Acknowledgments

This reinterpretation of the history of Singapore is based on much used but misunderstood data. It relies heavily on the works of the colonial historians who have created the standard accounts of this period. The most useful primary sources have been the English-language Straits Settlements Records (SSR) for the period 1800–1867 and the Colonial Office Records (CO 273) for the years thereafter. These have been supplemented by the English-language newspapers of the period and by the standard published works of the nineteenth century. Chinese-language sources are scarce but necessary, and my access to them has been through secondary published works. These have been supplemented by the Malay-language sources of the Johor Archives, which I used for my earlier studies. The Johor records have proven an invaluable resource, and it is doubtful that the history of Singapore can be properly understood without them.

Although I have raised questions about the assumptions of the colonialist historians who have produced the substantial literature on the Chinese and the secret societies, I could not have begun this work without their contributions. I have also attempted to test the theories of more recent scholars, Maurice Freedman and G. William Skinner, who have been responsible for pointing the study of the overseas Chinese in a new direction. I have also benefited from the important work many Malaysians and Singaporeans are doing as they take charge of their own history. This group includes Wong Lin Ken, Wang Gungwu, Khoo Kay Kim, Lee Poh Ping, Wang Tai Peng, Hong Lysa, Mak Lau Fong, and Ng Chin-keong. Finally, I see this as only a part of the much larger effort being undertaken by other students of opium and the
imperial process. These are my colleagues and contemporaries in this effort who are presently reinterpreting the history of the entire region.

Much of the research for this book was supported by grants from the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies in 1981 and by a Fulbright Grant from the Council for International Exchange of Scholars in 1985. The first permitted me to spend three months in London, where I used the collections at the India Office, the Public Record Office, and the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. I am most grateful for the assistance and support of the staffs of all these archives. The Fulbright award allowed me to spend eight months in Singapore, where I benefited from the sponsorship of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) and its director, Dr. Kernial Sandhu. My work in Singapore was aided by the active assistance of the staffs of the National Library, the National Archives, the Library of the National University of Singapore, and the library of ISEAS. In particular I thank Dr. Patricia Lim, formerly of the ISEAS Library, and David K. Y. Chng of the National Library for their many acts of personal assistance on my behalf.

I made several other less sustained research forays to collections in the United States, the most important of which were the John M. Echols Collection and the Wason Collection at Cornell University. I also made significant use of the special collections of the Cleveland Public Library and of the Southeast Asian collections of the Ohio University Library. I also acknowledge material support from the academic institutions that employed me while I worked on this project. Both Thomas More College in Crestview Hills, Kentucky, and Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., have provided the institutional foundations without which this sort of scholarly endeavor cannot be undertaken. In particular, I am grateful to my friends Raymond G. Hebert; Sr. Mary Philip Trauth, S.N.D.; Howard Spendelow, and Matthew Gardner. I also acknowledge the support of Hans and Lisa Jacobson. The interest and assistance of my friends in Johor Bahru was an important contribution to my understanding of this material. I am especially thankful to Dato Kuek Ho Yao, Dato Wong Peng Long, Chern Yen Ming, and Cheng Chean Chiang.

Numerous colleagues read all or parts of this manuscript and, through their kind criticism and comments, saved me from many glaring errors. Their time and interest has resulted in the substantial improvement of this work. In particular I am indebted to Ruth McVey, George and Audrey Kahin, James R. Rush, Jennifer Cushman, Dian
Murray, Leonard and Barbara Andaya, Jeya Kathirithamby-Wells, John Butcher, Sharon Carstens, Wong Lin Ken, Hong Lysa, and Mary Somers Heidhues. Others have shared with me, at some point in this project, their insights on opium, secret societies, kongsis, revenue farms, and British imperialism in general. These include Mary Turnbull, Mak Lau Fong, Ng Chin Keong, Lim How Seng, Ernest Chew, Diane Lewis, Anthony Reid, Khoo Kay Kim, Lee Poh Ping, Robert Taylor, Helen Chauncey, Vivienne Wee, and Geoffrey Benjamin. Finally, I make special mention of the unflagging support, both material and intellectual, of my good friend Benedict Anderson, who not only provided hospitality during my many trips to Ithaca but also read, discussed, criticized, and encouraged this work in ways too numerous to mention.

My family, who have stood by me and often suffered neglect while I pursued this project, I also acknowledge: most important, my wife, Orrawin; my children, Rebecca and Carl; my mother, Helen Trocki; and my brothers and sisters. Finally, I am grateful for the companionship of my many friends in Singapore, London, Johor, and elsewhere.

Carl A. Trocki

Washington, D.C.