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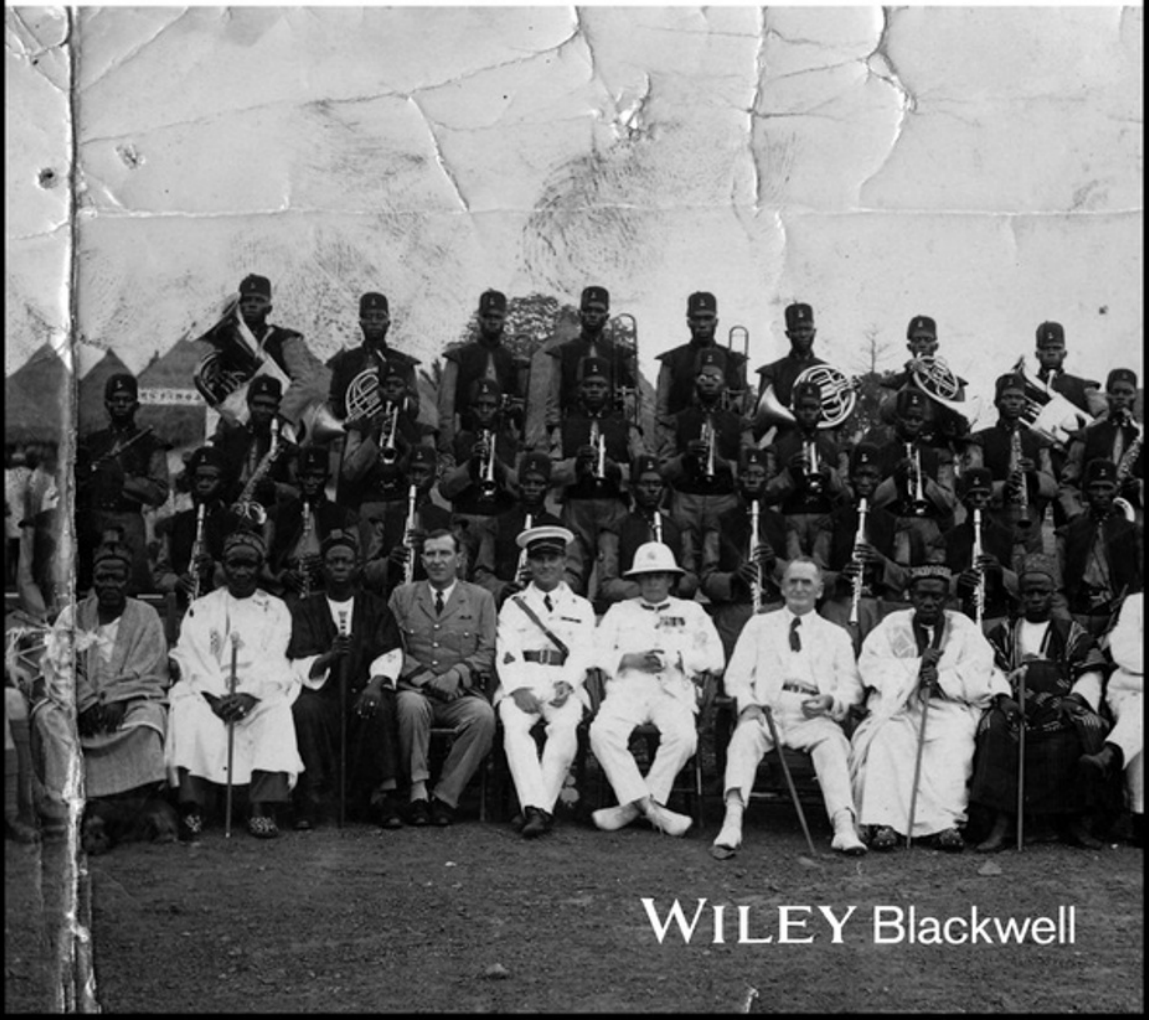
European Overseas Empire, 1879–1999

A Short History

MATTHEW G. STANARD



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Thousands of years of recorded history show that the main way in which human societies have been organized is as empires. Today, the evidence of recent European overseas empire's lasting effects is all around us: from international frontiers and fusion cuisine to multiplying apologies for colonial misdeeds. *European Overseas Empire, 1879–1999: A Short History* explores the major events in this critical period that continue to inform and affect our world today.

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- Traces current events to their roots in the European overseas imperialism of the 19th and 20th centuries
- Challenges the notion of political, cultural, social, and economic exchanges of the era as being primarily "Europe-outward"
- Examines the complexity and contingency of colonial rule, and the range of outcomes for the various territories involved
- Explores the power dynamics of overseas empires, and their legacies that continue to shape the world today

Matthew G. Stanard is Associate Professor and Department Chair of History at Berry College. He is the author of *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (2011) and coauthor of *European Empires and the People: Popular Responses to Imperialism in France, Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, and Italy* (2011).

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Contents

List of Illustrations

Maps

Figures

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List of Selected Abbreviations

AEF	Afrique Équatoriale Française (French Equatorial Africa)
ANC	African National Congress
ANZAC	Australia and New Zealand Auxiliary Corps
AOF	Afrique Occidentale Française (French West Africa)
CAF	Central African Federation
CFS	État Indépendant du Congo (Congo Free State)
EIC	(British) East India Company
FLN	Front de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front)
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Mozambique Liberation Front)
IBEAC	Imperial British East Africa Company
OAS	Organisation Armée Secrète (Secret Army Organization)
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
PPA	Parti Populaire Algérien (Algerian Popular Party)
RDA	Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (African Democratic Rally)
VOC	Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (United East India Company)

Introduction

Many books have been written about nineteenth- and twentieth-century European overseas imperialism, and some may argue that that there are more pressing historical subjects, such as the history of globalization, of terrorism, or of global warming and the environment. In today's world of nation-states and non-state actors like the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, and Daesh (so-called Islamic State, or ISIS), empire might seem to some like ancient history. In the year this author was born, 1973, there remained just one European colonial empire of any significance, namely that of the Portuguese in Angola, Portuguese Guinea, and Mozambique, and it was limping toward its ignominious end. Why another book on imperialism?

Surveying thousands of years of recorded history reveals that empire in its various guises has been the primary way in which human societies have been organized, for better and for worse. Although our twenty-first-century world is one of nation-states, we should not let our familiarity with nation-states lead us to conclude that they were "natural" or inevitable, meaning that we need to explore how they came about. Another reason to take up empire as a subject of study is because we can neither understand how things have changed over the past 200 years, nor fully grasp contemporary history and current events, without having some understanding of recent European imperialism and its consequences. There is evidence everywhere of how colonialism and decolonization profoundly reshaped the world: in the debate over the United Kingdom leaving the European Union (popularly known as "Brexit"); in international frontiers; in Daesh propaganda; in cuisine; in ongoing tensions between India and Pakistan, or China and Japan; in the multiplying government apologies for colonial

European Overseas Empire, 1879–1999: A Short History, First Edition. Matthew G. Stanard.

misdeeds; and so forth. Not only did European imperialism affect places that were colonized; it also reshaped Europe, and was intertwined with other world-changing historical developments, including industrialization, globalization, both world wars, and the creation of the United Nations.

There are other important reasons that make this a good time to turn to the study of imperialism, one being the recent renewed scholarly interest in the history of empire, which has led to a slew of fascinating work reshaping our understanding of the past. There have also been exciting recent discoveries. A certain time period, sometimes decades, is often required before researchers are granted access to archives, which remain the main source of evidence for historians. Many such restrictions are now lapsing, giving researchers access to documents that improve our historical understanding.

In some ways, greater distance from the colonial era allows us to better grasp its history and its actors on their own terms. It may seem paradoxical that being further distant from past events enables us to better understand them. But the politics of imperialism and decolonization often colored past histories. Early studies debated why a new wave of empire began in the late nineteenth century in the first place. Many of them identifed European industrial and financial capitalism as a cause, an interpretation that was given new life by the Cold War competition between capitalism and communism. The persistence of European colonial rule shaped historical studies in the first half of the twentieth century: they often focused on colonial administration, military conquest, and Europe's "expansion" by means of overseas political control, infrastructure development, Christian missionaries, and the spread of European technology, culture, and languages. The history of empire waned as emphasis shifted during the decolonization era to the study of resistance and the precolonial origins of African and Asian nations, which legitimized newly independent states. The history of empire has come roaring back since the mid-1990s as scholars have adopted new approaches and uncovered subtler aspects of empire, including gender, race, culture, and colonial knowledge. Younger generations of historians – few directly implicated in this history – are exploring the legal history of empire, colonial policing, empire's effects on Europe and its cultures, migration, colonies and the two world wars, and the United States and empire. Decolonization, only recently a "current event," has now become a field of history in its own right. All this said, even if greater distance in time allows us to study imperialism more dispassionately, as students of history we must remain attuned to present-day biases and our personal predispositions.

The years 1879 and 1999 bookend the story told here. The late 1870s witnessed a hastening of overseas expansionism that led to an era of European global dominance and the decline of other powers, most notably the Turkish Ottoman empire and the Manchu Qing empire. This book examines European overseas conquests and formal colonial rule through the first half of the 1900s,

into the era of decolonization, and then through independence following World War II. The year 1999, the book's chronological end point, saw Portugal formally relinquish Macau to China after nearly four and a half centuries of Portuguese rule. Today there remains only a very small number of tiny areas subject to any kind of colonial status, even if the legacies of the colonial era live on innumerable ways.

A Word about Words

What is "empire" exactly? What is a colony? Are imperialism and colonialism the same thing? Is there a difference between decolonization and independence? It is worthwhile defining at the outset several terms that recur throughout the book.

Definitions depend on whom you ask, and when, as well as where you are from and the languages you speak. To many in the United States, terms like "colonial history" or the "colonial era" evoke an American history, namely the years from the first European settlements in North America down to the Revolutionary War. Ask someone from India, Senegal, or Indonesia about the "colonial era," and you are likely to get three different responses, none having much to do with the United States. In France, the term *l'impérialisme français* generally refers to empire building in Europe, primarily under Napoleon Bonaparte. *L'empire colonial* refers to France's overseas empire, from its "old" colonies in the Caribbean, the Americas, and south Asia to those of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Africa, the Indian Ocean, southeast Asia, and Oceania. In a US history context the term "empire" can refer to British rule in North America, US overseas rule in Hawai'i and the Philippines, informal US influence in Latin America, or the even more nebulous but no less real global power wielded by the United States after World War II, especially after 1989. Such examples can be multiplied. Complicating the matter is the fact that all these terms refer to human concepts whose meanings have changed over time. "Colony" as the Puritans of the Mayflower would have known the concept differs from how Queen Victoria would have understood it, just as both differ from how a historian would understand the term today.

The term "empire" dates back millennia, to at least the Romans, whose rulers – first under the republic, then under the empire after around 27 BCE – exercised *imperium*, or "the power to get things done," including command over non-Romans and their lands. An empire is a form of political control where one people commands other states, peoples, or lands, and where there is a power differential such that the state or people in control enjoys greater authority, prestige, rights, or other advantages than subject peoples. Scholars often use the term "metropole" to refer to the country or state exercising power over

foreign peoples and lands, which avoids gender-loaded terms such as "mother country" or "fatherland." As we shall see, the division between metropole and colony was not as clear as we might have first thought.

From the word "empire" come the terms "imperialism" and "imperialistic." Use of the term "imperialism" in any modern sense dates back only to the mid-nineteenth century, when British critics of Emperor Napoleon III of France accused him of engaging in "imperialism," a seemingly strange accusation today considering that Britain ruled a huge empire at the time. What these critics meant was that Napoleon was engaging in aggressive, militaristic, and nationalistic tactics to extend France's influence abroad. By the end of the century, detractors of empire in Britain itself used the term to attack British overseas rule. "Imperialism" refers to the practice of conquering abroad to create and rule an empire. "Imperialistic," an adjective, makes reference to an attitude or mindset that is in favor of imperialism.

"Colonialism" is oftentimes used interchangeably with the term "imperialism" – and will be at times in this book – even though the former often has a more specific connotation deriving from the word "colony," which itself has multiple meanings. One kind of colony comprises a group of people that leaves one place to settle in a distant land, and who then remain free of formal control of their country of origin. Ancient Greeks who departed the area around the Aegean Sea to establish settlements around the Mediterranean are an example of this, as is, more recently, the "colony" of Italians who settled in New York City from the late 1800s. A colony can also be such a settlement that remains controlled by the land from which the colonists originated. By 241 BCE, the Roman Republic had established its first province in Sicily, for instance. More recent examples are Virginia and Australia, founded as British colonies in 1607 and 1788, respectively. A third type of colony is a territory conquered by a foreign power and placed in a subservient relationship within that power's empire, but that, for whatever reason, is not settled by large numbers of people from the metropole. A good example is Italian Somaliland, a territory on the Horn of Africa of some one million souls by the 1920s, very few of whom were Italian: a 1931 census revealed 1,631 Italians living there, some 0.16 percent of the population. A "colonist" is someone from a colonizing power who settles in a foreign or colonized land, a "colonizer" someone who engages in conquest and foreign rule, and the "colonized" those people subject to colonization, that is, indigenous people (natives) ruled over by foreigners and oftentimes dispossessed of their lands.

To "colonize" (noun: "colonization") usually refers to setting up a colony, that is, taking and populating lands. "Colonialism," by contrast, often refers either to colonization or more generally to engaging in the practice of empire. This book emphasizes a major distinction, namely between "colonies" controlled by a metropole yet overwhelmingly populated by indigenous peoples, and "settler

colonies," lands where colonists took land for settlement. Good examples of the latter are Korea under Japanese rule from 1910 to 1945, during which time tens of thousands of Japanese settlers snapped up arable land, and French Algeria, where hundreds of thousands of Europeans had settled by the 1950s.

Other important terms include the "New Imperialism," the "new imperial history," "late colonialism," and the "late colonial state." Some referred to the wave of late nineteenth-century empire building as the New Imperialism, to distinguish it from the earlier era of European overseas empire building dating back to the sixteenth century, which followed Christopher Columbus's voyages. Lately, scholars have taken to using the term "new imperial history" to refer to recent work that integrates the history of Europe with that of Europe's overseas imperialism, which were traditionally treated as distinct subjects. Some use the term "late colonialism" to refer to European empire across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to distinguish it from the seaborne empires dating back to the era of Columbus. Others refer to the "late colonial state" when talking about empire during the post-World War II era. In this book, concerned as it is with the period from the late nineteenth through the twentieth century, the terms "late colonialism," "late imperialism," and "late colonial" make reference to the last few decades of formal empire, roughly the post-World War II period.

Then there are the terms "decolonization," "transfer of power," "independence," and "neocolonialism," which refer to the end of empire and its aftermath. As scholar Stuart Ward has shown, the term decolonization is of recent vintage, referring to the retreat of empire in the twentieth century. Neocolonialism refers to the continuation or reimposition of imperial relations between a more powerful state – perhaps an erstwhile metropole – and a former colony that has achieved political independence but not autonomy in all realms. The Belgian approach toward the Belgian Congo's independence in 1960 provides a good illustration. When in the late 1950s Congolese began to agitate for change, Belgian officials embraced rapid decolonization because they believed the Congo was so unprepared for independence that it would remain dependent upon them for their expertise. Then, as Belgians negotiated independence in 1960, they undermined the soon to be independent Congolese state diplomatically, financially, and economically. Belgian leaders were willing to accede to Congo's wish for formal independence, but they were also determined to remain the real masters there. All this said, some observers of international relations have misappropriated the term "neocolonialism" to refer to any unbalanced power relations within or between states – not dissimilar to the overuse of the term "fascist" – with the inevitable result of watering down its meaning. This book will hew to a strict definition of neocolonialism.

People have similarly appropriated the term "postcolonial" to the point that it is a word that risks meaning everything and nothing. In a narrow sense, "postcolonial" refers to something that follows the colonial era chronologically. Thus events in Nigeria following political independence from Britain in 1960 can be considered postcolonial. But postcolonialism also makes reference to an interpretive stance toward history, literature, and other disciplines that views the world from below, from the position of the (formerly) colonized. Much postcolonial study focuses less on tangible manifestations of power and more on culture, influences, representations, and knowledge. As almost everything is connected in some fashion or another to imperialism, the ambit for postcolonial studies is practically limitless.

Empires in History

Looking at a world map today makes clear that we live in a world of nation-states, something that is now taken for granted. Over some seven decades, the United Nations has grown from 50 to nearly 200 member states. So great is our attachment to the nation-state that world leaders fight tooth and nail to preserve "failed" nation-states, including Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Somalia. We have difficulty dealing with major non-state actors, for example international drug cartels, Daesh, or large multinational corporations.

But when one looks at a world map from a century ago, at the time of World War I, it is evident that the world was one of empires. Rather than being an anomaly, the world of the early twentieth century adhered more to the norm because, as noted, empire has been the predominant way in which people have been organized throughout history. One can detect aspects of imperialism when studying the first human settlements and civilizations in ancient Mesopotamia. When the eighteenth-century BCE ruler Hammurabi promulgated his code across the lands between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, he was reinforcing his authority over the varied peoples he ruled, including Sumerians, Kassites, and Assyrians.

For millennia, central and southwest Eurasia was the epicenter of empire building. Persians, a subject people under Assyrian and then New Babylonian rule, rose under King Cyrus (r. 559–530 BCE) to capture Babylon and topple the New Babylonian empire in 539 BCE. By the time of the emperor Darius (r. 522–486 BCE), the Persian empire was the largest the world had ever seen. The Greek Macedonian ruler Alexander (r. 336–332 BCE) went after the same territories. His rapid, almost continuous campaigning overwhelmed Anatolia, the eastern Mediterranean, Egypt, Syria, and Persia. Only a threatened mutiny by his officers prevented him from invading India. Although this produced "the Hellenistic World" and the spread of Greek culture, southwest Asia's influence

was suggested by how much the Persians inspired Alexander and the Greeks. In some ways, Alexander annexed Greece and Macedonia to the Persian world rather than the reverse.

Rome rose to preeminence in the Mediterranean following the Punic Wars between Rome and Carthage (264–146 BCE). The Pax Romana of the first to second century CE represented a new scale of imperial power, Rome exercising sovereignty over peoples from what is today the English–Scottish border to present-day Iraq. The Roman empire consisted of a western, more rural, Latin half centered on Rome and an eastern, Greek-speaking half centered, by the early 300s, on Constantinople. No less impressive were contemporary east Asian empires. King Jeng (259–210 BCE) of the Qin state launched a war of unification in 230 BCE to bring all of China under his rule. Following his success, he became the emperor Qin Shihuangdi in 221 BCE. The short-lived Qin dynasty was succeeded by the Han dynasty, which further unified and then expanded China's territory.

Arab Muslims took the perennially contested region of southwest Asia beginning in the eighth century, and the Umayyad Caliphate eventually extended even further, from the Indus River in the east through southwest Asia across north Africa and north to the Pyrenees. Other Arab Muslims deposed the Umayyads in 750, setting up the long-lived Abbasid Caliphate. In the east, subsequent Chinese dynasties such as the Tang extended China's reach from Vietnam all the way to the Himalayan state of Tibet.

Both the Abbasid Caliphate and China later came under the sway of the Mongols, who created the largest empire in world history. By the thirteenth century, Mongol control spanned most of Eurasia, and the Mongols launched attacks as far afield as present-day Hungary, Poland, Japan, and Baghdad. Kublai Khan (1215–1294), the grandson of Genghis Khan, became the Great Khan, basing his rule in China, where he founded the foreign, Mongol Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). As Mongol power declined, however, locals took advantage and native Han Chinese overthrew the Mongols by 1368, establishing the Ming dynasty. Russian princes of Muscovy overturned their vassal status to the Mongols beginning in the fifteenth century. Timur the Lame, or Tamerlane (d. 1405), of Turkish–Mongol descent, tried to recreate the Ilkhanate of Persia in southwest Asia as a first step toward restoring the Mongol empire. His whirlwind campaigns laid waste to cities and massacred innumerable souls in southwest Asia. His successors never ruled anything like what he had hoped, and his efforts represented the last gasp of the great Eurasian empire builders as much empire building shifted to the seas.

Still, other land-based empires did come into being. Contemporaneous with Mongol rule was the powerful and wealthy west African Mali empire, founded by Sundiata (r. 1230–1255). It is said that, as he passed through Cairo making the hajj to Mecca in 1324–1325, the Mali emperor Mansa Musa gave away so much

gold that he crashed the city's gold market. In the Americas, the Mexica people on Lake Tenochtitlan built up a wealthy state capable of subduing its neighbors. Their elaborate tributary empire reached its zenith under emperors Itzcóatl (r. 1428–1440) and Moctezuma I (r. 1440–1469). Central Asian Turks, who had lived along the Abbasid Caliphate's borders and converted to Islam sometime around the tenth century, invaded "Rûm," or the remnants of it: Rome's eastern half, which had survived as the Byzantine empire. The Turkish conquest of Byzantine lands and the 1453 capture of Constantinople put the Muslim Ottoman empire on the map.

After Tamerlane, small yet powerful states emerged alongside regional empires and great, globe-spanning maritime imperial formations that profited less from acquisition of land and control over people than from trade and commercial ties. Christopher Columbus's 1492 voyage opened up a set of exchanges between world areas that, for all intents and purposes, had never been in contact before, leading to a new era of colonialism. As it developed, the Spanish empire functioned as an international enterprise, with ships financed and manned by non-Spaniards, bullion moved from the Americas through the Philippines to China, and massive interest payments on Spanish debt financed by American gold forfeited to Italian and French bankers.

By the early eighteenth century, Europeans claimed extensive holdings throughout the Americas, with the Portuguese in Brazil, the Spanish in South and Central America, the French and British in the Caribbean and North America, and the Dutch in the Caribbean. Most important were Brazilian and Caribbean lands that produced sugar, a prized commodity that produced huge profits. Sugar cane cultivation also was labor-intensive. A decline in the indigenous populations of the Americas led Europeans to turn to Africa for labor, resulting in the creation of trading posts along the African coasts. By the 1780s, at the height of the Atlantic slave trade, on average 88,000 souls a year were enslaved by Africans and Europeans, the latter shipping them like cargo to the Americas.

As the Spanish and Portuguese and later the British, French, and Dutch expanded in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they only joined in empire building. The Ming dynasty (1368–1644) represented a new height of power and prosperity in China, which continued after another foreign group, the Manchu, overthrew the Ming to establish the Qing dynasty (1644–1912). By the seventeenth century Muscovy's princes had established Romanov rule across a growing Eurasian empire. Ottoman Turks continued their rule over a multiethnic empire centered on Anatolia and straddling three continents, and to their east was the Shi'a Muslim Safavid empire, centered on present-day Iran. Foreign (Sunni) Muslim rulers lorded over most of the northern, predominantly Hindu Indian subcontinent beginning with Babur (r. 1526–1530). The Mughal empire's wealth and power was reflected in massive projects like the Taj Mahal, built

during Shah Jahan's reign (1628–1658). Such wealth and power sustained Mughal rule in India into the eighteenth century.

Thus the imperialism at the heart of this book – late nineteenth- and twentieth-century European overseas colonialism – followed on millennia of empire building. It was also contemporaneous with empire building *within* Europe: by the English in the British Isles, and on the Continent by Napoleon, the Habsburgs, Germany during the two world wars, and Russia's Romanovs. Although anti-imperialism was inherent to the Marxist–Leninist ideology espoused by the Bolsheviks after 1917, the Soviets in many ways replicated their tsarist imperialist predecessors. Relying on an extensive network of secret police, the Soviet state represented another centralized, expansionistic Russian-dominated regime ruling over innumerable non-Russians. There was also a US empire, a rare case of a former colony become a colonizing power.

Themes of the Book

Any short history of a subject as wide ranging as recent overseas colonialism cannot cover everything. This book is not encyclopedic. Certain subjects are addressed only in passing, for instance England's rule over Ireland, Wales, and Scotland; Jewish colonization in Palestine; and US informal imperialism in Latin America. A short study must also choose certain emphases for reasons of space and cohesion.

This book develops three major themes, the first of which is *exchange*. Recent overseas imperialism set in motion myriad interchanges between numerous peoples with profound cultural, political, economic, social, and other effects across the globe. For long the direction of these exchanges was believed to have been predominantly Europe-outward. As this book will show, exchanges moved in myriad directions: from European metropoles outward, from colonized lands "back" to Europe, and between empires.

The second of this book's three themes is the *complexity and contingency* of colonial rule. Imperialism was never a straightforward story of the projection of Europe outward to rule the globe, followed by a period of "retreat" in the form of decolonization. European rule was often highly contingent upon agreements or "buy-in" from local peoples. In some places, colonialism was utterly devastating, upending existing realities. Yet in many places in the "colonized world," people continued to live their lives and to build their futures with little regard for European claims to authority. European states never fully controlled the many territories they claimed, and their empires were always in a process of becoming, never finished. People reacted variously to colonialism, and neither the colonizer nor the colonized constituted undifferentiated monolithic blocs.

A third theme that emerges in the pages that follow is *power*. Who controlled what resources and had what rights are perennial questions of critical historical importance. This book is based on important work of recent years that has revealed the many powers of resistance and agency of colonized peoples across the globe. At the same time, this book never loses sight of the fact that nineteenth- and twentieth-century overseas empire was at its core an astonishing projection of European power across the globe, the ramifications of which we continue to live with today.

Citations

Page *Source*

5 "decolonization." Stuart Ward, "The European Provenance of Decolonisation", *Past & Present* 230, no. 1 (2016), 227–260.

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The Nineteenth-Century Context

> *The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much.*
>
> Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1902)

Makana Nxele began to speak of visions in the spring of 1819. Nxele was Xhosa, a people living around the Great Fish River in southern Africa who were suffering from intrusions from neighboring peoples. Invaders included white settlers, including "Boers" of Dutch origin and Britons, who for years had encroached on Xhosa lands, seized their cattle, and disrupted their lives in myriad other ways. Nxele was a convert to Christianity who claimed to be a prophet and a younger son of Jesus Christ. He said that the Xhosa had to rise up, fight, and drive the whites out. People listened, and many joined up. In April, Nxele led an attack on a British outpost in Grahamstown. The British put down the uprising, captured Nxele, and imprisoned him on Robben Island, the same island on which South Africa's apartheid regime would imprison Nelson Mandela in the 1960s. (Although Mandela survived Robben Island, Nxele did not: he drowned during an escape attempt in December 1819.)

In 1856 another Xhosa, a girl named Nongqawuse, preached a series of prophetic visions. Nongqawuse foretold that the morning sun would set and that the ancestors would arise and drive the whites into the sea, thus saving the Xhosa. First, though, the Xhosa had to prove their faith by destroying their crops and slaughtering all livestock; only if they did so would the prophecy come true, on the eighth day. Nongqawuse's uncle Mhlakaza was among those who embraced her

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vision, and he won over the Xhosa ruler, Sarhili. Like Mhlakaza before him, Sarhili destroyed his cattle and crops, and then persuaded a number of his advisers and subordinates to do the same. Others bought into Nongqawuse's vision, so desperate were they to rid themselves of the whites.

Whites were not the only problem: the Xhosa also felt pressure from the Zulu, a successful and expansionistic people to their east. Zulu success dated back to Dingiswayo, a king among the Nguni people who had transformed his society, doing away with traditional "bush schools" that required cohorts of boys of the same age – "age grades" – to sequester themselves from society, undergo education, and be circumcised. Instead of removing productive young men from society for an extended period, Dingiswayo organized age grades into military units, and these young men became full members of society through military service. This transformed the Nguni into a fighting force. Dingiswayo's successor, Shaka, made his Zulu clan dominant among the Nguni. Shaka Zulu put the Zulu on a permanent war footing, instituted more combat training and years-long segregation of men in military groups, and introduced the assegai, a short stabbing spear used as a sword at close quarters. Shaka also introduced new tactics, including the "cow horn" formation, combining a central group with swift-moving wings to attack an opponent's flanks and rear. Innovation translated into Zulu dominance over large areas of southeastern Africa and, when others adapted or adopted Zulu tactics, warfare became more destructive. The result was the Mfecane or "time of troubles," during which Shaka himself was assassinated, in 1828.

By the time of Shaka's successor, Dingane (r. 1828–1840), the Mfecane had spread widely, reaching the Xhosa people. Heeding Nongqawuse's visions, Xhosa slaughtered thousands of head of cattle and destroyed crops. Then came the eighth day. "Nothing happened. The sun did not set, no dead person came back to life, and not one of the things that had been predicted came to pass." Instead there was starvation, devastation, and death. By 1857 the Xhosa were no longer capable of putting up any resistance to expanding European colonization.

How could anyone have such faith, to the point of destroying all their crops and cattle? One can analyze such apocalyptic visions and those who believed them from anthropological, psychological, religious, gender, or other perspectives. The historical explanation is straightforward: the Xhosa were under intense pressure as a result of Zulu and European expansionism. The same was true of other indigenous peoples, from Khoi, San, Nama, and Herero in southwestern Africa, to Bantu-speaking peoples such as the Sotho, Ndebele, and Shona. A series of droughts coupled with population growth compounded such problems. The Xhosa were unable to compete, in particular in the face of European technological superiority.

As the experience of the Xhosa suggests, many actors and factors shaped global history in the nineteenth century, including local conflicts, movements of