

## REVIEWS

### TREES AND BRANCHES IN THE HISTORY OF BANTU LANGUAGES

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704219442

*Continuity and Divergence in the Bantu Languages: Perspectives from a Lexicostatistic Study.* By YVONNE BASTIN, ANDRÉ COUPEZ and MICHAEL MANN. Tervuren: Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 1999. Pp. 225. No price given, paperback (ISBN 90-75894-27-9).

KEY WORD: linguistics.

When a group of rather closely related languages such as Bantu covers a large contiguous area, a genetic tree can help tracing the history of the region. Nurse provides a good overview of the history of Bantu subclassification; the two most recent statements are by Nurse and Philippson and by Schadeberg.<sup>1</sup> The book here reviewed reports the results of the largest lexicostatistic study ever undertaken in the context of African languages. The data consist of 452 Bantu vocabularies of 92 words, a modified version of the well-known Swadesh list. A. Coupez and Y. Bastin undertook the collection of wordlists and cognation judgements at Tervuren over several decades, and M. Mann (SOAS) made the statistical analysis and wrote the report.

Most of the 225 pages are trees and maps, only 40-odd pages are tables, lists and text, and most of the text consists of succinct instructions as to how to read the trees and maps. The data are presented in three chapters, framed by an Introduction and Conclusions. Chapter 2 identifies the 452 vocabularies and then provides for each gloss a rather nice schematic map where each language is represented by a symbol, with different symbols for each cognate set. Chapter 3 presents Michael Mann's main message: continuity and discontinuity among the Bantu languages. The author has developed a technique for drawing maps which, when read as a sequence, show the gradual division of Bantu into more and more areal units. There is no strict hierarchical tree structure since the areal units are not closed but typically leak at one or more sides. Chapter 4 presents a whole series of lexicostatistic hierarchical cluster analyses. Here, too, the author has refined the standard techniques and created five steps between the extreme 'Nearest Neighbour' and 'Furthest Neighbour' methods. In addition, chapter 4 presents some 70 close-up looks at local language groups and their affiliations.

It is hard to find any conclusions. Lexicostatistics promises a tree-shaped internal subclassification, but Mann is not a true believer in this method. For him, all trees are 'true', and all trees somehow result from 'history', each one representing no more and no less than its underlying specific data and statistical manipulations, but unable to distinguish the opposing factors of divergence and convergence. He is extremely careful to avoid a composite picture (cf. p. 109).

<sup>1</sup> Derek Nurse, "'Historical" classifications of the Bantu languages', *Azania*, 29–30 (1994–5), 65–81; Derek Nurse and Gérard Philippson, 'Towards a historical classification of the Bantu languages', in Nurse and Philippson (eds.), *The Bantu Languages* (London, 2003), 164–81; Thilo C. Schadeberg, 'Historical linguistics', in Nurse and Philippson (eds.), *Bantu Languages*, 143–63.

I spotted two places in the report where Mann tries to be bold. One is found in Table 4.2.2.1 (p. 125), where he posits four main groupings: **Periphery**, **East**, **North-West** and **West**. By noting how these groupings differ in membership according to the various hierarchical cluster analyses, he implicitly gives precedence to groupings which are his own, as similar as possible to all cluster analyses but identical with none. He expresses no preference for any of the four different branching diagrams as they emerge from eight clustering methods.

[P[[NW W]E]] [[P NW][W E]] [P[NW[W E]]] [[[P NW]W]E]

'Periphery' stands for a sample of non-Bantu Bantoid languages, plus 'Lebonya' (= Lengola, Nyali, Bodo), 'Boan' (= Bwa, Bira, Kumu), and 'Buneya' (= Bubi, Tunen, Yambasa). 'North-West' stands for the remainder of zone A languages, plus the languages of the Myene (B.10) and Tsogo (B.30) groups. 'West' stands for the remainder of zone B, plus zones C, H, K (except Kwangali), and R, as well as a few languages of group L.20 (Kete, Mbagani, Lwalwa). All remaining languages are subsumed under 'East'.

The other generalization appears in the final chapter (p. 223), where M. Mann carefully supports Jan Vansina's view.<sup>2</sup> Vansina, eminent historian but also a linguist, has indeed presented his conclusions from this project four years before the report reviewed here was published. Combining some branchings suggested by lexicostatistics with his own vast knowledge and insight, and superimposing the wave model over the tree model, he paints a picture of 'Bantu differentiation' rather than 'Bantu expansion'.

The book provides an extraordinarily well-constructed documentation of a rich and complex set of data. It does not produce the tree-structured historical classification which some have expected. It can and should, however, stimulate Bantuists to put renewed and creative efforts into the task of reconstructing the history of this unique language family and its speakers.

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## THE GREAT LAKES REGION IN THE VERY LONG RUN

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*The Great Lakes of Africa: Two Thousand Years of History.* By JEAN-PIERRE CHRÉTIEN. Translated by SCOTT STRAUSS. New York: Zone Books, 2003. Pp. 503. \$36 (ISBN 1-890951-34-X).

KEY WORDS: Eastern Africa, Rwanda, Burundi, precolonial, colonial, post-colonial.

Compared to the timeless fantasies adorning the region of the Great Lakes since various quests started to attract European explorers in the nineteenth century, a period of two thousand years seems in tune with academic self-restriction. This time-span, and the extent of the area, would make most specialists hesitate. Thirty years of scholarship have given Jean-Pierre Chrétien the assets necessary to take up the challenge. This synthesis is accessible to new readers, reopens perspectives on the Great Lakes region and makes the reader familiar both with ancient economic

<sup>2</sup> Jan Vansina, 'New linguistic evidence and "the Bantu expansion"', *Journal of African History*, 36 (1995), 173-95.

developments and with the more recent transformations which initiated the political entities Europeans met. Startled by appearances they could easily interpret within their own visions of political integration, they would contribute to reinforce those structures. They would give selective credit to local myths and accredit distortions of history. Monographs presenting each country as isolated made it easy to forget the historicity of divisions and to manipulate reconstructed pasts for modern purposes.

This brilliant synthesis of archaeological and linguistic data describes a region already densely populated, in some parts, from the beginning of our era. The current agricultural complex – including agriculturalists, fishers and cattle raisers – is shown emerging during the first millennium. Favourable climatic conditions, a location at the crossroads of ecological zones, had fostered there a fertile hybrid of African, Asian and American traditions well before the beginning of European colonization. Cattle and Asian crops were part of the landscape when a new economic revolution followed the introduction of various American crops, from the sixteenth century. The resulting demographic pressure exacerbated the competition between agriculture and pastoralism, activities pursued by all peoples present in the area. The hypothesis of nilotic invasions being refuted, and the practice of pastoralism by Bantu speakers attested, the question of ethnic cleavages is opened and remains the unifying thread of the book. Socio-economic realities and their perceptions are analysed for various periods.

The next step towards de-mythologizing the Great Lakes area is to show how kingship emerged, and the nature of its power. Religion was the basis of power in the area. With clanship at the basis of the pre-kingship organization, the fact that all groups shared the same patrilineal clans comes to the fore. The Rwandan case is given special attention, but reference to d'Hertefelt's work should call for a reconsideration of a synthesis partly marred by biased evidence and by a shortage of careful field observation. The ancestor cult, on the other hand, stresses continuity and could be more incorporated into the analysis of the transition from clanship to kingship as the main organizing structure of society. Clans kept their ritual meanings within the kingship rituals, and the ancestor cult was foreign to neither. Chrétien's fascinating account of the variations of the Cwezi myth and of the related Wamara cults underlines the cultural unity of the area, and hints at the connections between these cults and clanship. But it does not give much attention to the ancestor cult and its popular performances expressing various aspects of local religion. Rather, it evokes a relation between the Wamara (Ryangombe) cults and kingship along the lines of a structuralist approach familiar from de Heusch.

As Chrétien points out, the ways in which power took root in the popular imagination escaped European minds. Colonizers imposed their own visions on the countries they administered, and concerned themselves with ruling through reinterpreted political structures. If missionaries were active in promoting the Hamitic myth in the whole area, its impact varied and higher education further diversified its effects.

The final chapter, 'Independence regained and the obsession with genocide', gives an account of the postcolonial period, with an emphasis on the ethnic legacy and on the use made of it by some members of the new elites. The old and new threads with which the new social fabric was woven are described, but in a fashion which leaves loose ends. This may leave some readers a bit hungry for the quality they are used to from the preceding chapters.

Chrétien resorts to his stupendous erudition on the region to provide a wide readership with a meaningful and critical reconstruction of its history. This much-needed work raises questions. Some specialists will object on details and on interpretations, but all will benefit from reopening a past lived within structures

different from those often described in previous studies. This opening calls for the application to the present of the paradigm Chrétien applies to the past. The resources and conditions that fostered competition between groups of people who could resort to the past to govern the present and make the worst of it would then be taken into account. We would then see the full meaning of the manipulation of ethnicity in the contemporary international context.

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## CHURCH AND STATE IN 'MEDIEVAL' ETHIOPIA

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*Le domaine des rois éthiopiens (1270–1527): espace, pouvoir et monachisme.* By MARIE-LAURE DERAT. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2003. Pp. 383. €25 (ISBN 2-85944-480-7).

KEY WORDS: Ethiopia, Christianity, precolonial, kingdoms.

This is a valuable contribution to Ethiopian history and to the scanty literature on 'medieval' Ethiopia. The issues addressed are of comparative value to students of other Sudanic African kingdoms: the origins of dynasties, mythic and geographical; the landscape of power; the networks of holymen; the relations between kings and holymen; control of land and the wealth it produces; and the institutions for disseminating royal power. Historians of Sudanic Africa have been too little aware of the parallel ways in which political and religious authority worked themselves out in both Muslim and Christian polities south of the Sahara. They could learn a lot from this book.

The book covers ground originally staked out by Tadesse Tamrat's classic study, *Church and State in Ethiopia, 1270–1527* (Oxford, 1972), and revisited by Steven Kaplan's *The Monastic Holy Man and the Christianization of the Early Solomonic Empire* (Wiesbaden, 1984). While using much of the same primary material – published chronicles, hagiographies, contemporary Arab and European accounts – Marie-Laure Derat draws on a whole new generation of textual scholarship as well as on new Ethiopian manuscript sources, and on insights gained from her field work in Ethiopia. *Le domaine* also gains from its tighter geographical and thematic focus.

Derat organizes her material into seven chapters, further organized into three sections. Part I deals with the emergence of a new royal 'domain' in the provinces of Amhāra and Šäwa in the late thirteenth century; Part II considers the relations between monks and the kings from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries; and Part III explores the political and religious framework created by the institution of royal churches and monasteries.

In Part I Derat successfully frees herself from one of the abiding tyrannies of Ethiopian historiography: the tendency to view the history of the Christian Kingdom through the lens of Šäwa, a province as often on the edge of developments as at their center. Derat argues that the new dynasty emerged from within the historic province of Amhāra and only in the fourteenth century extended its power southward into Šäwa, which then became its operative base and the source of much of its wealth. She shows how the Solomonic continually reinforced their ties to Amhāra, a theme to which she returns in Part III.

Part II takes up the relations between the monks and the throne. Derat first explores the intricately layered traditions arising from the rival claims of the

monasteries of Däbrä Hayq and Däbrä Asbo (later Däbrä Libanos) and their respective leaders, the thirteenth-century saints Iyäsus Mo'a and Täklä Haymanot. She confirms Taddesse's account that the latter, much more famous to posterity, played a decidedly second fiddle to the former, and that this pattern persisted through the relations of their spiritual sons into the fifteenth century. Her account rests primarily on the hagiographical literature and benefits from careful attention to the dating of the documents and the contexts within which they arose. She revisits at some length the famous conflicts between the monks and the rulers of the mid-fourteenth century arguing that, while these were indeed intense, they were less wide-ranging, and more closely linked to succession conflicts, than once thought. Finally, with rather more attention to the monastic side of the story, she confirms Taddesse's account of the emergence of a new synthesis of church–state relations in the fifteenth century.

Part III describes the emergence of the institution of royal churches and monasteries, a development barely hinted at in the earlier literature, arguing persuasively that it played a central role in disseminating monarchical influence throughout Amhāra and Šäwa and into the increasingly important regions of Gojjam and Lake T'ana. Derat notes how these royal endowments intertwined with the funerary practices of the Solomonic to create royal shrines and networks of clergy dependent on royal beneficence.<sup>1</sup>

Necessarily, there is much that is not here or touched on only tangentially: the Muslim polities of the Rift Valley and the eastern highlands; the fraught relations between these states and the Christian kingdom; the wider connections of Christian Ethiopia; the expansion of the state deeply into the southern and southwestern highlands; evolving ethnic relations throughout the region; developments in the northern highlands; and the church outside the monastic nexus. But Derat's book gains from the closeness of her focus: geographically on the territories on which, most intimately, Solomonic power rested, and thematically on monasticism, an institution which, with the new dynasty, most vividly expressed the energies of the period. This focus, along with the amount of new material she synthesizes, allows her to make a fundamental contribution to our understanding of the foundational period of Solomonic rule.

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## EXCAVATING NYANGA AGRICULTURAL HISTORY

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*Nyanga: Ancient Fields, Settlements and Agricultural History in Zimbabwe.* By

ROBERT SOPER. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa, 2002. Pp. ix + 277.

£50 (ISBN 1-872566-12-X).

KEY WORDS: Zimbabwe, precolonial, archaeology, agriculture.

Eastern Zimbabwe's Nyanga region is one of the few areas of Africa where an extensive fossil landscape of past agricultural activity survives for archaeological scrutiny. Nyanga has attracted interest from the earliest phases of archaeological enquiry in Zimbabwe, but until now little attention has been paid to the wider

<sup>1</sup> This story is carried through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Donald Crummey, *Land and Society in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia: From the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century* (Urbana, 2000).

landscape surrounding the few excavated settlements, or to integrating data from them with the evidence for past agricultural practices embodied in that landscape's terraces, cultivation ridges and water-delivery furrows. It is to Robert Soper's credit that these omissions have now been repaired through the fieldwork he conducted in 1993–7 on behalf of the University of Zimbabwe and the British Institute in Eastern Africa (BIEA). *Nyanga* provides a full, extensively illustrated report on this fieldwork and the conclusions drawn from it. It begins by contextualizing the project in regard to previous fieldwork, the regional environment and broader studies of precolonial agricultural intensification in Africa. It also presents the research strategy followed, which used aerial photography to identify potential areas for ground survey, moving on to locate, record and selectively excavate sites and areas with past cultivation traces visible from the air. The main excavation focus was placed on investigating the construction and use of agricultural terraces, establishing the age of settlements and emphasizing the recovery of plant and animal remains.

Chapters 4–7 discuss the project's main findings and represent its principal achievement. A key contribution is a much sounder chronology for the Nyanga complex. Radiocarbon dates and studies of settlement morphology, ceramic typology and glass beads show it is both older and younger than previously thought. Extending from the fourteenth to mid-nineteenth century, it spans almost the whole of the Later Iron Age, though relations with earlier communities still require investigation. Within this period, three phases of settlement activity can be distinguished, each with different altitudinal and spatial distributions; changing climatic conditions and the effects of anthropogenic forest clearance probably explain some of this patterning. Landscape features are harder to date because of radiocarbon's imprecision and the need to assume associations with nearby settlements. Soper nevertheless mounts a convincing argument for hillslope terracing being mostly seventeenth to eighteenth century in date and for the cultivation ridge systems found in lower-lying situations and valleys probably being contemporary with them. The furrows used to flush out cattle pits to produce liquid manure, provide water for gardens and domestic use and (sometimes) irrigate fields have a longer history, continuing into the early colonial period.

With a sounder chronology established, Nyanga's agricultural economy is approached afresh. There is a good discussion of likely cultigens and of how terraced fields and cultivation ridges may have been used for various cereal, root and legume crops. Highland soils in particular must have required their fertility to be replenished for successful long-term cultivation and for this manuring must have been essential; the lack of domestic middens or dung accumulations in byres is consistent with the practice. That cattle were stalled in the pit structures central to most settlements in order to concentrate manure production is confirmed by archaeological evidence for the presence of suitably sized dwarf cattle. This finding allows estimates to be made of overall manure production, agricultural productivity and population size, thus building up a more human-scale model of Nyanga settlement history. This leads to discussion of possible complementary and co-operative economic arrangements between highland and lowland communities in parts of the Nyanga region, social stratification at some of the larger sites and the identification of Muozi as a specialized rainmaking centre. All these conclusions and discussions are underpinned by the detailed reports on individual settlement excavations and associated technical appendices that constitute the second half of the monograph.

In sum, *Nyanga* dramatically reshapes and extends knowledge of the archaeology of this part of Africa and contributes to wider debates about the scale and consequences of agricultural intensification south of the Sahara. Beautifully

produced, with illustrations of very high quality, it will stand as a landmark study for many years. Not all areas of interest are covered here, and future research should focus on building a more nuanced and (crucially) local palaeoenvironmental record (from pollen cores and possibly tree-rings) and on trying to identify the crops once grown in Nyanga's fields (by searching for phytoliths and charred soft tissues, for example). The relations between Nyanga's inhabitants and polities like Great Zimbabwe and Mutapa, as well as the possibilities for exploring the belief systems likely present in how they organized their settlements (and landscape?), could also be investigated further. That these can be pinpointed as areas for future study is, however, a result of the systematic and detailed research reported here. As interest in the archaeological study of agricultural intensification in sub-Saharan Africa grows, further work by the BIEA along the lines developed here will be eagerly awaited.

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## IRON, RICE AND SLAVES ON THE GUINEA-BISSAU COAST

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*Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves: Transformations along the Guinea-Bissau Coast, 1400–1900.* By WALTER HAWTHORNE. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann, 2003. Pp. xvi + 258. \$24.95, paperback (ISBN 0-325-07049-0).

KEY WORDS: Guinea-Bissau, precolonial, agriculture, slave trade.

Until recently, the history of the Balanta peoples of Guinea-Bissau constituted a blank in our knowledge of the Upper Guinea Coast. Hawthorne has now admirably filled that gap, for the period from the arrival of the earliest Portuguese traders, five centuries ago, through the development of the Atlantic slave trade, to the decline of that trade and the introduction of 'legitimate commerce'. This masterful study situates the Balanta within the broader context both of Upper Guinea Coast history and, more significantly, of small-scale or decentralized West African societies in general. His conclusions have implications for our understanding of the dynamics whereby such societies, in West Africa generally, responded to the challenges posed by the growth of the slave trade. He convincingly refutes the prevailing hypothesis that centralized African states invariably benefited from participation in the slave trade at the expense of the small-scale societies that inhabited the 'hinterland'.

In both the micro-study and the broader contextual analysis, the book makes major contributions to the history of precolonial West Africa. Hawthorne's empirical data are immensely strong. At the same time his theoretical framework, based as it is on an extensive and detailed familiarity with theories and case studies of the slave trade, is both nuanced and convincing. The evidence is derived from two categories of sources: European written records, primarily Portuguese travel narratives, both published and in manuscript; and oral sources, gathered during the author's extensive fieldwork among the Balanta. Few American scholars have the linguistic ability to make adequate use of the wealth of early Portuguese documents, both published and in the various archives in Lisbon. Hawthorne takes full advantage of these sources.

The oral testimony marshaled in this book demonstrates meticulous fieldwork. In addition, reading this material, I can feel the mutual respect that the author and

the subjects of his study have for each other. This is all too rare in fieldwork situations, and is very much to his credit. It is already an achievement to learn the local language, to earn the trust of one's hosts and then to collect oral testimony from the field. It is more impressive, however, to bring a critical sense of historical analysis to the interpretation of this data. One of the strengths of this book is that Hawthorne brings an historian's critical judgment to bear both on oral and on written sources.

For example, a close reading of Almada (1594) leads him to observe that this writer, who knew the coast well, does not mention rice as a Balanta crop. In itself, this silence does not necessarily prove that the Balanta were not then growing rice. But Hawthorne correlates this silence with the subsequent entry – which he documents – of the Balanta into the Atlantic trade, and with their evident desire for iron. In addition, he refers to oral testimony; together, this evidence greatly strengthens his argument. The resulting historical thesis is skillfully documented and convincingly argued: that the Balanta entered the Atlantic trade in large measure to obtain iron; that access to the metal enabled them to begin to exploit the mangrove swamps in order to grow wet rice; and that at the same time, they moved from dispersed housing patterns to compact settlements, both for protection against slave raids and to obtain the labor force needed to prepare the swamps for rice. For its combination of diverse historical sources, this argument is a methodological 'tour de force'.

The book is clearly written and well organized. It includes an admirably detailed discussion of the role of women in Balanta society, with particular attention to the percentage of female slaves exported from Guinea-Bissau. In the areas where Hawthorne's research overlaps with my own work on the Luso-Africans, in his discussion of the 'lancados', or Portuguese who settled among Africans on the coast in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, I am more or less completely in agreement with his interpretation of the historical sources (this is not necessarily either a strength or a weakness; it is, however, to say that I agree with his judgment). In addition, the amplitude of his historical documentation is truly impressive. In brief, this book is a major addition to the literature on the precolonial Upper Guinea Coast.

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## DYNAMICS OF EURAFRICAN HISTORY

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704269444

*Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century.* By GEORGE E. BROOKS. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003. Pp. xxiii + 355. (ISBN 0-8214-1485-2); paperback (ISBN 0-8214-1486-0).

KEY WORDS: Western Africa, precolonial, Euraficans, trade, gender, states, decentralized societies, religion.

George Brooks surveys a large part of West Africa over more than three hundred years in this history of 'Euraficans', the offspring of European merchants and African women. Geographically, the 'western Africa' of this work consists of 1,500 kilometers of the West African coast from Senegal to Sierra Leone. Although Brooks spends little time on definitions, he argues that Euraficans formed a 'new and unprecedented element' (p. xxi) in Western Africa that emerged out of



centuries-old landlord–stranger relationships. European merchants were denied the right to own land or pass on their property to their descendants, but they were allowed to cohabit with local women, creating trade alliances with their hosts. Brooks argues for a significant divergence between the status of Eurafricans in stratified and patrilineal societies north of the Gambia compared to acephalous and matrilineal societies south of the Gambia. In stratified societies Europeans were not allowed to marry free women and their properties were expropriated by ruling elites upon their death. Their children and slaves thus often became dependants of local elites. In small-scale and matrilineal societies, on the other hand, Eurafricans were treated as free members of the host societies, which allowed some of them to prosper as merchants and others to become reassimilated into the African host societies. This dynamic, which Brooks identifies and documents in his case studies, does not receive the sustained analytical attention it deserves, given the rich evidence he uncovers.

Brooks's new work draws upon his previous publications on landlord–stranger ties, climate change and Eurafrican women (*nharas* and *signares*) for much of its analytical framework. Rather than a tightly focused work on Eurafricans, Brooks has written a broad survey of European-African commerce that sets the Eurafricans in the context of European trade rivalries, commercial networks linking the coast to the hinterland and the shifting patterns and fortunes of export commerce. His evidence comes from a thorough survey of published primary sources. Much of the narrative framework, which is organized chronologically, is based on the analysis of European primary sources, which means that there is much attention to European wars and treaties and to efforts to found or revive various European companies. Many of the chapters of the book contain one or more subsections that summarize primary sources that Brooks deems to be of particular importance. This multifaceted approach has advantages and disadvantages. At times Brooks seems momentarily to lose sight of the Eurafricans on his larger narrative canvas. In the end he has charted out a vast territory that should inspire new research. Future historians of this topic will be in his debt.

One of the implicit arguments of the book is that the Luso-Africans who emerge first from Portuguese-African trade form a distinct and unified group that can be studied over time. In a passage that defines their essential characteristics, Brooks writes: 'They wore European-style garments, displayed crucifixes and rosaries attesting their adherence to Catholicism, spoke Crioulo (which derived from Portuguese and West Atlantic languages), and asserted that they were "Portuguese," "whites," and "Christians" – claims derided by Portuguese and other Europeans' (p. xxi). The existence of Luso-Africans who fit this description is amply attested in primary sources, but their status as a distinct group over time and space is more problematic. Were Luso-Africans (and the groups who succeeded them that Brooks dubs Franco-Africans and Anglo-Africans) a distinct cultural group that reproduced itself over time or a group that was constantly recreated by the relations formed between European merchants and African women? Were many Luso-Africans reabsorbed into the African host societies over time? What role did the different forms of 'marriage' in stratified and acephalous societies play in creating conditions of continuity or discontinuity? How did the economic activities of Eurafricans in different parts of Western Africa affect the emergence and stability of Luso-Africans as a distinct group? These questions deserve more consideration than they receive. My reading of Brooks's evidence suggests that more attention to these questions would sharpen the analysis of why Luso-Africans 'disappear' or lose their cultural distinctiveness in regions like the Petite Côte, while they persist and prosper in Cacheu and

other regions south of the Gambia. These latter groups, as Brooks demonstrates in his most significant case study, had a long-term role in the kola trade between Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Gambia region and benefited from the different landlord–stranger relationships that prevailed in small-scale societies. For similar reasons, I find Brooks’s argument that the ‘Franco-Africans’ of Gorée and Saint-Louis or the ‘Anglo-Africans’ of Sierra Leone were direct successors of the Luso-Africans to be unconvincing.

George Brooks has assembled a large array of data that documents the importance of Eurafricans in the trade of Western Africa over the course of more than three centuries. His book is the best available guide to this important topic to date.

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JAMES SEARING

### A WOMAN AND A WAR

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704279440

*Yaa Asantewaa and the Asante–British War of 1900–1*. By A. ADU BOAHEN. Edited with Editor’s Notes by Emmanuel Akyeampong. Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers; Oxford: James Currey, 2003. Pp. 182. No price given (ISBN 0-85255-443-5); £9.95, paperback (ISBN 9988-550-99-5).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, imperialism, resistance, memory, gender.

Professor Adu Boahen is widely acclaimed as one of Ghana’s most distinguished historians. He was engaged in several projects when, in May 2000, he was incapacitated by an illness that obliged him to abandon work on them. One was the book that is reviewed here. It was originally intended to be launched in Kumase as part of the centenary celebrations of the events described as ‘the Asante–British War of 1900–1’, and there was agreement that especial emphasis would be placed on the part played by an undoubtedly charismatic woman, Yaa Asantewaa. When Boahen was stricken, only a first draft of the study had been written. By the end of 2001 it was sadly apparent that he would be unable to produce a finalized version. He asked his friend and associate, Professor Emmanuel Akyeampong, to edit the draft and see it through publication. Akyeampong agreed. He added a brief background survey, deleted a few sections for a variety of (good) reasons, and made many changes that were for the most part cosmetic. Otherwise, he notes, ‘I tried not to change the substance of Professor Boahen’s arguments or the evidence as presented’. Akyeampong was surely right in this decision, but there is a problem. The reader can now do no more than guess at the changes that Boahen would have made in his later drafts. He might, one hopes, have made use of Robert E. Hamilton’s thoughtful study of the period, ‘Asante, 1895–1900: prelude to war’ (Ph.D., Northwestern University, 1978), and he certainly planned to include more on Kwabena Kyere of Bantama who, hanged by the British on 25 November 1900, had been senior field commander of those Asante who took to arms (see *Ghana Studies*, 3 (2000), 56–9).

It is well known that, after the British military occupation of Asante in 1896, treaties of protection were signed with each of its component divisions, and each divisional head was made directly responsible to a British resident stationed in Kumase. It is also well known that many of these divisions remained, for whatever reasons, pragmatically neutral during the war of 1900–1, and some actively

supported the British. Boahen places Dwaben, Kokofu and Mampon in the former category (p. 166), and Agona, Bekwai, Kumawu and Nsuta in the latter (p. 173). 'Were they', he asks, 'pro-British, or as the British officers called them "loyal chiefs"', and therefore traitors to the Golden Stool?'. He advances the view that Dwaben, Kokofu and Mampon 'did surreptitiously support the uprising to the extent that their circumstances could allow', and therefore 'remained loyal and faithful to the Golden Stool' (pp. 172-3). Some may see special pleading in this. After all, the Golden Stool had been hidden; its rightful occupant, the Asantehene, was a political prisoner of the British, and the highest authority in the land was, *de facto* if not *de jure*, the British resident. Moreover, since the civil wars of 1884-8, the idea had been gaining ground in 'progressive' circles that the future development of the Asante nation depended upon reshaping the 'traditional' political machine embodied in the Golden Stool, and there were many who saw the British administration of the Gold Coast Colony as a potential ally in the process. In the circumstances of the turn of the nineteenth century, the neutrality of many divisions should surely not be treated, *pace* Boahen, as constituting treason against the Asante nation.

The career of Yaa Asantewaa herself demonstrates something of the incongruous nature of the times. On 10 February 1896, as Edwesoheemaa (that is, Edweso 'queenmother'), she accepted a British offer of 'Friendship and Protection'. Nine months later she and the British resident were engaged in a dispute that had to do with a gold mining concession that she had been instrumental in granting. The resident ruled that Edweso had no right to the land in question. Over the next two or three years Yaa Asantewaa became a leading advocate of a war to drive out the British, thus herself exemplifying Boahen's observation that 'the assumption of concession rights and royalties by the colonial government further alarmed and enraged Asante chiefs and land owners. This became one of the major causes of the 1900 War' (p. 33). Boahen has done well to extol the virtues of this extraordinary woman, showing beyond doubt that she came to exercise a quite decisive influence on the course of the war even if the extent to which she herself actually engaged in combat remains moot.

The title of Boahen's book, with its reference to 'the Asante-British War of 1900-1', is pre-emptive in character. There was certainly a *war* in 1900-1. Those Asante who took up arms fought skilfully and bravely, as Boahen shows, but faltered before the overwhelming superiority of British military technology. Can the war, however, be accurately described as an Asante-British one? In 1940 a writer posed the question very well in the pages of *The Ashanti Pioneer*. Under the headline 'Ashanti Conquered - in what war?', Osafoadua Amankwatia perspicaciously asked how the defeat of Yaa Asantewaa could have provided the British with 'sufficient ground for a claim to the whole of Ashanti?' (see *Ghana Studies*, 3 (2000), p. 13). In fact British spin-doctors (as one might now think of them) opportunistically spun a war fought by all Asantes out of one fought by some Asantes. London was thus enabled to ignore the treaties of protection it had signed with individual divisions, and in 1901 to declare all-Asante a colony by right of conquest! It was a brilliant piece of political chicanery.

The good news is that Adu Boahen decided to devote time to producing the first full-length study of Yaa Asantewaa and her role in the war of 1900-1. The sad news is that he has been unable to give final shape to a study that could be acclaimed definitive.

## KILIMANJARO ECONOMIC HISTORY RECONSIDERED

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704289447

*Kilimanjaro – A Regional History, 1: Production and Living Conditions, c. 1800–1920.* By LUDGER WIMMELBÜCKER. Münster: Lit Verlag, 2002. Pp. 552. €41.90 (ISBN 3-8258-5846-4).

KEY WORDS: Tanzania, Kenya, precolonial, colonial, economic, famine, gender, trade.

This history of Kilimanjaro from the late eighteenth century to about 1920 seeks to overturn many assumptions about the region's past. Eschewing ethnic designations for the peoples of Kilimanjaro in favor of an analysis of mountain chiefdoms that include Ugweni, Mamba, Kilema, Rombo, Machame, Kibosho, Mochi and Marangu (among others), Wimmelbucker sees the advent of international trade from the eighteenth century as the most important dynamic for political and social change on the 'mountain of the caravans'. In particular, the author argues that the search for ivory led to shifting political alliances between mountain chiefdoms and savanna pastoralists, especially Maasai. Access to iron, cattle, women, hunters, firearms and allies who might provide soldiers were important elements in changing power relationships. In telling this story of a long nineteenth century characterized by continuing conflict, Wimmelbucker disputes Helge Kjekshus's portrayal of precolonial East Africa as a time of prosperity before colonialism ushered in forced labor, disease and land alienation that in turn disrupted and impoverished rural societies. He also takes issue with Jim Griblin's assertion that an ideology of patronage was the basic operating mechanism within precolonial rural societies, emphasizing instead that gender and generational conflict, as well as competition between neighboring societies, were important dynamics in the changing conditions on the mountain and the shift from one hegemonic power to another.

Turning to the colonial period, while the author makes it clear that colonialism was premised on racism and the search for material advantage, he nonetheless emphasizes the agency of individuals within mountain societies as able to effect positive change under German rule. The access to wage labor enabled a younger generation of men to invest profits into new production regimes and ensure food security. Famine itself motivated Africans as well as European settlers to produce food for the market, allowing the Kilimanjaro population to grow after the 1890s conquest decade. Wimmelbucker's conception of colonial-era prosperity on Kilimanjaro has much in common with John Iliffe's view of the emergence of African modernizers and market-oriented peasants, though he downplays the role of coffee in favor of maize as the more revolutionary market crop in the region. While the author seeks to include a gender analysis in this study, the evidence does not allow him to push the margins very far. It is doubtful that household dynamics were as rosy as the author asserts given the intense individualization that favored men over women as wage laborers in the colonial economy.

Because this book is so wide ranging and attempts to piece together almost every facet of life on Kilimanjaro for over a century – an impossible task given the author's goal of looking at regional history rather than following one chiefdom over a *longue durée* – it necessarily falls short in some respects. Far too often one wishes the author would inject Kilimanjaro into a wider political environment. While occasionally the author refers to events on neighboring Mount Meru or the Pare Mountains, it is usually to corroborate thin evidence for Kilimanjaro rather than to create a dialogue with the rich scholarship on those regions. Moreover, Wimmelbucker neglects policy changes among German colonial rulers that affected

African life. In short, Kilimanjaro seems to be far too insulated as a region in this study, despite the emphasis on the caravan trade or the advent of diseases such as smallpox in acting as catalysts of change. The effects of rinderpest, for example, are hardly discernible. Even though the pandemic might have bypassed the stall-fed cattle of the mountain, as the author points out, the refugee movements of savanna pastoralists and survival strategies of women that other authors have documented surely affected Kilimanjaro more dramatically than is evident in this work. While labor dynamics on Kilimanjaro are discussed at length, the author does not attempt to follow workers down the mountain to other parts of German East Africa and trace their experiences elsewhere, an important omission given that the labor-card system that existed in the settler-dominated northeast gave mountain men ample motivation to migrate to regions where oversight was not as stringent and wages were higher. While it might not be possible to fill these gaps with the author's copious oral evidence, or with the travelers' and missionary reports that are the primary evidence for this study, the work of other scholars requires more attention. The quick release for publication of a 2000 University of Hamburg dissertation is obvious in the poor editorial oversight. This work could easily have been culled by 40 per cent by reorganizing the chapters, eliminating duplication of argument and extraneous material and curbing the author's stream-of-consciousness approach in arriving at conclusions.

That said, there is much about this work that is compelling and important. Wimmelbucker directs scholarly attention to what must have been an enhanced role for hunters in the nineteenth-century Tanzanian political economy, the center of gravity of this work. Indeed, the attempt to reconstruct the immediate pre-colonial history of this region is a welcome and important addition to the historical literature on East Africa, and here historians of Kenya as well as Tanzania will find much of interest. The author frames the work as an attempt 'to contribute to the understanding of hunger and famine from a historical perspective' and in so doing he provides an innovative look at how the agency of Kilimanjaro subalterns managed to overcome the threat of famine and food shortage through personal initiative rather than relying on the actions of the colonial state or social superordinates. Wimmelbucker provides a fresh perspective on the dynamics of European settler society around Kilimanjaro and their response to famine in producing for an African market for their own profit. Finally, the author's detailed reconstruction of patterns of famine from the precolonial through the colonial period offers new insights into dynamics of political change and motives for labor migration.

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THADDEUS SUNSERI

## NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE AMBAQUISTA NETWORK

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704299443

*Afrikanische Pioniere: Trägerkarawanen im westlichen Zentralafrika (c. 1850–1890).*

By BEATRIX HEINTZE. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Otto Lembeck, 2002. Pp. 320.

€25, paperback (ISBN 3-87476-410-9).

KEY WORDS: Angola, Central Africa, precolonial, Christianity, trade.

In the early 1910s, on a visit to the Mussuco mission in the western Kwango basin, Mgr Lima Vidal was prompted by the funeral monument to an Ambaquista to devote some thoughts in celebration of people whom he regarded as ubiquitous

and eternal cultural interpreters between Africa and the Western world. Vidal also transcribed and published an Ambaquista letter; it is replete with learned allusions, including to Camões and Livingstone, and is signed by one João Gonçalves d'Azevedo. This person (and his obsession with literary tradition) is not absent from the survey carefully compiled by Beatrix Heintze. Her ambition takes her beyond what is announced in the title. To be sure, she depicts with great care the world of caravans, their organization, their hierarchies, their itineraries, their standard products (e.g. salt, ivory, firearms – produced in part by Tshokwe craftsmen) as well as a hotchpotch of odd goods: Worcestershire sauce and cognac for Max Buchner, a Portuguese throne for the Mwant Yav, instruments for the band which accompanied a Lunda embassy. However, Heintze looks beyond the world of transport as she explores a whole way of life: tracing crafts, agricultural practices, architectural designs and clothing fashions that were introduced by the Ambaquistas into the Lunda-Luba world, along with commercial skills, credit and transport networks. Challenging the worn-out cliché of the isolated dark continent, she felicitously speaks of the 'internet' linking the actors of the times. Central to her analysis is the presence in the Ambaquista universe of the written word: books, legal documents, improvised schools.

A semi-urban network of small settlements gave structure to the Ambaquista diaspora. Spreading over central and eastern Angola and beyond, the colonies incorporating Ambaquistas and their clients appeared to enlightened contemporaries such as Dias de Carvalho as the crucible of progress. One can speak here of a new historical imagination taking shape, bearing on the past as well as the future. Heintze perceptively notes that it was through the Ambaquista channel that European explorers gathered evidence of the African past, thus setting the tone which has prevailed until recently in the written historiography of the region.

Modernity did not go unchallenged in this society as the Ambaquista colonists continued to inhabit the ancient African world of charms, oracles, healers: vows to the Holy Virgin of Muxima went side by side with fetishes and witchcraft. The modern dimension of the colonies also went along with a close awareness of genealogies. Behind the general Ambaquista identity, Heintze is able to trace a variety of social itineraries. She makes her point through a number of portraits. Some salient groups emerge, distinguished by genealogies, matrimonial alliances and so forth. One was the Bezerra family, spread over Lunda and far into modern Kasai. It included some of the most attractive personalities in this gallery. For their part, the Coimbra clan included some less savoury characters. Its alliances can be traced through Bié, Katanga, the Upper Zambezi and even Zanzibar. Other groups were attached to particular ethnic backgrounds, such as Tshokwe or Imbangala, or were linked to a shared historical experience.

One of the great contributions of the book is to introduce individuality into an historical landscape which is too often approached impersonally. Here we are in a world of names, of biographical data, buttressed by a rich iconography. The album of photographs from the Carvalho expedition to the Lunda capital is one of the gems brought to light by Heintze and it is turned to good use. Photographs appear here as simply human documents, presented free of all the cant which permeates much of today's discussion of photography as an instrument of cultural oppression. The author is not blind, however, to the deeply hierarchical worldview of the historical actors she is bringing back to life. Ladders of scorn are present in her story. Based as it is on a variety of sources – specially Carvalho and abundant German testimonies – this book leaves no doubt as to the depth of prejudice felt by Europeans towards the 'semi-civilized' world of the Ambaquistas. The latter in turn showed wanton insensitivity when it came to raiding the 'pagans', the despised *gentio*, a basic social frontier which runs through modern African history.

*Afrikanische Pioniere* deals with a frontier. The Atlantic-centred vision of the social and economic dynamics of the area leads us to think in terms of a centre, on the coast, and of a frontier as a periphery, somewhere in the interior. Seen from inside Africa, however, the frontier society was itself a centre: the real source of riches for both the coastal and the inland economies. The constellation of the Ambaquista settlements served as a counterpoise to the ancient centres of power and their dependencies. In fact, the cosmopolitan and patriarchal character of the new settlements increasingly challenged the more formal political constructions inherited from an ancient past.

Was this process entirely new, or can we see in the African clergy of the seventeenth century, or in the Njinga of that period, the forerunners of the Ambaquista world of the late nineteenth century? Has the concept of frontier lost its usefulness since the Ambaquista episode? Heintze is too prudent a scholar to have ventured much outside her chronological and geographical set of references. Yet she opens the way for fruitful research into both the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century antecedents of her topic as well as into today's 'urbanized frontier' world of the Lunda Norte and Western Kasai regions (see ongoing research by F. De Boeck). Indeed this work should remain a pioneering landmark.

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JEAN-LUC VELLUT

## RECENT HISTORICAL CONTEXT, EXTINCT CULTURAL EXPRESSION

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704309448

*Der Mond als Schuh : Zeichnungen der San : The Moon as Shoe : Drawings of the San.*

Edited by MIKLÓS SZALAY. Zurich: Scheidegger und Spiess, 2002. Pp. 311. SFr 98; €65 (ISBN 3-85881-138-6).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, archaeology, arts, culture.

This is an ambitious undertaking that succeeded in stimulating my thoughts about the construction of knowledge on the boundaries of history, ethnography and archaeology. The volume is built around the presentation of some 229 drawings and water colours made by /Xam and !Xun people interviewed by Lucy Lloyd and Wilhelm Bleek in Mowbray between 1875 and 1881. After an editorial introduction by Miklós Szalay, the illustrations are preceded by five essays by prominent ethnographers, historians and an archaeologist (Roger Hewitt, Megan Bieseke, Janette Deacon, Mathias Guenther and Elias Canetti), and followed by two reflections by practising artists (Frederic Bruly Bouabre and Keith Dietrich). There are parallel texts in German and English for all essays, notes and captions. The book is carefully produced, the captions fully reproduced and the commentators well briefed. It is a valuable addition to the growing archive on the 'Bleek and Lloyd informants'.

What struck me as I read the book, but more so as I visited the accompanying exhibition of these drawings and water colours in the (former) National Gallery at the (now) Iziko Museums of Cape Town, was the question 'What is actually being shown?' The two /Xam artists, Dialkwain and /Han#kass'o were important informants who contributed many pages to the archive, whilst the four !Xun artists, !Nanni, Tamme, /Uma and Da, were young boys from seven to mid-teens

in age. The work of all six includes some extremely attractive images to my eye, but the feeling grows, encouraged by the commentaries that precede them, that the images are more (or less?) than art. I could not keep from my thoughts the question 'Why are these drawings being published and displayed?'

The commentaries offer a range of answers. In his preface Szalay notes that 'San culture, formerly ignored, has finally gained the recognition it deserves' and hopes that the publication of the drawings will 'promote the cultural self-discovery of the new and democratic South Africa'. There are hints that the images are valuable because they reflect an extinct cultural expression. More specifically, Janette Deacon raises the possibility that the images will help us understand the rock paintings or, more likely she believes, the rock engravings of southern Africa. It is, then, as presumed representatives of a formerly widespread hunter-gatherer population of southern Africa that the artists are celebrated. Da is not a child prodigy whose images qualify somehow as candidates for a National Gallery, but an opportunity to learn about past artists.

But what happens when we discover that the images of Da do not resemble the engravings much, either in content or in composition? They are mostly plants, a rare subject for either engraver or painter. How does our understanding of Da's vocabulary and image choice translate into an understanding of those of an engraver some thousands of years ago? Not at all, I think, especially as we know little of the stimuli to which he might have been trying to respond. Dialkwain and /Han#kass'o are more promising cases, perhaps, as they were older and clearly contributed much in the form of stories to the Bleek and Lloyd archive that has so enriched our understanding of /Xam expressive culture. Some details look interesting: animals predominate, profiles and silhouettes prevail, even the top-down views of frogs, beetles and lizards conform to the notion of presenting an image from the most distinctive perspective. Most images face right, but not all, as in much of San painting.

The problem comes when we try to make use of any similarity or difference between these images and the ancient paintings and engravings. How do we assess significance? Deacon ascribes the difference in image choice between these drawings and the paintings and engravings to the secular context of the former and the 'essentially religious' context of the latter, but Szalay notes that 'in the /Xam culture generally the sacred and profane were not usually considered to be opposites; on the contrary, they were intimately linked, and there was "little or no distinction" between them'. I do not believe we would reliably distinguish male and female animals in these drawings without the captions, yet the distinctions are sometimes obvious in paintings or engravings. Despite Szalay's (I think correct) recognition of 'transformation as a generative principle of San culture' I am not persuaded that it is 'clearly evident in the present contributions'. For example, few images show anything approaching the transformative quality of the therianthropes (figures that appear part-human, part-animal) of Drakensberg paintings.

So how representative of another time, another place can these images be? How significant was the specific historical context of their manufacture? My feeling is that these evocative drawings and water colours are far more significant reflections of the dislocation, displacement and dispossession of some young men in the late nineteenth century than they are clues to the meaning of painted and engraved imagery from past millennia. Another Bleek and Lloyd informant, //Kabbo, spoke poignantly of the 'broken thinking strings' and the separation he felt from a landscape that was being taken from him.



## PUGILISTIC REVISIONISM

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704319444

*The Lion and the Springbok: Britain and South Africa since the Boer War.* By RONALD HYAM and PETER HENSHAW. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Pp. xv + 379. £45; \$60 (ISBN 0-521-82453-2); African ed., no price given (ISBN 0-521-53769-X).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, imperialism, international relations, war, apartheid.

First, some warnings. This is a collection of free-standing articles and papers, most of which have been published before in journals. Both the title and subtitle may be misleading: the title if it is taken to imply that the South African side is given equal prominence with the British; the subtitle because the book starts very solidly *before* the Boer war. In fact the chapter on war origins is one of its best. It also rather thins out after 1961. Further, some readers may be startled and even put off by the slightly aggressive tone of the (new) Introduction towards both economic interpretations of South African history ('Marks-ist', they are dubbed at one point, after Shula Marks), and most newer theoretical approaches. 'History is too important to be left to the stay-at-home theorists' (p. 7), say the authors. They present themselves assertively as unregenerate empiricists, relying on primary government sources above everything. Indeed, the difficulty of getting hold of these in South Africa is their main excuse for not giving that country equal billing. Further, they take what some may see as a narrow view of the reasons why things happened there: 'geopolitical' considerations, mainly, as determined by tiny elites. 'In *general*, our view is that government tends to be disdainful of pressure' (p. 101). Thus, this is in fact a series of essays in British imperial rather than African history, written from a 'high political' point of view.

Accept these limitations, however, if that is what they are, and there is much to be savoured here. There is a logic about collecting these pieces in a volume, because they do have some overarching themes. Two have been alluded to already: the geopolitical factor (first trade routes, then the cold war), and the importance of the 'official mind'. Others are the place of humanitarian principle in British government policy, especially with an eye to the rest of the empire (another kind of geopolitical factor); the lasting significance of the High Commission territories in this connection; Britain's essential weakness *vis-à-vis* the governments of South Africa; and the latter's ambition to expand (a familiar Hyam theme). The book is full of historical 'revisions', often combatively expressed, and new angles and information. The chapter on the 'myth' of magnanimity in connection with the Liberal government's grant of responsible government to the defeated colonies after the Boer war ought to be the last word on this, though a typically waspish 'Afterword' added by Hyam at the end shows how it still has not got through in some historical quarters, 25 years after his original paper first appeared. In two other related chapters Hyam questions the widespread orthodoxy that the British somehow 'traded' African rights in South Africa for Boer-British unity; and suggests that the settlement of 1908-10 was always intended as 'provisional'. Both authors are empathetic towards Britain's dilemmas over the Seretse Khama case in 1952 and UN condemnation of South Africa before 1961, and her general need – again, for wider international reasons – to treat apartheid South Africa as 'half ally and half untouchable' (p. 272). Hyam's chapter on South Africa's 'departure' from the Commonwealth is exemplary. Henshaw contributes excellent essays on Afrikaner South Africa and the Sterling Area, on the Simon's Town naval base discussions, and on South African and British press attitudes towards

each other after the Second World War. The last of these is particularly interesting, showing how anti-apartheid opinion was strongest and most unanimous immediately after the war and right at the end of apartheid, rather than growing steadily, as one might expect. This is all we get on the post-1961 period, despite the authors' insistence that the cutting of the Commonwealth link made no real difference to relations between the two countries, except for a brief 'Epilogue' on South Africa's return to the fold in 1994.

The book is full of strong judgements. Apartheid was 'both lunatic and laughable' (p. 33). Smuts comes out of it badly: a racist and expansionist, much more imperially minded than his British colleagues. Several of the latter do much better from this account, especially those who predicted African rule in South Africa quite early on: it was one of their reasons for *not* throwing their lot in with the whites. Thatcher of course comes out badly by this criterion. Hyam also has some good jokes. Tshekedi was 'threatened with as near an approach to gunboat diplomacy as the Kalahari would permit' (p. 170), and I liked his picture of the BOSS agents who used to sit in on his Cambridge lectures (p. 25n). What with this, and the pugilism, the book is an excellent read. It also works very well, despite its rather untidy genesis, in what it sets out to do: which is to confront and debate the main issues in Anglo-South African diplomatic relations between 1895 and 1961. It must be essential reading on this – even, hopefully, for 'theorisers'.

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BERNARD PORTER

## 'SUMMING UP' ISLAM AND POLITICS IN SUDAN

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704329440

*Islam, Secularism and Politics in Sudan since the Mahdiyya*. By GABRIEL WARBURG.

London: Hurst, 2003. Pp. xvii + 252. £45 (ISBN 1-85065-588-X); £19.95, paperback (ISBN 1-85065-590-1).

KEY WORDS: Sudan, Islam, political.

Gabriel Warburg's latest book on the modern Sudan is, he tells us, his last, and is intended as a summing up. Seen as such, the book would be expected to provide little that was new, but rather to recapitulate, correct, smooth over, expand upon, reiterate in the light of controversy or draw back in the light of events, and most of all to take into account his own and others' findings and conclusions published since his previous works on aspects of the general subject of Islam in the modern Sudan. This indeed is what it does. For the scholar or student of the Sudan, and especially for those interested in an easy point of entry into Warburg's work, this single volume will be of interest and value.

The book is divided into five parts of unequal length: 'Islamization' (pp. 1–21), 'The Mahdist state, 1881–98' (pp. 22–56), 'Religious policy under the condominium [1899–1956]' (pp. 57–141), 'Independent Sudan, 1956–89' (pp. 142–201) and 'Islamism and democracy' (pp. 202–26). The bibliography does not cite all publications mentioned in the footnotes. The two maps look the same as those in an early edition of P. M. Holt and M. W. Daly, *The History of the Sudan* (1979), rendering one of them, 'The modern Sudan', out of date. A list of abbreviations used in the notes erroneously identifies the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (and Army) and the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*. An effort has been made throughout to render 'the Sudan' as 'Sudan', with occasional grating results.

The author's self-conscious apprehension of criticism for yet another book on the same subject is addressed forthrightly in preliminary remarks (pp. ix–xi) and even on the back cover blurb ('Why another book on Islam and politics in Sudan?'). But the book takes ample account of recent work (some sixty titles mentioned in the bibliography have been published since 1990), and the discrete nature (and indeed location) of some of Warburg's lesser works on the subject (conference papers, publications in Hebrew) makes a 'summing up' easily defensible. Nevertheless, the sources, as well as the narrative and conclusions of most of the chapters in the book will be familiar to experts. And despite an admirable attempt to bring the narrative as nearly as possible up to date, the sources for the post-independence period and, especially, for developments since the coup of 1989, are inevitably inferior to those for the periods Warburg knows best in any case, the Mahdiyya and early Anglo-Egyptian periods. It is worth mentioning in this context, too, the extraordinary nature of Warburg's achievement in general since, as an Israeli, he has been barred from the Sudan and its rich archival collections.

It may be ironic, therefore, that to this reviewer the most interesting chapters in the book are those that deal with the most recent history. Warburg's interpretation of developments since the collapse of the parliamentary regime in 1969, and his reading of the current situation and of future prospects are well informed by a command of the colonial background and by careful reading of Arabic published sources. That interpretation (mostly implicitly) treats the Sudan as part of the larger Arab or, at any rate, Afro-Arab Islamic world, rather than as the odd man out (neither Arab Islamic nor African) that academic fashion and foreign-affairs experts on this week's crisis have purported to discern. Warburg's work therefore comfortably takes its place within the framework of what Richard Hill called 'the frontiers of Islam'. Would that scholarship in general had found in the subject the same degree of interest – and devoted to it the same degree of professionalism – that Warburg did.

Waterville, Maine

M. W. DALY

## MAINTAINING WHAT THEY YEARNED TO OVERTHROW

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704339447

*Living with Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.*

By HEATHER J. SHARKEY. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. Pp. xiii + 232. \$65 (ISBN 0-520-23558-4); \$24.95, paperback (ISBN 0-520-23559-2).

KEY WORDS: Sudan, colonial intermediaries, culture, nationalism.

Heather Sharkey addresses the seeming contradiction that indigenous peoples were willing to serve the colonial power even though that control kept them in subservient positions and perpetrated foreign rule. Since Great Britain employed only a small cadre of British citizens to rule an immense empire, the many low-level officials were the ones who kept the empire running day-to-day. How the British managed those indigenous cadres and how they viewed the British are central to *Living with Colonialism*.

For the Sudan, which Britain ruled from 1898 to 1956 (nominally in a condominium with Egypt), Sharkey argues persuasively that the African staff were 'colonialism's intimate enemies, making colonial rule a reality while hoping to see it

undone' (p. 1). The contradictions were clear. The British, assuming their own moral and cultural superiority, sought to train indigenous staff who would imbibe British values while accepting British superiority. They provided a quality education at Gordon College that developed the students' intellectual abilities and promoted sportsmanship, meanwhile emphasizing the students' difference from (and inferiority to) Europeans by requiring them to wear 'traditional' dress and to identify themselves by 'tribal' affiliation. 'The foundations of imperial domination', after all, 'were based on notions of difference' (p. 47) and well-defined barriers had to be maintained.

Upon graduation, these students were shunted into low-level administrative jobs, often in distant parts of the country, and could not aspire to senior positions in the career civil service. They resented their inferior status, but (aside from a brief revolt in 1924) did not rebel against a system that guaranteed secure jobs and some privileges vis-à-vis other Sudanese. Sharkey cites minor acts of sabotage: a prison director who printed subversive broadsheets on the prison's mimeograph machine; the head of the local police who, after decorating the town square with British flags to celebrate King's Day, slipped back at night to rip them up. When the British district commissioner raged in anger, the officer sent policemen to look for the perpetrators who, of course, were never found. Mostly, Sudanese civil servants participated in literary societies and used the postal and telegraph services to communicate their political views, often expressed through poetry and short stories. Fundamentally, they 'prop[ped] up the colonial system they yearned to overthrow' (p. 95).

During the decades of British rule, these civil servants created a sense of 'the Sudan' as a national entity deserving independence, with themselves as the future leaders. However, largely because only a narrowly based group of privileged Muslim Arab men entered Gordon College, they viewed the country in their own image: essentially Arab and Muslim.

Many saw themselves as the bearers of modernity, capable of stamping out backwardness. Many customs of the African peoples in the south, west and Nuba mountains were alien: witchcraft, naked Nuba wrestlers, un-Islamic marriages. The Muslim Arab civil servants sometimes proselytized on behalf of Islam and spread the Arabic language. Their sense of the African as alien, coupled with their intense homogenizing effort after independence, triggered a civil war that still bedevils the country.

The British ultimately (and unintentionally) created the indigenous class that would take over after their departure. The British also created the context in which national identity emerged: fixed geographic borders, a centralized state with coercive power and a cohesive administrative class.

Sharkey's meticulous and subtle analysis illuminates this transformation as well as the contradictions inherent in the colonial project and in the new Muslim Arab elite's image of 'Sudan'. Her study complements research on the emergence of northern political groups that led the drive for independence and shared the civil servants' vision of the Sudan as a Muslim Arab country. It also complements studies of British rule in the south, which remained isolated and underdeveloped until its forced absorption shortly before independence. In addition, Sharkey contributes to colonial studies by not only addressing an important puzzle related to colonial administration but also demonstrating the lasting impact of that rule on former colonies' political cultures and institutions.

# INTERACTIONS OF COLONIAL AND INDIGENOUS IDIOMS OF POWER

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704349443

*The Culture of Power in Southern Africa: Essays on State Formation and the Political Imagination.* Edited by CLIFTON C. CRAIS. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann, 2003. Pp. 216. No price given (ISBN 0-325-07084-9); US\$24, paperback (ISBN 0-325-07083-0).

KEY WORDS: Southern Africa, colonial, political culture, state.

This book brings together a series of essays which aim to shift analyses of the state in southern Africa. It offers an ambitious view of state formation, one which tracks equally across the broadest dynamics of formal institutional power and the slightest subtleties of local rule and resistance. The collection offers much food for thought for historians of the region, and beyond. In the context of southern African studies, it articulates the importance of tying together streams of theorizing too often kept apart. Some of the most significant past contributions by historians of this region have dealt, in turn, with structuralist analyses of the state and with popular social histories. In aiming to bring them together this book potentially offers an account of the state which dispenses with the limitations of each. And many of the essays deliver on this promise.

Formations of the state, and modes of rule and of resistance are explored here as profoundly intertwined. The ways in which colonial states ruled subject peoples owed considerably more to indigenous cultural idioms than has routinely been acknowledged in historical and especially theoretical writings. Clifton Crais's own essay in this collection starts off on this theme with an account of the ritual murder of a resident magistrate near Qumbu, in the former Transkei in 1880. The chief leading the rebellion not only consumed parts of the magistrate for strength, he also rode into the court house and staged a simulation of the magistrate's court room activities. Indigenous practices were profoundly shaped by the 'magic' capacities of the states they encountered, with techniques of representation and distancing taking on the appearance of magical abilities. The state itself was also produced in a form quite distinct from the fantastic representations of writers like Foucault and Weber, for whom the state embodied rational forms of modern power. Rather, in Crais's view, 'white magistrates wore the political masks of the people they were conquering', 'they were in a fundamental sense African rulers as well as colonial masters' (p. 37).

In mimetically reproducing elements of state rule, some of the essayists argue, indigenous people attempted to capture for themselves some of the magical capacities of the state. More mundanely (though 'magic' is in this context perhaps not very magical and more a collection of mundane traditions), an overextended and underresourced state in Southern Africa was routinely dependent on African insights and practices – as McClendon's neat chapter on Shepstone reminds us. But in these situations of effective indirect rule, the relations between chiefs and their subjects – and, by extension, with the state – depended on protracted and often opaque negotiations and contests including new forms of political organization (like MaCongress, in Lane's essay) as well as insistence on living up to older expectations of rulers. Timothy Lane's essay on witchcraft, chiefs and the state, based on experiences in a region of the northern Transvaal near Pietersberg in the first decades of the twentieth century, exemplified this with his narrative of murders, witchcraft accusations and political and financial conflicts over the acquisition of land (and siphoning off of wealth) by chiefs on behalf of the 'tribal' groups. The state, then, in this context was formed as much by

local views of appropriate forms of rule as by any bureaucratic or financial calculus.

An intriguing essay by Deborah Durham reinforces Crais's point that mimetic appropriations of state forms have transformed local cultures, enhanced resistance and continue to frame possibilities for indigenous identities, through her study of 'passports and persons' amongst Herero peoples across Botswana, South Africa and Namibia. Perhaps here the subtlety of the argument disappoints a little, surprisingly since Durham's is one of the more creative essays in the collection. In the act of inventing passports alongside forms of proto-military organization (the Otjieserandu), in the wake of the failed Herero War against the Germans in 1904, there seems to have been a suggestion that control of the right to move around was itself something to be (symbolically) appropriated. And although the opening example has a subtext of this 'spatial' resistance, in this account the passport remains a metaphoric component of a wider cultural resistance/appropriation. Did the hardening of borders and growing limitations on movement across the subcontinent more directly inspire the appropriation of this rather obscure element of a bureaucratic state?

The essays inhabit in such a creative way the complex and contested forms of rule and resistance in the region that it seems unreasonable to take issue with them (although a couple are a little weak and not so novel in their approach). But I wonder if there does not remain a useful distinction between states – their forms of organization, strategic capacities and spatial extent – and forms of indigenous resistance – with all the huge obstacles they face in trying to sustain wider association and spread, and durability over time. Also, there is a sense in which the essays suggest that the 'rational' western state was subverted in Africa. How might these narratives transform accounts of the state elsewhere? Finally, while these essays draw on some exciting literature in anthropology and history from across the world, they seem to indicate a certain distancing from regional scholarship. It would be a great shame if, post-liberation, Southern African historiography lost the close links which have sustained an exile and foreign scholarship in creative synchrony with locally based scholars. There is a danger that the popular American scholarship drawn on as inspiration in this book replaces attention to debates from the region. There is much to learn from other contexts. But there is also much to learn on these topics from scholars working in South Africa, now and in the past, and they receive rather scant attention here.

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JENNIFER ROBINSON

## THE COLONIAL ENCOUNTER AND CHANGES IN MEANING AMONG THE ANLO-EWE

DOI: 10.1017/S002185370435944X

*Sacred Sites and the Colonial Encounter: A History of Meaning and Memory in Ghana.* By SANDRA E. GREENE. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002. Pp. xix + 200. No price given (ISBN 0-253-34073-X); \$19.95; £15.50, paperback (ISBN 0-253-21517-X).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, colonial, culture, memory, religion.

This is a very ambitious and rather contestable work. Sandra Greene attempts to reconstruct what the Anlo people of southeastern Ghana 'had both remembered

and forgotten about the meanings associated with specific places [Notsie and Anloga], with specific spaces [burial sites and water bodies] and with the [human] body' (p. x). She uses material collected on field trips to Anlo between 1977 and 1996, records and publications of the Norddeutsche (Bremen) Mission, British colonial documents and a large number of secondary sources.

The author is at pains to establish that she is not interested in a run of the mill expose of the impact of European cultural contact. Again, she is keen to respond to D. W. Cohen's challenge to historians (as paraphrased by Greene) 'to do more than chart the history of Africa in terms of its responses to large world processes', by exploring 'those intimate areas of social life within the African communities that shifted and changed in response to local forces, changes which then intersected with the large structural forces to create social histories particular to the communities studied' (p. 132).

Greene explores how colonialism and Christianity affected not only the economic and political life of institutions and individuals, and relations within and between groups, but also the terms by which the Anlo understood and interacted with their physical and human environment, in which certain material sites were considered to have special meanings. The sites examined include the ocean, permanent bodies of potable water, burial grounds, religious centres and the male and female human body. The book discusses how these sites were conceptualized by the Anlo in precolonial times, as both material and spiritual, and how and under what circumstances these conceptualizations were challenged first by some people in Anlo itself, and later by German pietists and British colonial officers. The author focuses on the landscape (as well as the human body), defined as those places and spaces that are visible to the eye and are the focus of collective visual activity. She discusses how meanings of place and space have shifted over time: how far changes in the religious meanings attributed to the sites mark both a shift in understandings of the landscape and in how the Anlo understood themselves and their material and spiritual environment.

The book adds to a growing number of scholarly works on the Ewe, of whom the Anlo are part. It provides evidence of erudition, extensive reading and familiarity with a wide range of sources. It adopts a multidisciplinary approach to the writing of history, using insights from anthropology, religious studies and geography about the importance of understanding place and space through the meaning the communities attribute to them.

The author is at pains to sustain a number of pet hypotheses. There is a tendency occasionally to over-stretch the interpretation of the evidence or source cited and to ignore evidence or material that would dispute or bring into question the claims being advanced. A number of scholars of Ewe history and culture would be startled by a claim that the missionaries contributed to changing the memory of Mawu from one of a number of deities to the presently widely held one of a Supreme Being, with the attributes associated with the Christian God. Another surprising claim is that it was German missionaries who 'took it upon themselves to define the various Ewe-speaking peoples in the region as a linguistic community' (p. 19): the 'missionaries selected Notsie as the site from which all Ewes would be encouraged to believe they originated' (p. 20).

One is reminded of Jan Vansina's admonition to historians of Africa some twenty years ago that 'our present perceptions of Africa and our understanding of its past are conditioned by the epistemological categories well established by 1900, and in large part derived from the observations of administrators, missionaries and various travelers. Their perceptions were translated directly, uncritically, into their conclusions, and once published, these have often been accepted as fact, as if

they were similar to incontrovertible experimental observations on the structure of crystals'.<sup>1</sup>

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D. E. K. AMENUMEY

## THE WRITTEN WORD AND THE COLONIAL ENCOUNTER

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704369446

*Writing and Colonialism in Northern Ghana: The Encounter between the LoDagaa and 'the World on Paper'*. By SEAN HAWKINS. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. Pp. xv + 468. £55 (ISBN 0-8020-4872-2).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, anthropology, colonial, literacy, oral culture.

The need to understand colonialism as both political project and 'cultural encounter' between colonial administrators and African 'subjects', with profound effects on the negotiation of identities and construction of legitimacy in the postcolonial world, has been an important insight of recent studies on colonial rule. Hawkins's book on Lawra District, northwestern Ghana, contributes to this research by focusing on the 'power of writing' and its role in establishing colonial domination. It argues that the texts and categories produced by external observers (colonial administrators, European anthropologists) and, more recently, by the local literate elite, not only 'distorted' and 'misrepresented' indigenous social practices, but 'assaulted' the flexibility, ambiguity and negotiability that were typical of oral cultures (and, as Hawkins implies, are missing in literate societies). The 'world on paper', as Hawkins puts it, violated the autonomy of the 'world of experience' by imposing a 'mimetic tyranny' (p. 328) on the latter's representations of their experiences towards the 'external world'. Only if the LoDagaa – as he insists on calling the Dagara and Dagaba of northwestern Ghana, perpetuating an ethnic name coined by Jack Goody – reorient their self-representations 'inwards', can their 'sovereignty be regained, identities ... liberated, authority legitimated, and fluidity and negotiability preserved in social practices' (p. 325).

Hawkins's study is based on painstaking analysis of archival sources in Accra, Tamale and Lawra (though not of those in London's Public Record Office), together with texts by local intellectuals. Endnotes on archival and ethnographic minutiae comprise nearly one quarter of the voluminous book. It offers illuminating insights on many aspects of colonial rule and the mission of the White Fathers in Lawra District. The chapters on the local courts provide a particularly fascinating account of how colonial officers (later magistrates), local chiefs and male litigants fashioned debatable (and subsequently contested) notions of 'marriage' out of a complex of local practices that established conjugal unions. The interest that administrators and the Catholic clergy took in delineating unambiguous rules concerning 'marriage' and child custody converged with attempts of LoDagaa elders and wealthy men to control women and rival males more rigidly. Equally convincing is Hawkins's discussion of the role that missionary medicine played in the mass 'conversion' of LoDagaa in the early 1930s, and his critique of the local

<sup>1</sup> Jan Vansina, 'Knowledge and perceptions of the African past', in Bogumil Jewsiewicki and David Newbury (eds.), *African Historiographies – What History for Which Africa?* (Beverly Hills, 1986), 29.



clergy's projection of a 'high God' into indigenous religious thought. There are also useful analyses of related themes, such as the history of colonial mapping and naming, and of British attitudes, shared by the LoDagaa's politically centralized and islamized neighbours, towards native 'nakedness'.

Because his research in Ghana coincided with the political tensions of the early 1980s, making full-fledged fieldwork practically impossible, Hawkins's reconstruction of 'the world of experience' relies wholly on colonial (and local intellectuals') texts, on the verbatim records of litigants' statements in court (documented with sufficient detail since the 1950s), and on the rich ethnographic analyses of Goody, Henri Labouret and others. Although the insight gleaned from a careful re-reading of written sources is impressive, the absence of first-hand, non-archival material does not warrant sweeping statements such as the assertion that 'ethnicity still does not really exist beyond the "world on paper"' (p. 6).

The chapter on chiefs and the colonial 'invention' of history is the book's weakest. In my own research on Lawra District, which combined oral with written sources, I found ample evidence that even early on the chieftaincy was not an entirely 'foreign' institution, based exclusively on colonial 'tyranny', as Hawkins has it, but was readily appropriated and reshaped by local actors. Hawkins's apolitical, romantic view of the Black Volta region before colonialism as a world in which 'indigenous authority was so bound up in noumenal knowledge and practices ... that it never belonged to the phenomenal world' (p. 179), prevents him from understanding the continuities (and transformations) of precolonial configurations of power. Hawkins does admit that chiefs used the British for their own ends, but excludes such power politics and its actors from the 'world of experience'.

Not only does Hawkins idealize 'the world of experience', he also reifies 'the world on paper'. From the title of the book, one expects details on how colonial officers gathered and recorded information, who their interpreters were and which strategies informants pursued. But instead of providing information about colonial writing as social practice (or on the reading and interpretation of texts), Hawkins presents a little-nuanced picture of colonial intelligence and repeatedly criticizes British 'ignorance' of LoDagaa culture. However, an alternative reading of the sources suggests that some British administrators were astonishingly knowledgeable about their district, and that lively debates among officers were not limited to the period coinciding with the introduction of 'indirect rule', as Hawkins claims.

Whether colonial rule in Lawra District can be adequately described as 'conquest', as Hawkins repeatedly suggests, and whether the British intended fully to subjugate and 'appropriate' the local population, is debatable. Rather, evidence seems to indicate that the British in northern Ghana, individual ambitious officers notwithstanding, pursued a minimalist project. In general, indigenous actors had much latitude to manipulate local affairs in their own interests. Hawkins admits this, but his notion of a totalizing colonial project forces him to redefine as 'resistance' all actions of chiefs, young men and women that deviated from colonial prescriptions. Within this domination/resistance framework, it is difficult to do justice to the complicated dynamics that characterized relations between the colonial state and the local population. Fortunately, however, numerous sections of the book ignore (and implicitly contradict) this conceptual straitjacket and present rich, nuanced insights into the colonial encounter.

INDIGENOUS AGENCY IN 'TOP-DOWN'  
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704379442

*Negotiating Development: African Farmers and Colonial Experts at the Office du Niger, 1920-1960.* By MONICA VAN BEUSEKOM. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann; Oxford: James Currey; Cape Town: David Philip, 2002. Pp. xxxviii + 214. \$65 (ISBN 0-325-07046-6); \$17.95 paperback (ISBN 0-325-07045-8).

KEY WORDS: Mali, colonial, agriculture, development.

This book engages with current debates in development studies about the representation and role of rural communities in the development process. There has been a long tradition that depicts rural African rural producers as passive recipients of agricultural policies and new technologies. Peasant farmers are typically depicted as incapable of improving their own agricultural techniques and livelihoods without the paternalistic assistance of the Western expert. This social evolutionist ideology that positions the West as the best and the Rest as in need of the helping hand of development has generated a rich power-knowledge imagery that places African farmers near the bottom of the evolutionary ladder. In contrast to this ahistorical and instrumentalist view of 'development' as driven by external powers, van Beusekom argues that African farmers have been major players in the making of their own agrarian history. Through multiple acts of resistance and innovation, ordinary Africans have forced Western policy makers to modify their approaches and perspectives in the realm of rural development. The book's emphasis on African agency in shaping development ideologies and practices is a familiar theme in African social historiography. Its message is aimed more at poststructural development studies where discursive (de)constructions of the 'development' apparatus underestimate the power of local actors to shape theory and policies.

The Office du Niger was originally conceived as a part of France's 'plan for imperial autarky' (p. xxvi). It was designed to provide cotton to France's textile industry and thus reduce its dependence on American cotton exports. Project officials also hoped to make the Office into the rice basket of West Africa. Rice was promoted in rotation with cotton and periodically exported to Senegal where peanuts were being produced for France's oil-seed industry. Almost a million hectares were slated for irrigation in 1932 when the Office was created. These ambitious plans were scaled down over the next thirty years so that by 1960 just 54,000 hectares were developed.

As the title suggests, van Beusekom views development as a dynamic process. Her case study of cotton and rice development on irrigated lands managed by the Office du Niger in Soudan (Mali) during the 1930s and 1940s demonstrates that contestation, innovation and political-economic change during this interwar period led to significant changes in development policy and interventions in the 1950s. Presented in a clear and compelling prose style, van Beusekom's account reveals how shifts in development ideology and policy were the outcome of multilayered negotiations under changing political-economic conditions. Struggles between farmers and Office personnel over crops, labor and markets during the interwar years led to reforms in the post-1945 period that made farming Office lands more appealing to settlers. The agricultural system that evolved combined African and European expertise and practices in ways that reflected the multi-sited power and hybrid nature of the development process.

Van Beusekom organizes her work thematically. After introducing her general argument that 'development in practice was not merely conceptualized and

imposed from above [but] was in fact a complex negotiation among many different parties' (p. xxi), she examines the labor processes, cultivation practices and market relations at the four settlements comprising the Office. Her attention to tensions between African settlers and European project staff over farming and market conditions at the Office nicely complements Richard Roberts's work on cotton colonialism in the Soudan in which he focuses on struggles between two camps of colonial administrators over cotton policy ('la politique cotonnière'). While Roberts views the Office du Niger as a victory for the European-managed plantation agriculture group (versus the pro-peasant rain-fed agriculture group), van Beusekom sees the indigenous colonization model as a compromise between peasant and plantation agriculture. For van Beusekom, the principle struggle taking place at the Office centered on the degree of European versus African control over farming methods, markets, irrigation schedules and fees.

The development discourse of the 1950s at the Office contained the rhetoric of participatory development in which planners appear to be working closely with farmers in the design and management of development projects. But as van Beusekom argues, this discourse appeared to be more rhetoric than reality. Although settlers were given more formal advisory roles and the Office modified farming and marketing regulations, these actions were mere concessions. Office managers did not relinquish control over the project. A similar tension exists today between the rhetoric of community-based resource management promoted by development agencies and their actions on the ground. Participatory development appears to be little more than community mobilization for development projects that have not involved local stakeholders in their design. The lesson of the Office du Niger is that the multiple actors possessing a stake in development will seek to reconfigure policies and projects to suit their own interests. Van Beusekom's book provides an excellent case study of the contested terrain of development that will be valued by students of African history and development studies alike.

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## INSIGHTS FROM COURT RECORDS

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704389449

*Genders and Generations Apart: Labor Tenants and Customary Law in Segregation-Era South Africa, 1920s to 1940s.* By THOMAS V. MCCLENDON. Oxford: James Currey; Portsmouth NH: Heinemann; Cape Town: David Philip, 2003. Pp. xxii + 234. £45 (ISBN 0-85255-956-9); £16.95, paperback (ISBN 0-325-07110-1). KEY WORDS: South Africa, social, sources, family, rural.

There is a refreshing new trend toward analyses of social categories which cut across family and community lines in historical writing on South Africa. These have been accomplished by use of the constructs of race, class, gender and now generation as important analytical tools for gaining new insights into social relations in African societies. The resulting analyses have rightly tended to complicate the picture we have of individuals and their relations with broader social structures and historical forces. They have rendered more vivid the lived experiences of Africans in the colonial context. Thom McClendon has used these tools to good effect to provide us with just such a new look at African farm-tenant families in segregation-era Natal. Based upon his careful reading of court records, archival sources and oral interviews, McClendon, who is a trained lawyer as well as historian, argues that the South African state, in conjunction with African patriarchs,

sought further to subordinate African minors (unmarried male youth and women) to the labor needs of elder males and white farmers through the use of an increasingly rigid system of 'customary' and contract law.

McClendon opens with a useful overview of his methodology and the difficulties inherent in using court records. He makes a convincing argument about the value of court records, and the rest of the book confirms his skill at using them. Chapters 2 and 3 chronicle the struggles of labor tenants during a prolonged period of drought and depression and the increasing movement of women and youth from the rural areas to the urban areas. This is a familiar story. Much has been written about this period of economic hardship and social dislocation. In this regard, McClendon tends to cover well-traversed ground. Nevertheless, in the remaining two chapters he does provide fresh insights into family and labor tenant relations as he traces the tensions between African fathers and their families. Although he argues that the increasingly ossified Natal code of 'customary law' was used as an effective tool by the state and African patriarchy, he also shows how youth and women contested the very 'traditions' and customs upon which it was based. This is important for our understanding of the ways in which customary law was re-configured during the segregation era in Natal. McClendon provides us with a vivid picture of familial relations through his compelling analysis of court records. Although he rightly cautions readers about the limits of these records, they are in many respects the closest we can get to the actual voice – albeit filtered through the colonial context, and the processes of translation and transcription – of Africans from the past. Used in conjunction, as the author has done, with current oral interviews and written records, these allow us a glimpse into the intimate world of people's personal lives at moments of tension and crisis.

The book could benefit from some revisions and additions. First, while the individual cases used provide wonderful detail, in a broad sense it is difficult to generalize from them about gender and generational tensions. While other aspects of an individual's social status may be less mutable, such as race or gender, all people grow old. It is difficult, therefore, to draw the lines, as the author tries to, between being a 'youth' and becoming an elder, although clearly marriage is a critical juncture. There are, moreover, insufficient statistics provided for the reader to get a clear sense of the local economy of the study area and how it compares to the rest of the country. In some places, the book is repetitive, especially where the author reminds readers about the nature of labor service contracts and the economy. It would be more interesting if McClendon elaborated on the more lively material. He offers a number of tantalizing pieces of evidence which could be further explored about the ways in which labor and family relations operated on tenant farms. It would be fascinating, for example, to learn more about the surrogate patriarchy of the white landlord-farmers he refers to, and how this intersected with colonial discourses on segregation. Similarly, a more thorough discussion of women's experiences on farms, which can be gleaned from the deeply textured court records, would prove to be equally illuminating.

Overall, this is a well-researched book which provides a keen analysis of the rich details to be found in the court records. McClendon has brought new generational and gender dimensions to his cogent arguments about the rural political economy of segregation-era Natal. His work will provide a sound foundation for new research on the nature of labor tenant families and the ways in which customary law, the lynchpin of so many colonial regimes, was reconfigured and applied in South Africa.

## CHRISTIANITY IN COLONIAL KENYA

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704399445

*The Life of Charles Muhoro Kareri.* By CHARLES MUHORO KARERI. Edited with an Introduction by DEREK R. PETERSON. Translated by JOSEPH KARIUKI MURIITHI. Madison WI: The African Studies Program, University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2003. Pp. xix + 104. \$17 (ISBN 0-942615-53-0).

KEY WORDS: Kenya, Christianity, colonial, memoirs.

The prominence of Charles Muhoro Kareri rests on two interrelated points: he was one of the first Africans in Central Kenya to receive western schooling at the newly established mission schools run by white missionaries and, partly because of this, rose to ‘become the first Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa’. This intersection between education and Christianity is now generally acknowledged to have been responsible for the ‘rapid spread of Christianity’ in Africa. Mission stations were not only religious centers but also medical and educational establishments at which young Africans (mostly boys), received elementary education. Some of these Africans were recruited as catechists and ministers and in time became indispensable in the ‘spread of Christianity during the colonial period’.<sup>1</sup> In early colonial Kenya, Charles Muhoro Kareri enrolled at Tumutumu mission, which had been established by Scottish missionaries of the Presbyterian church in 1908. He eventually trained as a priest and became a devoted member of the mission and church. On one level, this is clearly a story of personal triumph.

The period covered by this autobiography is also one of the most interesting and even controversial periods in Kenya’s history. This is the period of colonial imposition, missionary confrontation with African converts over cultural matters, the nationalist phase and the origins and occurrence of the Mau Mau peasant revolt. On almost each of these historical issues, Charles Muhoro Kareri’s autobiography is silent, evasive or very sketchy. Instead, he concentrates on the obstacles faced by both European and African missionaries in the spread of Christianity in Central Kenya. He recalls with fondness the memory of the white missionaries with whom he worked, for example, Dr. Philp who ‘hated sin’ and often called those Africans who had sinned ‘to his office, where he whipped them lying down’ (p. 14). Kareri mentions in passing instances of racial discrimination. He notes that it was difficult to ‘preach to the whites ... because they hate the black person with all their heart, although there are some who are good’ (p. 58). While in South Africa for a year’s study at Fort Hare College, he witnessed the treatment of Africans ‘as slaves ... in prison with chains around their necks’. These instances are not recalled for their historical significance but rather as examples of obstacles faced and overcome in his march toward Christian salvation.

On the Mau Mau and Emergency period in Kenya, Kareri is surprisingly very sketchy. While insisting that he remained Kenyatta’s friend, he was clearly part of the colonial government’s offensive against the Mau Mau and the nationalist movement. He not only refused to take the oath but actively preached against the Mau Mau and conducted ‘cleansing’ ceremonies on behalf of the colonial government. For these efforts the colonial government provided him with police security together with a revolver. After the capture of Dedan Kimathi, one of the major leaders of the Mau Mau in the forest, Kareri was chosen by the colonial government to administer to his spiritual needs. Kimathi, by Kareri’s account,

<sup>1</sup> Henry Mwanzi in A. Adu Boahen (ed.), *General History of Africa*, VII: *Africa under Colonial Domination, 1880–1935* (London, 1990), 222.

'did not want to die under the church's sanction'. He wanted to be forgiven by the church in order that 'God would forgive him' (p. 87).

As sketchy and evasive as this autobiography is on major issues, it nonetheless raises crucial historical questions. There are questions regarding the quality of colonial education, especially under white missionaries. The missionaries despised and abhorred African culture and values. Those Africans whom they trained, especially in these initial years, tended to share these negative sentiments toward African cultural values. Education and Christianity, therefore, had a 'disintegrating effect on African culture' since in becoming Christian an African used 'European culture as a point of reference'.<sup>2</sup> Did missionary and colonial education lay the foundation for the self-perpetuating 'Mis-education of the African'? As late as 1941, the library at Tumutumu mission school had 'only two history books ... a history of Greece, and a general history of Europe' (p. vi).

On a more general level, this book points to the perennial difficulties that confront historians who try to incorporate autobiographies in their studies. The value of these autobiographies may, quite often, lie in what they omit to mention. Explaining such an omission can produce an informative study. In Kareri's book, there is hardly any worthwhile mention of the cultural and political divide that haunted Gikuyuland and Kenya on circumcision controversy and the independent churches that followed. Nor does he discuss the reactions of Africans (sometimes violent), to the rise of Christian missions and churches in Kenya.

Autobiographies can also reflect the period when they were composed. Derek Peterson informs us in his excellent introduction that Kareri's autobiography is 'a compilation of texts written, revised and re-revised at different stages of his life' (p. viii). The resultant text is not only 'rehearsed', but also contains carefully chosen details. Kareri relies heavily on the missionaries' accounts of the history of Tumutumu mission and the Presbyterian church in Kenya. In this regard, it can be argued that there is very minimal deviation, if any, from the details, examples and emphasis already set by the white missionaries in their accounts at the beginning of the twentieth century. As a result, Kareri's autobiography does not succeed in helping us explore 'interior lives of African individuals and communities'.

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W. O. MALOBA

## EXAGGERATING THE CONTINUITIES IN MADAGASCAR POLITICAL HISTORY?

DOI: 10.1017/S002185370440944X

*Société et luttes anticoloniales à Madagascar (1896 à 1946)*. By SOLOFO RANDRIANJA.

Paris: Kharthala, 2001. Pp. 485. No price given (ISBN: 2-84586-136-2).

KEY WORDS: Madagascar, colonial, historiography, nationalism.

This book, an expansion of a doctoral thesis completed for the University of Paris VII, examines the emergence and influence of the Communist Party in Madagascar (PCRM) in the interwar era. Solofo Randrianja argues that the PCRM was the vital link, hitherto overlooked by political historians, between the two highpoints of twentieth-century nationalist protest in Madagascar, the VVS ('Vy Vato Sakelika' – 'Iron, Stone, Network') movement of 1913–16, and the 1947 Uprising.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

Randrianja expounds his argument in meticulous, sometimes repetitive detail – the book could have been trimmed by a third without impairing its quality. However, his case is unconvincing. The PCRM was short-lived, lasting from mid-1936 to 1939, attracted a limited membership of mostly urban French settler and Merina intellectuals, never possessed a coherent ideology and dissolved as much from internal dissent as from government persecution. Indeed, the history of the PCRM often appears indissoluble from that of its two leaders, Jean Ralaimongo, a Betsileo intellectual, and Paul Dussac, a lawyer from Réunion. Randrianja considers the PCRM to have been central to what he terms the ‘emancipation’ movement that developed from the VVS to eventual independence. The use of the term ‘emancipation’ for a nationalist movement whose members have until recently largely refused to discuss the perpetuation of slavery in Madagascar might appear inappropriate. Moreover, Randrianja exposes the VVS as a small grouping of ineffectual intellectuals whose impact was grossly exaggerated by the colonial authorities, and offers scant evidence of PCRM influence on the post-Second World War insurrection, eight years after the demise of the PCRM.

Randrianja’s work nevertheless offers interesting insight into the nature of political groupings in interwar Madagascar, and into the ‘nationalist’ school of historical interpretation to which he belongs. The PCRM was one of many radical movements to emerge in the 1920s and 1930s that were offshoots of left-wing politics in France. Involving a mixture of French and Malagasy intellectuals, a significant number of whom were based in Paris, they positioned themselves within the discourse of the republican left, arguing overwhelmingly for ‘assimilation’ – the eventual concession of French citizenship and its concomitant rights to all Malagasy.

Randrianja clearly exposes the latent contradictions of the French left which promulgated republican ideals, enshrined in the ‘mission civilisatrice’ that justified French imperialism, yet accepted, even maintained, a colonialist structure that prevented the application of those ideals to the colonized. However, as a member of the ‘nationalist’ school composed in the main of a similar cocktail of French and Malagasy intellectuals forged from that same crucible of French leftist discourse, Randrianja implicitly accepts French republican values in his historical evaluation. For him and other members of the nationalist school, the essential goal is to expose the historical steps leading towards the formation of the Malagasy versions of a French centralist nation-state and of citizens loyal to it. However, attempts to recreate this model outside France encounter major difficulties of interpretation. Prime examples of this are the ‘nationalist’ school’s embrace of the concept of a precolonial ‘Kingdom of Madagascar’ and their consistent underestimation of ethnic and regional differences in Madagascar.

Basic to the discourse of the nationalist school is the claim that nineteenth-century Madagascar was a unified and modernizing kingdom. Research over the last two decades has rendered such a viewpoint increasingly untenable. It reveals, rather, the establishment of an empire by the Merina elite of the high central plateau, who exploited the surrounding peoples they conquered to such a degree that the ensuing enmity has scarred political life in Madagascar to the present day. The denial by the ‘nationalist school’ of nineteenth-century Merina imperialism and its heritage has hindered them from understanding the limited appeal and effectiveness of Merina-dominated political movements and the nature of non-Merina social protests. Relying heavily on colonial French interpretations of events, Randrianja integrates all such protests and the spread of grassroots organizations like co-operatives as ‘anticolonial’, an integral part of the developing island-wide movement of ‘emancipation’. However, there is very little evidence that such protests were linked to one another, or to the urban-based intellectual

political organizations. Thus the case made by colonial authorities of the time, and by Randrianja and the nationalist school, that the essentially Merina-dominated *Mouvement démocratique de la Rénovation malgache* was behind the 1947 'peasant' uprising in the non-Merina regions of the east coast and forest, or that such an uprising was essentially motivated by the desire for political independence, has still to be substantiated.

Future researchers of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Malagasy history might do well to shelve the search for an emerging nation-state and follow historians like Manassé Esoavelomandroso in seriously analysing the structure of nineteenth-century Merina imperialism and its economic, social and political consequences. Only then, perhaps, might the true nature of protest in colonial Madagascar, including the 1947 uprising, emerge.

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## AFRICAN URBAN HISTORY IN COLONIAL ZIMBABWE

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704419446

*Sites of Struggle: Essays in Zimbabwe's Urban History.* Edited by BRIAN RAFTOPOULOS and TSUNEO YOSHIKUNI. Harare: Weaver Press, 1999. Pp. vii + 279. £14.95; \$24.95, paperback (ISBN 0-797-41984-5).

KEY WORDS: Zimbabwe, colonial, urban, class, gender.

Launched in the year this book was published, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has become the largest and most successful opposition political party to Zimbabwe's post-independence government. In general, the strength of the MDC has been in the country's urban centers, among those Zimbabweans who primarily rely on wage employment and have largely come to identify themselves as permanent city dwellers. Their political concerns, particularly at the municipal level, are wide ranging – issues that include calling for more and better housing, education for their children, more accessible and higher standards of health care, better public transportation, greater employment opportunities and a living wage, freedom from police and political brutality and the recognition of basic civil rights.

*Sites of Struggle* does not examine these contemporary issues. However, the editors have put together an extremely good collection of essays that provide an historical understanding of the social and political developments that have shaped contemporary urban society in Zimbabwe's two largest cities, Harare and Bulawayo. As a group these essays provide a distinct picture of the nascent life in these cities and make clear that 'the legacy of colonial rule confronts contemporary urban Zimbabweans' and that the 'problems faced by colonial administrators continue ... in an exacerbated form' in present-day Zimbabwe (p. 13).

The essays present two basic themes. First, they demonstrate how different groups of Africans in colonial Salisbury (now Harare) and Bulawayo, including wage laborers, women and a small emerging petty-bourgeoisie, acted to shape the new urban environment in the face of a colonial policy aimed at limiting, if not totally controlling, the presence of Africans outside the rural areas. For instance, Stephen Thornton argues, in early twentieth-century Bulawayo the urban environment 'created new opportunities for a burgeoning African capitalist class' that became a 'small but significant class of landowners' in and around that city. He also presents a case that some women and other enterprising individuals took advantage of new opportunities presented by urban life to gain 'a degree of independence' from wage labor – the only acceptable reason, according to colonial



administrators, for Africans to be resident in the city (p. 45). In another strong essay, Timothy Scarnecchia demonstrates that during the 1940s and 1950s educated young men and women in colonial Salisbury struggled to define 'themselves as distinctly separate, in terms of their actions, sentiments, and opinions' from working-class Africans in that city. It was out of these struggles to forge an identity that ideas about nationalism and national identity were born (p. 160).

The second theme that emerges from these essays focuses on the connections between the cities and the rural regions that surrounded them. Tsuneo Yoshikuni suggests that different forms of political activities that occurred in post-1945 Salisbury and Bulawayo are 'attributable to the differences in agrarian transformation and town-country relations which they experienced' in the years prior to the Second World War (p. 123). In a similar vein, Richard Parry persuasively argues that Africans resident in Salisbury drew on traditional cultural norms as they adjusted to their new lives in the city. In their new environment, however, they both reconstructed older cultural elements and invented new ones to 'resist colonial efforts to turn them into docile and pliant adjuncts to the urban economy' (pp. 77–8). On another aspect of urban–rural relations Teresa Barnes proposes that prior to 1945 'traditionalist patriarchs' in the rural areas and colonial officials in the cities confronted the same problem, the increased migration of African women to urban centers. In a succinct essay Barnes shows that both groups' attempts to control women 'were in serious difficulties by the time of World War II' (p. 105).

Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni have brought together a very strong set of essays that go a long way to filling a gap in the historiography of Zimbabwe. *Sites of Struggle* adds an urban focus to a field that has been largely dominated by studies of rural consciousness and political mobilization. However, it goes further than Zimbabwean social history and also contributes wonderfully to the growing field of African urban studies.

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STEVEN C. RUPERT

## DESCRIBING MATERIAL CULTURAL AND SPATIAL PATTERNS

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704429442

*Ethnoarchaeology of Shuwa-Arab Settlements*. By AUGUSTIN HOLL. Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2003. Pp. xiii + 422. \$85 (ISBN 0-7391-0407-1).

KEY WORDS: Anthropology, archaeology, postcolonial, Cameroon, material culture, spatial patterns.

This is a straightforward book to review, but a rather more difficult one to recommend to readers. It provides an extraordinarily detailed accounting of intra-site settlement pattern and household material culture in a number of Shuwa Arab communities in northern Cameroon. But that is almost all it does. It includes very little synthesis of this mass of data, nor does it ever really link this information on material patterning to the social and cultural lives of Shuwa people.

Holl begins with a one-page consideration of the role of ethnoarchaeology in archaeological research strategies. He proceeds to a short history of the Shuwa groups and a brief description of environments, economies and ethnic relations (with Kanuri, Kotoko and other peoples) in the Houlouf region where he conducted this research in the late 1980s. This synthesizing coverage occupies the first 50 pages. The next 250 are devoted to a verbatim account of material culture patterning at a series of permanent and semi-permanent villages and dry-season

camps throughout the region. These accounts include maps and tables that enumerate distributions of structures and ceramics found in each of these communities, but the descriptions of architectural features are almost entirely textual. The reader is therefore faced with 250 pages dominated by successive paragraph-long descriptions of specific structures and facilities, as if basic field notes had been transcribed directly into the text. It is extremely difficult to tease patterning out of this mass of data, and much of the material could certainly have been presented in tabular form.

This description is followed by a 20-page chapter synthesizing the spatial patterning observed in the settlements under study. This is a very useful summary of the preceding chapters, allowing readers for the first time to grasp the broad results of the fieldwork. It includes discussion of the relations between space devoted to human occupation and that devoted to livestock, the distribution of built features on the sites and changes in these characteristics through time.

This section is followed by a very detailed account of the design and decoration of the elaborate hearths built by married Shuwa women in their homes. This is interesting, but again could have benefited from significant summarizing and tabulation. There is only a minimal attempt to relate variation in hearth design to cultural practices or learning networks, for example, even though differences between settlements are noted. A single paragraph ascribes such variation to women's creativity (p. 366) and another calls these hearths identity markers (p. 370). (It is surprising how seldom Shuwa people themselves intrude into a book on Shuwa ethnoarchaeology.) A final, short (16-page) analytical chapter covers faunal remains found during the ethnoarchaeological survey. Very little material was found, and for the most part no substantive conclusions can be drawn. The book's conclusion is similarly telegraphic: it describes the settlements surveyed in the most general of terms, in three pages, and in the final three pages discusses political crises in the region during the survey period.

The material covered in this book is potentially of interest to archaeologists seeking to interpret the material traces of semi-sedentary populations in a number of different parts of the world. The mass of data made available makes possible a real consideration of variability in settlement patterning, still too often submerged under assumptions of monolithic ethnic practice. However, the form in which the material is made available makes interpretation very difficult, and the author himself provides little analysis or synthesis. This drastically limits the utility of the book. It is potentially a useful data source for those of us interested in the archaeology of the Lake Chad Basin, but will have limited appeal beyond that rather restricted group.

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SCOTT MACEACHERN

## ETHNICITY AFTER THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704439449

*Poison and Medicine: Ethnicity, Power, and Violence in a Nigerian City, 1966–1986.*

By DOUGLAS A. ANTHONY. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann; Oxford: James Currey, 2002. Pp. x + 272. \$64.95; £45 (ISBN 0-325-07052-0); \$24.95; £17.95, paperback (ISBN 0-325-07051-2).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, postcolonial, ethnicity, political, urban, violence.

What Douglas Anthony set out to study, when he began his doctoral field research in 1992, was 'the process of reconciliation that followed the Nigerian

Civil War ... focus[ing] on the forces that brought communities together'. He admirably accomplishes that goal and much more as he undertook additional substantial research, further reflection and deeper analysis in converting his Northwestern University dissertation – completed in 1996 – into this readable volume. The book makes an excellent contribution to our understanding of very important but neglected aspects of the contemporary history of Nigeria.

The author explains that the title-metaphor 'of poison and medicine ... is intended to suggest dual possibilities for ethnicity. Depending on who mobilizes it and how, ethnic identities [*sic*] and membership in ethnic groups can be turned to destructive or constructive purposes' (p. 2). This means that Anthony proceeds from a conception of ethnicity and ethnic identities that 'moves beyond instrumentalism and toward constructivism, an approach that concentrates on how ethnic identities are made, by whom, and why' (p. 6). He eschews the more problematic aspects of the primordialist conceptions of ethnicity that served colonial agendas in the earlier phases of Africanist scholarship. But he finds some aspects of primordialism relevant to his main argument, for 'despite ethnicity's material and constructed aspects, much of its power to motivate and unify originates in the realm of the emotional, and finds elaboration in myth, symbols, and cultural forms' (p. 7). Anthony elaborates his main argument by examining how Hausa and Igbo elites constructed and deconstructed different meanings of their respective ethnic identities and their perceptions of each other. He shows that during the period covered by this volume ethnic difference metamorphosed into violent riots, civil war, reconciliation and reintegration, thereby successfully demonstrating that ethnic conflicts are neither permanent nor inevitable.

Following the informative clarification of the main argument, basic terms, general theoretical framework and perspectives from which the narrative unfolds, Anthony adopts a format of beginning each chapter with a brief clarification of its main contention, theme and period. Chapter 1 traces 'Igbo migration to Northern Nigeria during the colonial period [1903–60], the ethnic and regional politics of decolonization during the 1950s and the rising tensions of Nigeria's First Republic between 1960 and 1966' (p. 34). Anthony insightfully applies his constructivist/primordialist conception of ethnicity to show that when it functions as medicine, ethnic difference did not prevent Igbo/Hausa friendship across ethnic divide, inter-marriage, commercial exchanges, political co-operation, and 'simple civility' that 'played key roles in connecting individuals and, sometimes, communities' (p. 33). But in the context of political crisis that brought the first military coup, ended Nigeria's first republic and plunged the country into civil war, we see ethnicity functioning as poison that heightened inter-regional tensions and polarized Igbo and Hausa ethnic groups into war adversaries (chapters 2 and 3). Yet even as the civil war raged, the significance of ethnic identities of the warring parties was recast 'from savages to brothers' (chapter 4), who can reconcile with each other by taking positive steps to re-integrate their hitherto warring communities (chapter 5), and thereafter resume mutually beneficial relationships, including the rebuilding of the Igbo migrant community in Kano (chapters 6 and 7). To reinforce his main argument about the 'profound malleability of ethnic identities', Anthony concludes his narrative by showing that since the 1990s religion has replaced ethnicity as the focal point of violent communal conflict in Kano. Anthony shares the common concern of both Nigerians and scholars of Nigerian politics that the rising tide of religious violence threatens the possibility of Nigeria's continuing existence as one country.

Given the controversies regarding the analytical utility of ethnicity, some readers may disagree with the central importance that Anthony attaches to ethnicity in analyzing not only violent conflict but also other forms of communal relations. Particularly problematic is Anthony's acceptance of an admittedly *modified* version of primordialist conceptions of ethnicity such as he reiterates at the end: 'The persistence and seeming ubiquity of ethnic sentiments, sensitivities, and networks in Nigerian society suggests that, at least for the foreseeable future, ethnicity is a force with which the country must establish a functional relationship, one in which there is medicine as well as poison' (pp. 253-4). But no matter what one might think of analytical value of the concept of ethnicity, still one has to come to terms with the political saliency of ethnicity in the modern history of Nigeria. It is therefore very important to emphasize that throughout this volume Anthony remains very attentive to the nuances and subtleties of how diverse social, economic and political forces actively came into play as political elites constructed and deconstructed meaning and significance to ethnic difference, thereby transforming it from medicine into poison and back into medicine. Anthony makes an original contribution to understanding neglected yet very important issues of great relevance to Africanists interested in the comparative study of life after violent conflict, and to peace-building and postcolonial studies.

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MUHAMMAD S. UMAR

## RELIGION AND CIVIL WAR IN SOUTHERN SUDAN

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704449445

*Religion and Conflict in Sudan: Papers from an International Conference at Yale, May 1999.* Edited by YUSUF FADL HASAN and RICHARD GRAY. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2002. Pp. 208. No price given (ISBN 9966-21-831-9).

KEY WORDS: Sudan, religion, civil war.

The thirteen chapters in this volume cover a number of issues vital to an understanding of the issue of religion in the conflict in the Sudan. Two chapters (by Yusuf Fadl Hasan and R. S. O'Fahey) analyse the present situation in a historical framework. Three chapters (by Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil, Akolda M. Tier and Hunud Abia Kandouf) look at the Islamization of the legal system and ask pertinent questions with regard to human rights and the rights of minorities. One highly readable chapter (by Abdel Salam Sidahmed) discusses state-sponsored *jihad*, and there is a chapter (by Azza Anis) on resistance to the present government's political project by women's groups. Four chapters (by Richard Gray, Scopas Dekwat Poggo, Sharon Elaine Hutchinson and the late Marc R. Nikkel) deal with different aspects of religious experience in the southern Sudan. A very revealing chapter (by Peter Woodward) examines the Ugandan dimension of the conflict. In the last chapter Lillian Craig Harris discusses what it will take for Sudanese from the different sides of the conflict to come to terms with personal losses and rebuild their shattered communities. Finally, it should be mentioned that the editors in their introduction address several of these issues, and there is also an epilogue by one of the editors, Richard Gray.

Despite several attempts the editors were not able to get anybody from 'within' the Islamist movement to write a contribution. This is unfortunate because in

the last decades arguably Islamism has been the most significant ideology in the Sudan, and the Islamic discourse has in many ways transformed the nature of the civil war. Most notably in this regard was the introduction of the concepts of *jihad* and martyrdom. Yet by comparing arguments presented in different contributions it is possible to get a glimpse of the differences of opinion between Muslim intellectuals from the northern Sudan and their Christian counterparts in the south. A case in point is Yusuf Fadl Hasan's and Scopas Dekwat Poggo's conflicting views of the factors that underlie perceptions of Islam in the south. While the former claims that the Christian missionaries through their schools 'poisoned the minds of children' by implanting the 'myth of the rapacious Arab [slave] traders' and thus 'badly impaired' the image of Islam (p. 28), the latter minimizes the missionaries' influence and stresses that people in the south quite independently of foreign inputs make a direct link between Islam and repression (pp. 134–5). It is also interesting to note the difference of opinion between the editors with regard to the 'Southern Policy' of the Condominium Government. To Yusuf Fadl Hasan, it was motivated by a desire to 'suppress Islamic influence in the Southern Sudan' (p. 27); to Richard Gray this policy was primarily the outcome of 'security considerations' (p. 123).

The chapters by Hutchinson and Nikkel constitute the book's most original contributions. Based on extensive fieldwork under what must have been very adverse conditions, they document religious change in the south during the 1990s. Read together the essays offer very interesting perspectives on the impact of armed conflict on religious expression. Hutchinson draws attention to how certain Nuer religious concepts were reformulated to make sense of deaths by firearms, and how at least one rebel leader manipulated the same ideas to remove war-related killings from the moral paradigm that constrained his soldiers. Nikkel focuses on conversion to Christianity among the Jieng Bor (Bor Dinka). Perhaps this chapter more than anything indicates how profoundly societies and cultures in the southern Sudan have been transformed by conflict.

None of the contributors go far in suggesting how religion can be handled in order to find a practical solution to the conflict. However, the typology introduced by R. S. O'Fahey suggests alternatives. In his broad sweep of the Sudanese past, he notes that historically states in the Sudan have either been 'exclusionary' or 'inclusionary'. If an exclusive identity is made the defining characteristic of a state, it follows that those who do not share this identity will reject the state. Transferred to the present context it will lead to separation of the area controlled by the SPLM from that now controlled from Khartoum. On the other hand, if identity is constructed around an inclusive idea, the call for separation will lose much of its power. O'Fahey makes the point that the leaders of the Mahdist state did not really consider the southern Sudan part of *the Sudan*. For this reason the Mahdist government did not try to maintain the borders established by the Turco-Egyptian regime but instead sought to build an Islamic state in the north. Since 1989, the government of General Omar Hassan al-Bashir has pursued similar exclusivist policies, but without giving up the claim to sovereignty over non-Muslim areas. While the contributions to this volume are better at explaining why so many Sudanese reject the vision of the incumbent regime in Khartoum and not what the alternative might be, they do give the reader a more comprehensive understanding of the various ways religion and conflict are interlinked in the Sudan.

# CONTEXTS, CONNOTATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF ALCOHOL USE

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704459441

*Alcohol in Africa: Mixing Business, Pleasure, and Politics.* Edited by DEBORAH FAHY BRYCESON. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann, 2002. Pp. viii + 305. No price given (ISBN 0-325-07115-2).

KEY WORDS: Alcohol, economic, leisure, political, social.

The ubiquity of alcohol in contemporary African history and its apparent implication in a broad range of critical issues has drawn increasing numbers of scholars to the topic. In this diverse collection, Deborah Bryceson has organized eleven essays by historians, anthropologists and social scientists into three loose categories: 'business interests', 'political contests' and 'social comforts and discomforts'. Some chapters represent the work of scholars like the historians Justin Willis, Simon Heap and Emmanuel Akyeampong, who have focused substantial attention on the subject; others represent rather slight research by-products that contribute relatively little to any broader understanding of the role of alcohol in African societies. Historians will find a great deal to interest them here, however. As Bryceson herself points out, 'alcohol is a historically contextualized cultural artefact. Its place in any culture is not inherent in the culture itself but arises from historical events and processes that are traceable, but never inevitable' (p. 271).

Thus, Willis summarizes some of the work on Tanzania that is included in his important new book, *Potent Brews: A Social History of Alcohol in East Africa, 1850-1999* (Oxford, 2002), drawing attention to the interrelationship between control over alcohol and gender and generational tensions. Heap's chapter, 'Living on the proceeds of a grog shop', shows for colonial Nigeria how the dependency of states on alcohol-derived revenues has a deep history, at least in West Africa. Whatever ambivalence imperial humanitarians and their descendants may have had regarding the liquor trade, 'the one group in Nigeria who never questioned the morality or utility of the alcohol trade was the colonial administration' (p. 142). In a fascinating essay, Akyeampong extends the analysis of his book on drinking in Ghana into a glimpse of the youth drinking culture of Kumasi in the 1990s. Making a point that surfaces in a number of other essays, he notes how unemployment and impoverishment associated with Structural Adjustment has nurtured a new, enforced, 'leisure class' that finds in drinking not only a way to pass the time but to ease the pain of their collective plight.

The remaining contributions cover a wide range of geographical and topical areas, but most, like Akyeampong's essay, chart the powerful if often contradictory interrelationships between postcolonial and neo-liberal economic policies and abrupt shifts in patterns of alcohol production and consumption. Nite Baza Tanzarn charts the dramatic expansion of *waragi* (local banana gin) production in the Kibaale District of Uganda in a piece that sets the rising incomes of distillers against ancilliary social and health problems associated with alcohol abuse and a diversion of a major food crop to alcohol production. A study of the growth of wine production as a by-product of the development of cashew production in Guinea-Bissau by Roy van der Drift makes a tenuous case for linkages between drinking and concepts of freedom, but almost casually documents how rapidly and thoroughly local people in an area that had little indigenous alcohol production incorporated cashew wine in a new set of communal rituals. Similarly, an essay by Rijk van Dijk on abstinence and pentecostalism in Malawi explores the fascinating connection between drinking and modernity. The author reminds us that 'drinkers' was often in fact a term that was used

to signify people regarded as 'backward' and it was the teetotalers, rather than the sophisticated drinkers of bottled beers, who appropriated the symbols of modernity.

Although these essays individually offer important, if scattered, insights into the history of alcohol use and control in Africa, it is the substantial direct contributions of the editor, Deborah Bryceson, that will make this volume a useful reference for students and scholars. In two introductory chapters and a conclusion (encompassing approximately 75 pages), she outlines conceptions of alcohol in African societies, summarizes the existing scholarship and defines 'changing modalities of alcohol usage'. Her conclusion focuses on the last two decades and what she refers to as the 'darker side' of alcohol. These chapters reflect a very thorough familiarity with the literature on alcohol use in Africa refracted through a sophisticated grasp of African historical and contemporary political economy. In Bryceson's view, and that of a number of contributors, the economic and policy shocks of the last two decades have conspired to encourage widespread alcohol abuse by making liquor more easily available and creating the conditions of unemployment and impoverishment that stimulate excessive consumption. In the absence of substantial data to support such a trend, however, these accounts may recall earlier 'liquor panics' stretching back to the emotional debates over the liquor traffic in West Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Although Bryceson makes substantial claims for the continental sweep of this book, she does not really explain why that is valuable. Her own analysis seems mainly to derive from the experience of societies in East and Central Africa, while individual essays provide uneven coverage of the rest of the continent. Instead, Bryceson might have more profitably attempted to explore the experiences of African communities in a broader context. But neither she nor most of the other contributors demonstrate much awareness of the larger scholarship on alcohol use and abuse, as evidenced by uneven and inexact use of terminology like 'alcoholism'. Nevertheless, Bryceson's chapters, and the book as a whole, certainly provide a useful introduction to the topic; still, Willis's *Potent Brews*, despite its geographical limits, offers an approach to the subject that is richer in detail and more theoretically informed.

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## AT THE END OF COLONIAL RULE

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853704469448

*Africa*, IV: *The End of Colonial Rule: Nationalism and Decolonization*. Edited by TOYIN FALOLA. Durham NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2002. Pp. xxvi + 541. No price given (ISBN 0-89089-202-4).

KEY WORDS: colonial, nationalism, decolonization, teaching texts.

Here is the penultimate instalment of Toyin Falola's epic journey: five volumes of African history designed to introduce Africa to college students and the general public, to break down stereotypes and to focus on the major issues of the African past from the perspective of Africans themselves. This volume comes hot on the heels of the volume on the origins of colonial rule and the Second World War. Next is Independent Africa. In many ways, this is the most difficult to pull off

successfully. It must cover a period of enormous activity and change that spilled over the whole continent and was intimately connected with the decline of European imperial power. It must – at the very least – allude to the range of opinion generated by the huge amount of scholarship now assembled on the late colonial period. And it must anticipate but not be overshadowed by the fate of independent Africa. Thankfully, there are 560 pages in which to rise to the challenge, an easy to read type-face, ample margins, plus 15 supportive maps and 72 illustrations. So, although encyclopaedic in ambition and girth – weighing in at a hefty 1.2 kg – the book manages not to feel cumbersome or over-crowded. Falola has been able to call upon established academics and rising stars on the North American scene. Indeed, most of the essayists were born and educated in Africa and have higher degrees from United States, Canadian or Nigerian universities. If there is one over-arching theme, it is Africans initiating major changes through their struggle against colonial control in a period riven with racism and lost opportunity.

After a crisp introduction by Falola and useful notes on all 25 contributors the volume divides unequally into three sections. Part A consists of 16 thematic chapters charting 'Africa in the years of decolonization'. Part B is made up of 6 regional 'case study' chapters. Part C contains 3 chapters under the heading 'Reflections on colonialism'. There are chapter summaries at the beginning and end; comprehensive but not overwhelming advice on further reading; a question section; and most helpfully, the footnotes – liberal but not manic – are printed on the same page.

'Part A' delivers much and strikes a balanced note. Four chapters on pan-Africanism, nationalism and war are followed by two on women. There is good coverage of old and new themes without jettisoning the former or over-privileging the latter. African economies and business history comes before urban tales of highlife, fast beats and easy sex. Rural history still seems to be out of favour. There is a freestanding but delightful chapter on African art. The two most successful chapters are Olufemi Vaughan's on chieftaincy and Adeleke Adeeko on African literature. Vaughan shows us how terms like tribes are out, 'ethno-regional alliances' in and that 'communal loyalties' are the new black. Whilst acknowledging some of the benefits of colonialism, verdicts emphasize that at independence African government and society was in a vulnerable state, while African economic development was skewed. Nationalism could help but only up to a point; its loyalties too were ambiguous.

In the regional section, understandably, Apartheid has a chapter all to itself. But East, Central and Equatorial Africa are lumped together, which cannot be right. Last, but by no means least, is the final section reflecting on colonialism. The three constituent essays bear the burden of having to speak to the themes of the previous sections, synthesize the huge literature on the relationship between Africa and Europe and prepare the ground for the subsequent volume on independent Africa. As a conclusion they do not work and an additional freestanding summary would have been useful. They are passionate, provocative and problematic chapters and they deal with overlapping subjects: psychology of colonialism, neo-colonialism and relations between Africa and Europe. This final section sits somewhat in tension with the first. Here, colonialism is presented as a disabling process begetting neo-colonialism, the combination of which explains Africa's current woes: the colonial and neo-colonial systems of economic extraction and control but mostly the cultural and psychologically disempowering effects of colonialism. There is less sign of African agency here although current African leaders are found to be in need of 'reprogramming'.

Occasionally chapters veer towards personal tributes to individuals: Kwame Nkrumah for being pan-Africanist and against globalization; Julius Nyerere



for supporting redistributive justice and for being Julius Nyerere. Sometimes there is a feel of African history pictured through a West African lens. Also a male lens. Depressingly there are only two women contributors and, guess what, they do the 'women' chapters. Personally I find the use of photographs with the caption 'an elite woman' or 'a Kikuyu woman' rather emptying (can we not have names even if they are supposed to represent a cohort?). There is little coverage of the hand-over of power and the politics of decolonization; little discussion of poverty and of patriarchy. But overall this volume delivers the goods wonderfully well. Its strength lies in its readability for the target audience. Its writers are interested in communicating and bear their expertise gently. This reader was pleasantly surprised by the lack of jargon and enjoyed the use of everyday language such as colonial entrepreneurs creating 'retail stores'. With such readable texts now available, there is no excuse for history curricula (especially at high school level in Britain) not to introduce African history earlier. Ultimately, this volume conveys the hope felt by a generation at the end of colonialism: as the poet David Diop wrote in 'To My Mother' there was 'beautiful black blood spilt in the fields' but then Africans began 'to see the flowers again'.

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## A THOUSAND TREES

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*Africa*, v: *Contemporary Africa*. Edited by TOYIN FALOLA. Durham NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2003. Pp. xxxiii + 962. No price given (ISBN 0-89089-203-2).

KEY WORDS: Postcolonial, teaching texts.

The fifth and final volume of Toyin Falola's ambitious *Africa* series promises, like the earlier volumes, to challenge established views, while offering university instructors a comprehensive and flexible resource for introducing students to a wide set of issues concerning Africa in our times. In some respects it delivers. The contributors are overwhelmingly African, with experience of studying and teaching both in the United States and Africa; they bring perspectives not typical in African history textbooks outside Africa. The scope is immense. The almost 1,000 pages hold 38 chapters from 31 contributors. Although most of the writers are historians, there are also authorities on management, literature, religious studies and economics. Chapter topics range from a 'background' section on such themes as the environment, population, corruption and health, to sections on 'politics and administration', the economy, 'culture and society' and finally five regional narratives. The chapters follow a uniform format, each featuring a brief preface, conclusion, study questions and suggestions for further reading. Instructors will find these qualities helpful. However, looseness in thematic selection and minimal editorial intervention leave this collection less useful than it might have been for students and instructors searching for new and more useful approaches to contemporary African problems.

Some of the chapters are wonderful essays on timely themes, laying out, for example, informed case studies of local governance and community development, or vibrant accounts of the state of African art production. Other chapters, however, serve less well as broad introductions because they are intent on offering prescriptions, for instance on how to reform public administration, end corruption or

effect 'sustainable environmental management'. Perhaps because about two-thirds of the contributors have Nigerian research interests, Nigerian examples frequent the text while East Africa and especially North Africa are less well covered. Three consecutive chapters, on indigenous religions, Christianity and Islam respectively, highlight how potential connections between the parts sometimes fail. While the first two address the resilience and social value of religious faith, the last drops these threads to focus instead on the rise of Islamic militancy and the quest for Islamic states.

More importantly, the contributors' often divergent approaches will provoke their audience less effectively than they should because points of difference or opportunities for debate are never identified, let alone addressed. Some chapters lament how African enterprise has been stunted; others celebrate the success of African businessmen. Some seek to apply international management ideas; others look to sustain particularly African traditions, including a unique mode of management. Some eschew treating Africa as a unified historical space; others assume it. Some work from nationalist traditions which stress colonial and neo-colonial causes of Africa's crises; others offer more nuanced treatments of how historical processes have unfolded to Africa's detriment. One should not expect a volume of this scope to adopt a consistent political line or philosophical perspective, if only because of the range of disciplines employed and questions addressed. However, one might hope that the chapter prefaces or book structure would highlight key points of debate so that instructors and students could assess them. As it stands, these important differences pass without comment by authors or editor. One notable overall effect of this oversight is that the question of how to periodize the later twentieth century never comes into focus, let alone under discussion. One might expect different stories to begin at different points, and for Independence, the 1970s oil crisis, the advent of Structural Adjustment or the end of the Cold War to vary in significance according to theme. But students are left with no pointers for relating these events to each other, or for mapping continuities and changes across wide landscapes. This question of chronology highlights how this huge volume differs from Fred Cooper's recent undergraduate text, *Africa since 1940* (Cambridge, 2002). In just over 200 pages Cooper covers far less ground, but the task of rethinking accepted chronologies is central to the book. While Falola's volume offers us a thousand discrete trees for study, it lacks a map to the whole forest which books such as Cooper's try to provide.

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## SHORTER NOTICES

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*Issues in Historiography*. Edited by O. O. OLUBOMEHIN. Ibadan: College Press, 2001 (distributed by African Books Collective, Oxford). Pp. x+143. £12.95, paperback (ISBN 9782194131).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, historiography.

This book intends to kill two birds with a stone. The first bird, Nigerian undergraduate students, in search of materials to read for classes on historical methods and philosophy, will find chapters on historical objectivity, oral sources, archaeology and the concept of universal history very useful indeed. Faced with

the scarcity of reading materials, the students will find many ideas associated with E. H. Carr's *What is History* retold in various ways in some of the essays. Would Carr have revised his book were he alive today? If so, then, certain portions of the book on historiography and ideologies of history associated with his ideas may need to be revisited.

Still, the value of the book to undergraduate students is the elaboration of the meaning of an interdisciplinary approach, defined as the ability to borrow from various disciplines to develop a holistic interpretation of events. The book is careful to say that history should not be narrowly defined. The contentious issues generated by postcolonialism, postmodernism and related modes of explanation are missing from the book. It is unclear whether this is a deliberate omission or a reflection of the poverty of historiography in Nigerian universities.

One of the strengths of the book is the adaptation of historical themes and concepts to the Nigerian situation. It is pleasing to see the use of references and examples derived from great Nigerian historians. One would have wished that students would also be exposed to a critique of the works generated by the outstanding scholars, if only to show that a critical discourse does not diminish their contributions but elevates them, thereby teaching students how to transit into a new generation.

Now to the second bird. In the preface, the editor says that the 'contents of the book have been carefully expanded to make it relevant and useful for the professional historians'. I take it to mean that we should look for a set of 'original essays' that will complicate the nature of historical research. Only chapter 10 by Ayo Olukojun on 'The challenges before the twenty-first century Nigerian historian' meets my expectation, especially some of his utilitarian suggestions to make the discipline more relevant to the needs of Nigerians.

The merit of the book is the attempt to offer a handbook to students in a readable manner. The serious ones among them can read and understand this book in a day or two, and then move on to something more ambitious. By positioning itself also to offer 'professional historians' ideas that they can find useful, the book outreaches its actual achievement and opens itself to negative criticisms that this author may be unwilling to attempt. Is it possible to kill two birds with a stone?

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TOYIN FALOLA

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*Ethnoarchaeology in the Zinder Region, Republic of Niger*. By ANNE HAOUR. (BAR S1133.) Oxford: Archaeopress, 2003. Pp. vii + 149. £30 (ISBN 1-84171-506-9).

KEY WORDS: Niger, archaeology.

This volume is based upon research completed initially for a doctoral thesis. Haour tackles the neglected subject of the archaeology of the Hausa, primarily with reference to Niger, focusing upon the site of Kufan Kanawa. She is quite correct in citing the general neglect of Hausa archaeology within African archaeological 'textbooks', and her important study begins to redress this. Thus, besides the presentation of the primary archaeological data, useful summaries of the relevant written sources are provided along with reviews of previous research, backed up with a comprehensive bibliography.

Kufan Kanawa is adequately introduced and moreover placed within its regional context via her survey results. Far too often primacy is given to the main urban centres resulting in their being left floating devoid of context, something Haour avoids. The excavations and their finds are also described. But here, in order to make the stratigraphy clearer for future investigators (if any), it would have been

useful to combine clearer visual conventions for the different matrices encountered (Figure 6.4) with the written descriptions which are given primacy. However in compensation the pottery is well described and the degree of detail provided, such as the thin-section photographs of fabrics encountered, will be extremely useful for comparative purposes.

The main criticism which can be made, though 'criticism' is perhaps too harsh a term, is in the use of the term 'ethnoarchaeology'. Excavation, survey, interviews and historiographical critique are all methodologies employed, but ethnoarchaeology is given primacy in the title when in reality it is little used except in application to a brief consideration of modern potting at Garin Bauchi. Haour makes no attempt to define what is meant by ethnoarchaeology here and one is left wondering if it is being used as a descriptive device linked with the archaeology of ethnicity rather than ethnography directed at archaeological aims as is usually understood.

Notwithstanding this, Haour is to be commended for a useful volume which will serve archaeologists and others working in the region well for many years to come. The illustrations are clear and the inclusion of a page of colour plates gives an appreciation of the landscape which black and white often fails to do. The work is also very well written and remarkably free from typographical errors.

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TIMOTHY INSOLL

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*Cattle Plague: A History.* By C. A. SPINAGE. New York: Kluwer Academic, 2003.

Pp. xx + 765. No price given (ISBN 0-306-47789-0).

KEY WORDS: Animal husbandry, science, colonial.

This book is, as the publisher's blurb asserts, 'the most comprehensive general study of the history of ... rinderpest yet attempted'. It also provides an accessible guide to past and present research on the aetiology of the disease. Compiled by a wildlife biologist, it is the result of an exhaustive search through the secondary, and some printed primary, literature. Nine chapters, nearly 200 pages, cover the history of rinderpest in Africa from its introduction into Eritrea in the late 1880s to its near eradication a century later. At present, only one known focus remains, in Southern Somalia.

While the book is unlikely to have the same impact as Ford's study of trypanosomiasis thirty years ago, since it concentrates on producing a comprehensive narrative of spread and response rather than on presenting new epidemiological and ecological perspectives, its detailed summary of events will be very useful, especially to Africanists unfamiliar with livestock disease. The author makes some important suggestions. One is that, while rinderpest cannot survive for long in wild game populations, thus ruling out the older theories of game as a permanent reservoir of infection, the disease can infect sheep and goats, a possible source of transmission that colonial scientists tended to overlook. Another is that the great pandemic of the 1890s might not have been rinderpest's first visit to sub-Saharan Africa. This cannot be proved, but the possibility is worth considering. It is based on two plausible contentions: that, since rinderpest epidemics can burn out so completely as to leave no trace behind, the fact that rinderpest was not endemic in the 1890s does not mean that it was entirely 'new'; and that the disease, already present in Egypt and possibly in the Maghrib and Sahel, might have spread previously along the lines of trade routes, much as it was introduced from outside in the 1880s.

Africanists will naturally turn first to the section on Africa, but other sections are also of interest, especially those dealing with rinderpest in Britain and Europe in the nineteenth century, if only because they help to contextualize later colonial responses to rinderpest. Considering its long history in Europe, surprisingly little had been discovered about rinderpest control by the 1890s. In the absence of a cure, measures in Britain had focused almost entirely on the monitoring of stock imports and the slaughter of infected animals, and almost no research had been undertaken on methods of immunization, an essential given the impossibility of controlling stock movement absolutely and the key to ultimate eradication. Mid-nineteenth-century debates in Britain over the wisdom of quarantine were continued in colonial Africa, but the real breakthroughs in immunization methods came from outside Western Europe, first from Russia and then in Africa itself (serum-simultaneous or 'double inoculation') and India (inactivated virus), areas where rinderpest threatened to become enzootic, and thus posed a challenge of a different order from the spectacular but shortlived epizootics that plagued Western Europe up to the 1870s.

This is probably not a book that many Africanists will want to buy, but it is one that they should urge their libraries to acquire.

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*The Postal Services of the Gold Coast to 1901*. Edited by JOHN SACHER (historical introduction by Philip Beale). London: Royal Philatelic Society, 2003. Pp. xii + 254. £70 (ISBN 0-900831-52X).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, colonial, communications.

Over the years the Royal Philatelic Society has published a series of volumes illustrating the postal history of the former British West African colonies. *The Postal Services of Sierra Leone* by Philip Beale appeared in 1988 (reviewed in *Journal of African History*, 31 [1990]). *The Postal Services of the British Nigeria Region* followed. The book under review supplements an already-published *The Postal Services of the Gold Coast, 1900-1957*. These comprehensive, scholarly publications are a reminder that postal history extends far beyond the invention of adhesive stamps or the introduction of government monopolies. Early Gold Coast correspondence was carried, as 'ship letters', by any merchant ship whose captain was ready to take it. The earliest recorded here is dated 1733. It had taken six months to arrive and on reaching London was charged by the General Post Office for delivery to its destination. When the crown resumed control of the Gold Coast forts in 1843 the colonial government assumed responsibility for mails. But carriage was still by ship letter until 1852 when a mail packet service for West Africa was established, contracted out to one of the shipping companies. The mail steamer provided correspondents with a regular 'mail day' to send and receive letters – and provoked angry correspondence with the government when captains failed to respect their timetable. But only in 1850 was compulsory prepayment introduced, certified by an official handstamp. The first adhesive stamps were issued in 1876. When low denominations ran short in the post offices higher denomination stamps were bisected, diagonally or vertically, and accepted for delivery.

The overseas mail service was supplemented by a local service. Official correspondence between the forts was at first carried by seas, but by the 1850s an inland service had been introduced, open to the public. By 1900, 36 local post offices were

in operation (the Asantehene too had his regular courier service at this period).<sup>1</sup> For twenty years the office of postmaster-general was held by a Sierra Leonean, E. Rowland Cole, who managed to withstand the onslaught of racial colonial policy which, from the 1890s, began to drive Africans out of senior government posts. He retired on pension in 1899, handing over an efficient service to his white successor. The volume is lavishly produced with numerous illustrations exemplifying successive letter covers, handstamps and adhesive stamps described in the text, and includes a general historical introduction by Philip Beale.

London

CHRISTOPHER FYFE

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*Gold Coast Diaries: Chronicles of Political Officers in West Africa, 1900–1919.*

Compiled by THORA WILLIAMSON. Edited by ANTHONY KIRK-GREENE; Foreword by RICHARD RATHBONE. London: I. B. Tauris/Radcliffe Press, 2000. Pp. xix + 419. £24.50 (ISBN 1-86064-451-1).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, colonial, text editions.

One of the most widely informative categories of archival sources on colonial Ghana are the informal diaries kept by commissioners (political or administrative officers) of all levels. They were not private: on the contrary, they had to be submitted regularly to higher authority, and their official purpose was to keep superior officers, ultimately the governor, informed about how local administrators spent their working days, and about what they observed in their localities. For the researcher, they have major virtues compared to other materials in the colonial archives. First, they document what in administrative terms was the non-urgent as well as the urgent. Second, they cover an extreme variety of matters, which makes them rewarding reading for social, economic and cultural as well as to political and administrative historians. Finally, because they tend to be conversational and sometimes outspoken, they often add detail and perspective lacking in other colonial accounts.

The late Thora Williamson, an amateur enthusiast of evident dedication and enterprise, has done a very useful service in compiling this major collection of extracts from the first few years of these diaries. Anthony Kirk-Greene has edited them (extracting from the extracts, down to a publishable length) and provides a 15-page introduction, while Williamson herself supplies a prefatory essay on 'The Gold Coast DC' (district commissioner). Richard Rathbone's foreword rightly highlights their value in highlighting the diversity of experiences, settings and interactions in the colonial period – reflecting change, and diversity of place and individual personalities.

Williamson's book presents 330 pages of extracts from the diaries, plus several appendices. Of the diary extracts, 39 pages represent three frontier districts, 1900–7: northwest, southwest and southeast (Keta). The rest come from the first six years after Governor Clifford effectively institutionalized the informal diary system throughout Ghana, in 1913. Of these pages, 48 relate to the Gold Coast Colony, 118 to Ashanti and 125 to the Northern Territories. Thus the common under-representation in the literature of the inland districts, and especially of the northern savanna, is counteracted here. One only wishes someone would provide complementary volumes representing the later diaries.

<sup>1</sup> Ivor Wilks, *Forests of Gold* (Athens OH, 1993), 193–6, 205–8.

Where I could, I compared the extracts here with my own notes on the diaries from commissioners in Ashanti. In my view, for the years concerned, the published appetizer is a fair representation of the full menu available in the Ghanaian national archives. It is to be strongly recommended for use in teaching. It would also repay perusal by anyone interested in Ghanaian history and, for example, in the construction of indirect rule in colonial Africa generally. More surprisingly, it provides some unofficial British perspectives on French and German methods of colonial rule. But a note of caution must be added. To judge from the sample available to me, the text has been 'tidied', it is not made clear where words have been omitted, and occasionally there are what I believe to be copying errors. Read this book to get a multitude of flavours of the period: but go to the originals rather than quote it extensively.

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*South Africa and the Communist International: A Documentary History.* Edited by APOLLON DAVIDSON, IRINA FILATOVA, VALENTIN GORODNOV and SHERIDAN JOHNS. London: Frank Cass, 2003. Vol. 1: *Socialist Pilgrims to Bolshevik Footsoldiers, 1919–1930*. Pp. lxii + 263. £55 (ISBN 0-7146-5280-6). Vol. II: *Bolshevik Footsoldiers to Victims of Bolshevisation, 1931–1939*. Pp. lxi + 304. £55 (ISBN 0-7146-5281-4).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, political, nationalism, international relations.

These two fascinating and scholarly volumes make an invaluable contribution to the study of South African political history in the twentieth century, especially the history of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA). The volumes include much hitherto unavailable material, including official documents from both the Comintern and the CPSA, as well as correspondence between Russian and South African activists. Thus they enable readers to gain insight into the issue of agency as well as policy and into the perspectives of the various actors. The volumes are arranged chronologically and thematically, covering the major themes in the relationship of the Comintern and its South African section. These include the formation of the local Communist Party and its admission to the Comintern, debates about the Native Republic thesis introduced by the Comintern in 1927 and the implementation of policies such as Bolshevization, the New Line and the Popular Front.

The first volume opens in 1919, the year of the Comintern's formation, when socialists in South Africa were in the process of establishing a unified Communist Party. The volume traces the Comintern's growing role in its South African section and ends in 1930, when the Comintern's New Line policy was beginning to have a significant impact on internal CPSA dynamics. Volume II opens in 1931, the year in which the first generation of CPSA leaders, most of whom had been founding members of the Party, were expelled. It covers significant shifts in Comintern policy and closes in 1939, when the outbreak of war in Europe began preoccupying the Comintern's attention and led to a decline in communication between the Comintern and the CPSA.

A historical and thematic introduction in volume I provides an overview of the CPSA's development as a legal party and of its evolving relationship with the Comintern. This provides the reader with insight into key historiographical controversies and debates about South African Communist history and about

the methodological issues arising from the documents unearthed in the Comintern Archives.

Each volume contains two extremely useful glossaries of selected names and organizations, and an index of names. The volumes are handsomely illustrated with photographs of some of the key Comintern and South African Communist personalities, of flyers and other printed material and of places. These are necessary reference volumes for all library collections covering both South African and Communist Studies and for researchers in these areas.

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