop... The rulers sought their subjects' affection in carnival, almost indeed in saturnalia. There were games for Africans only, the slippery pole, a tug-of-war, blindfold football biffing; but there was inter-racial sport too, a bicycle race, a donkey derby, even a fancy dress soccer match between Europeans and Indians for the natives to gawp at. Peasant economy was co-opted too; there was an egg, cent and flour race... Peasant culture was used too; the day started off with church services. Europeans attended the high culture of an Anglican service; to Africans was left the 'low culture' of a Catholic celebration.57

It is plain that British administrators took all this sort of thing very seriously – Twining as governor of Tanganyika refused to negotiate