

## REVIEWS

### THE 'BANTU BIBLE' AT LAST

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*The Bantu Languages*. Edited by DEREK NURSE and GÉRARD PHILIPPSON. London: Routledge, 2003. Pp. 708. £170 (ISBN 0-7007-1134-1).

KEY WORDS: Linguistics.

At long last here is something that has been lacking for nearly a century: a systematic handbook about the Bantu languages in comparative, descriptive and historical perspective. Given the mass of studies and the diversity of topics on this subject the challenge was formidable, yet the editors succeeded so brilliantly that this book is set to become the classic introduction to the subject, or as they say in linguistic jargon the BB or 'Bantu Bible'. Clearly it is going to be essential for all Bantuists and many other scholars interested in the subject and hence one's first plea must be for a paperback edition at an affordable price.

The volume is divided into two parts. The first is comparative. Its initial chapters deal with sounds, phonology, tones, derivation, aspect and tense, nominal morphology and syntax. These are followed by chapters about the dynamics of languages, namely historical linguistics, historical classification, grammaticalization, contact languages and language acquisition. Most of these are excellent summaries of what is known and some are particularly noteworthy, for instance the discussion about the superclosed vowels and the presentation of aspect and tense.

The second part offers 17 descriptions of little known languages and of whole language groups. Ten of these deal with tongues near or in the rainforests that are not familiar to most linguists. These contributions will broaden many mental templates of what Bantu languages are supposed to look like and users of this handbook will often return to them. The book concludes with an expanded version of Guthrie's referential classification. Unfortunately, it still lacks entries for many languages (especially in the forests). Hence this list is not likely to gain universal acceptance and scholars will still want to resort to the original Guthrie system and its Tervuren (BCM) variant.

Readers of this *Journal* will be most interested in Schadeberg's chapter on historical linguistics and the following one on historical classification by Nurse and Philippson. Yet they should not neglect the others. Ideally historians should be familiar with the whole of Part I or – if that is too much to expect – at least with the chapters on derivation and contact languages. Moreover, they will soon discover that if they wish to evaluate critically a linguistic argument involving Bantu they will need to resort to this handbook both to check technical details, and to find information about further relevant literature.

As to the genetic classification of Bantu, the combined accounts of Schadeberg and Nurse/Phillipson depict the following situation. Bantu studies are now well over 150 years old and include some 10,000 publications. There are around 500 Bantu languages and the reconstruction of ProtoBantu phonology, grammar and lexicon has met with considerable success. Yet a convincing genetic classification still eludes scholars' grasp. In part this is due to the continuing scarcity

of adequate descriptions for most of these languages. But the main reason is that, unlike nearly all other language families in the world, Bantu acts as a huge single dialect continuum in which seemingly unlimited convergence (mutual borrowing) obscures genetic affiliations. This is most evident in the lexicon because that is most easily borrowed. Yet the criss-crossing of isoglosses shows that it also holds for phonetic or morphological features. But since classification by the comparative method rests on the identification of innovations (the best ones are irreversible phonemic change) that are not shared beyond a single set of languages, no criss-crossing isoglosses can be used – for who is to say which ones are due to transfer (borrowing) and which ones are not? One can therefore only rely on innovations such as Dahl's law that are nearly immune to transfer (as shown by breaks in their pattern of distribution). But these remain rare.

Hence, current genetic classifications are still based on lexicostatistics. This technique uses a set of basic words that are supposedly highly resistant to transfer and hence good to uncover genetic relationships. Lexicostatistics should yield groupings that need to be validated by the comparative method. But in this regard scholarship is divided. Nurse and Philippson are so disappointed by the results of lexical research in general that they reject out of hand the use of all lexical evidence whether 'basic' or not. At the other extreme, Ehret accepts the validity of lexicostatistics and leans heavily on common lexical innovation as further proof for genetic grouping.<sup>1</sup> The Leiden and Tervuren schools consider that stable results from lexicostatistic results are indicators of genuine groups to be validated, while unstable results point to trouble spots in need of clarification. In practice they also remain wary of proof by lexical innovation although in principle they do not reject this.<sup>2</sup>

On the basis of common phonological or morphological innovations and relying on the intuition of other linguists, Nurse and Philippson propose to bundle the Bantu languages in some 80 mostly uncontroversial local groupings. They then combine many of these to form 26 intermediate groupings of which about half are controversial. Intermediate groupings are then tentatively combined into a few large groups, only one of which, 'Northeastern Savanna', is accepted by all. This means that historians usually can reliably use genetic data when local groupings are involved and that they certainly should pay more attention to the wealth of evidence that is implicit in particular cases of convergence. And, in any case, the time depths involved in most cases of local groupings or convergence are also those that interest historians the most. But until further notice they should remain wary of building grand visions of early stages of the 'Bantu expansion'.

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<sup>1</sup> For instance his 'Subclassifying Bantu: the evidence of stem morpheme innovations', in Jean Marie Hombert and Larry M. Hyman (eds.), *Bantu Historical Linguistics* (Stanford, 1999), 43–147.

<sup>2</sup> Y. Bastin and P. Piron, 'Classifications lexicostatistiques: bantou, bantou et bantoïde: de l'intérêt des groupes flottants', in Hombert and Hyman (eds.), *Bantu Historical Linguistics*, 149–63.

## ISLAM AND HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

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*The Archaeology of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa.* By TIMOTHY INSOLL.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Pp. xv + 470, 125 illustrations.

£70/\$95 (ISBN 0-521-65171-9); £25.95; \$37, paperback (ISBN 0-521-65702-4).

KEY WORDS: Archaeology, Islam, precolonial.

There is little argument that Islam has played an important part in shaping the continent's history and culture, and this volume is the first comprehensive survey of the archaeological evidence for Islam from sub-Saharan Africa. It is a massive compendium of facts, sites and published opinions from the Saharan fringes to the Cape. The bibliography alone runs to some forty pages and the treatment of each region (Insoll identifies seven) is balanced, up-to-date and comprehensive. Numerous illustrations have been collected, and while some are a little murky they do contribute evidence that is often difficult to find elsewhere. Text boxes provide background in selected topics. This is a useful book that helps to understand the wider picture of Islam in Africa.

The author claims that this is essentially a study in historical archaeology (p. 3), and thus lies within the theoretical debate about the relationship between archaeological data (such as material culture, architecture, environmental evidence) and texts. Insoll lies at the archaeological end of this debate, and leaves little room for nuanced interpretations that can emerge from a detailed understanding of the historical evidence. By focusing on Islam, he has to identify the physical remains – such as prayer beads, burials or mosques – which of course may not be visible or have been found by archaeologists. For much of Africa, modern research has not been undertaken for this sort of precision in identification.

Archaeological evidence is at its most useful in locating the origins of Islam within different African societies. The conversion process is rarely recorded historically (or at least reliably so), and in many places the first traces of Islam are physical – mosques, tombs and inscriptions. The volume evaluates this evidence carefully and is rightly cautious in accepting this as a definitive answer. For example in East Africa, the historical sources place the conversion of the Swahili in the twelfth century, the earliest inscriptions date to 1100, but recent archaeological discoveries place the first mosques in the mid-eighth century. Much work has been done in East Africa, but Islamic origins are little investigated elsewhere; for example at the key Sahelian site of Koumbi Saleh, 'a rather standard trade centre was excavated which sheds little light on the central issue of the conversion to Islam of the kings of Ghana' (pp. 228–9). Without this evidence it remains difficult to establish the processes and chronologies in any detail.

Insoll argues repeatedly, as he moves around his seven regions, that trade was the most important factor behind conversion, 'long distance trade and conversion to Islam went hand in hand and underpinning this was access to trade goods and services brought by this trade' (p. 398). This is of course a very archaeological view, as long-distance trade is one of the more visible activities, leaving beads, glass and ceramics. But, as Insoll himself documents, large areas of Africa, especially in the south, east and western forests, had close trading links with the Islamic world, but remained unconverted for centuries. If the Indian Ocean trade was so important to Great Zimbabwe, why did its inhabitants never adopt Islam? Many complex factors played their part when a society converted to Islam, and only a few of these may be archaeologically visible.

This complexity is hidden by a monolithic view of Islam as a single, orthodox faith, whereas the reality in Africa (and everywhere) is much more complex. The Ibadi activity in the ninth-century Sahel has a sound historical basis, but not a

single convincing piece of archaeological evidence to support it, except three brown glazed sherds and some very dubious residual architectural traditions. The author dismisses out of hand the little archaeological evidence there is for early Shi'ites and Ibadis in east Africa, preferring a model of the gradual adoption of Islam by the Swahili, who it is suggested did not care where their Islam came from. However, these sectarian disputes were very real, and underpin the historical processes, hinted at in the chronicles and traditions. Here is a missed opportunity to use the archaeological evidence to understand these complex documents for the first time.

The strength of this book – its focus on Islam – remains also its weakness. Insoll has shown just how important Islam was in the development of African society across the whole continent. But in so doing, what emerges is a repetitive narrative of what Islam left behind – tombstones, mosques, trade goods – without an understanding of the wider societies that embraced Islam. Few archaeologists who work in Africa describe themselves as ‘Islamic archaeologists’, but deal with the impact of religion (whether Islam, Christianity or traditional beliefs) as part of the wider cultural historical sequence. Insoll has reminded us how important Islam is, and has provided us with a useful handbook to guide our researches into African societies.

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### MAGNUM OPUS

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*Arabic Medieval Inscriptions from the Republic of Mali: Epigraphy, Chronicles and Songhay-Tuāreg History.* By P. F. DE MORAES FARIAS. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. Pp. ccxvi + 280, 14 maps and site plans, 69 plates. £99; \$185 (ISBN 0-19-72622-8).

KEY WORDS: Mali, precolonial, social, sources, text editions.

Is history first of all a discursive activity, a field in which the main concern of the specialist is to question the words, the sentences, the discursive formations, that make up the meaning of a given historical event or sum of events? If this question is understood in a sense that transcends the narrow limits of the classical philological *modus operandi*, if it is extended to encompass the oral aspects of the language as well as the whole space that it produces and in which it is produced, the response of P. F. de Moraes Farias is certainly positive.

In his earliest major contribution to a critical rewriting of West African history,<sup>1</sup> Dr. Moraes Farias shook to its linguistic roots one of the most firmly established monuments of that history: the narrative of the Saharo-Sahelian Almoravid movement (mid-eleventh century), the first strong and (at least initially) centralized Islamic militant action recorded in the region. The focus of the young researcher's inquiry was a cautious and erudite re-examination of the meaning of the Arabic verb *rābata* ('to fight for the triumph of Islam') and the root *R.B.Ṭ*, on which the name *al-Murābiṭūn* (=the Almoravids) is built. On the basis, among other considerations, of this semantic reassessment, Moraes Farias put an end to the old controversy about the existence and location of the so-called *ribāt* (fortified monastery) which the received *vulgate* used to associate with the name and the initial phase of the Almoravid movement. Hence, the 'hidden' iconoclast Moraes

<sup>1</sup> P. F. de Moraes Farias, 'The Almoravids', *Bulletin de l'Institut Fondamental de l'Afrique Noire*, 29, B, 3-4 (1967), 794-878.

Farias liberated, in his gentle though radical manner, a major sequence of West African history from an imaginary problem.

Since then, he has continued, methodically and stubbornly, to dig the same furrow, instilling doubt in the sound (historical) minds that we claim to have displacing borders between groups, languages, identities, dynasties, chronological sequences, narrative forms, written and oral sources, modes of legitimation and (re)construction of the past, fields of knowledge and so on. His superb book, published last year by the British Academy, that I am trying to present in brief – a hard task for this large-format 600-page volume! – illustrates wonderfully the multiplicity and the depth of Dr. Moraes Farias's talents, his erudition and his rigour, and, if I can use this oxymoron, the 'cautious audacity' that characterizes his specific manner of deconstructing/reconstructing the history of Saharo-Sahelian West Africa.

Summing up almost forty years of non-stop field research, *Arabic Medieval Inscriptions from the Republic of Mali* confronts and redraws the images of the Malian Songhay-Tuareg universe(s) and their evolution between the tenth and the sixteenth centuries, though the epigraphic inscriptions copied out in the sites of Essuk, Junhan, Gao-Saney and Bentyia, on one side, and the Timbuktu chronicles (*Tārīḡhal-Sudān*, *Tārīḡhal-Fattāḡ Notice historique ...*), dating from the seventeenth century, on the other.

The book is divided into three parts: after a 'historical introduction' (Part I) giving an overview of the material and theoretical context which allows Dr. Moraes Farias to present a substantially renewed view of the history of the Niger Bend, the author turns to 'the textual characteristics of the epigraphic corpus' (Part II) that he has gathered and analysed. The third part is devoted to the corpus itself, that is to say to the transcriptions and translations of the (almost exclusively Arabic) epigraphic inscriptions. Let me try to give, within the allowed limits of a few sentences, an idea of this book packed with ideas.

To start, one must underline the wealth and the extent of the information recorded in the corpus patiently gathered and deciphered (a task often turning into the treasure hunt) by the author. Having examined some 400 inscriptions, he reproduces in his book 250 among them, meticulously transcribed, described and translated. The presented corpus is distributed as follows:

Site	Gao-Saney	Essuk	Bentyia	Junhan
Inscriptions	103	77	63	7

In terms of dates, the corpus extends over a period of more than four and a half centuries, beginning in AH 404/AD 1013–14, and ending in AH 894/AD 1489. The author gives an extensive analysis of the textual patterns of this written material: lettering and decoration, Qur'anic quotations, formulae, meaning and forms of the names, etc.

Among the most remarkable features of the corpus, Dr. Moraes Farias emphasizes the new set of data added to (and, sometimes, in contradiction to) the received chronology of the region. He shows the – unusual in the other sources – attention paid to female offices and to women ancestors in the given genealogical chains. He highlights the process of incorporation of the imported written material in genuine, though mixed, local patterns, which illustrates the 'naturalization' of Islam in West Africa, the replication of Mecca claimed by Essuk. Tādmakkat was the symbol of this 'integration at a distance', of these 'strategies of extraversion' at work in the early integration of the Sahelo-Saharan shores into the Muslim world – a dialectic which resounds as a remote ancestor of our *present-day* 'globalization/glocalization', and its homogenization/heterogenization effects.

But probably the most provocative contribution of Dr. Moraes Farias's analysis of the inscription corpus is the unexpected bridge he establishes between orality and written traditions through the medium apparently most remote from phonation, the epigraphic writings. One may read, for example, the remarkably accurate passages in paragraphs 481–3 dealing with 'the engraving of the letter *n̄n* to represent *tanwīn* or nunation' (a grammatical mistake associated with an 'auralized' perception of the text, that is to say a scriptural record of the phoneme /n/, spelled out at the end of some words, though absent in their correct written form), or paragraphs 490–9 that he devotes to the particle *mtāe* (in the expression *qabru mtāe Fuiān*='the tomb of So-and-so') obviously borrowed from Maghrebian dialectal use to replace the classical Arabic annexion state (*idāfa*), but syntactically manipulated in order to 'realign itself with Classical-Arabic grammar (p. cxciij)'.

Interferences and mixtures between Arabic dialectal forms, Berber syntax and Classical Arabic give support to the broader convergence discovered by Dr. Moraes Farias between the themes elaborated by the Timbuktu written chronicles and the heroes of the oral traditions. Paradoxically, this convergence is at the heart of the received historical reconstructions that made the richness of the epigraphic data literally invisible until the turning point inaugurated by Moraes Farias's discoveries and analysis, deepening and enlarging the hesitant intuitions of some praiseworthy predecessors (Van Berchem, Sauvaget, Viré).

Indeed, contrary to the assumption, originated in Barth's views, that the Timbuktu chronicles are to be considered as a reliable source of 'rough', 'innocent', primary data, belonging to a long-standing tradition of recording historical events 'formalized' in Ahmad Bāba's days or earlier, Dr. Moraes Farias brings to light the radical novelty of the chroniclers' project to (re)invent the Mali-Songhay Islamic-imperial as well as Sahelo-Saharan identity. Though the cohesion and the novelty of this (re)invention are generated by and generate some kind of Foucaultian 'epistemic shift' (p. 214) breaking with the heritage enclosed in the epigraphic inscriptions – the *raison d'être* of their 'oblivion' – the new chronicle genre, at the same time, betrays the continuity of the imaginative word of the local populations – commoners and chroniclers – through the above-mentioned intertwining of oral narratives with written traditions. One may here call attention to the long and meticulous passages devoted in the book to the conjunction of mythical and historical features in the figures of Aligurran/Ali Kulun, Silman Nāri, Sii (*Sii* or *Sonyi* Ali *Beeri*) and Maamar (*Askyia* Muhammad I), which crosses and mixes 'pagan' and 'Islamic' traditions, Tamāšeq, Songhay and Mande cultures.

This is a lesson of 'impurity' on which all contemporary symbolic-goods producers – politicians, historians, militant scholars – in search of 'authenticity' and 'national' boundaries may meditate. It is a lesson that our identities, in the Sahelo-Saharan region as well as elsewhere, are less behind us than ahead of us. To conclude, let me express a wish: to see this beautiful book in paperback form as soon as possible in order to allow the Sahelian reader to have access to it.

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## INTRA-REGIONAL INTERACTIONS

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*Economics, Politics and Social Change in the Benue Basin c. 1300–1700: A Regional Approach to Pre-Colonial West African History.* By ROBERT A. SARGENT. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1999 (available from African Books Collective, Oxford). Pp. vi + 305. £17.95; \$29.95 (ISBN 9-781-56415-6).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, precolonial, economic, environment, political, social.

Studying the Benue Basin before the eighteenth century is complicated. The region was staggeringly fragmented and lacks major archaeological finds, has produced few ethnographic studies and not enough of either the Islamic or Atlantic sources that facilitate the study of the period elsewhere. In 1974, W. E. B. Webster founded the Benue Valley Project at Dalhousie University, Canada, to redress these shortcomings. The army of researchers he nurtured generated a trove of oral information over the following two decades, and continues to yield books and articles that push the boundaries of our knowledge of the region's past, especially the chronologies of state formation and major population movements. Robert Sargent's book, a revised 1984 Dalhousie Ph.D. thesis, is a product of that project. Here, the reader will find in full display the dilemmas, skills and pitfalls of historians of the precolonial era. While historians of precolonial sub-Saharan Africa often conveniently concentrate on the eighteenth and, especially, nineteenth centuries, Sargent braves the period from the fourteenth to the seventeenth. He takes on a wider area and weaves a whole range of processes in a truly political economy perspective. Stripped of his wayward incursions deep into the north, south and southwest of the putative Benue Basin or eastern Nigerian Middle Belt, the study has much to offer. But, viewed as a study of the vast area that includes Kano, Katsina and Bornu in the north, and Nigerian coastal societies as far west as Lagos (pp. 2–9, 39, 59), the book falls short on sources and insights. Clear enough, however, are both the fluidity of boundaries and centrality of interactions on the one hand and the pitfalls of regional history on the other.

Sargent's argument is three-fold. First, economic change in the seventeenth century and its socio-political impact resulted not only from the collapse of the Songhai *pax* in 1591, but also from a major shift in West Africa's climate that coincided with the Songhai collapse. Droughts and famines were so severe that even regions not directly affected felt their aftershocks. Second, the overseas slave trade was not the prime cause of the economic disintegration of West Africa: political, social and economic disruptions antedated, by at least a century, the expansion of the trade after 1750. Third, transformations resulted from both natural factors and calculations of the African entrepreneur. The account revolves around three 'focal states', each representing a different ecological setting: Benin in the forest, Idah in derived savanna and Kwararafa in the sudan. Historians should pay attention to Sargent's analysis of interactions among the various societies. He consistently and deftly sketches the interaction of economics, politics, culture and other aspects of life. This book forces us to realize how little historians of West Africa know or care to know about the influence of the environment.

The nine chapters show that the societies were more intricately related than historians often realize. The rise and expansion of states both promoted trade and generated conflict within and among them, as well as resistance from satellite polities. Chapter 1 introduces the book effectively, barring the disconcerting absence of chronological signposts for the relationships marshaled. Unless interested in methodology for its own sake, the reader is advised to skip Chapter 2 altogether: it largely repeats relevant sections of Chapter 1. Whatever additional material here is on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, beyond the book's

focus. Chapters 3–5 deal with Benin, its formation, consolidation and expansion, with Chapter 5 giving some attention to Benin's uneven relationship with its offshoot, Idah. The latter's consolidation, expansion and separation from Benin are the subject of Chapter 6. Chapter 7 focuses on Kwararafa, an originally Sudanic state that clashed with Middle Belt powers following its sustained southward shift – a result of incessant conflicts with powerful Kano and Bornu, and its failure to establish itself as a Sudanic power. Chapter 8 charts Kwararafa's relations with Idah, which culminated in Kwararafa elements replacing the Benin monarchy in Idah; ironically, a fallout of the terminal disintegration of Kwararafa itself. Chapter 9 concludes. But to better understand the book, the reader should first read the 'Bibliographical notes' at the end.

Like most historians of our time, Sargent insists on allocating primacy to African over external agency, even when the evidence points decisively neither one way nor another. His claim that the trans-Saharan trade remained more important than its Atlantic counterpart until the mid-eighteenth century is, at best, controversial. The Atlantic trade had become more important up to one century earlier. Environmental factors loom too large in the analysis. Intermittent droughts do not necessarily stir sustained, long-term famines and the droughts Sargent characterizes do not seem substantially different from what was and is normal for West Africa. His claim that the Middle Belt experienced enough rainfall for it to escape the worst ravages of drought is contrary to the findings of geographers, such as Harrison Church and William Hance.<sup>1</sup> Sargent follows convention in using a standard generational marker for the myriad societies in the region, and spiritedly touts the superiority of this approach (pp. 21–2). The twenty-seven-year marker becomes a box to remain in, even when more precise statements are possible. The idea of a standard to apply everywhere, irrespective of special circumstances and specific cultural practices that influence the demographic process, is problematic. A standard assumes that first sons, who were not necessarily first born or of first wives, all survived. Each society is different and special circumstances, such as epidemics, unusually late marriages and high infant mortality, might exacerbate these disruptions.

Barring Kwararafa-related processes, which are lucidly described when backed with evidence from the Kano Chronicle, several accounts of intergroup relations are murky and/or cry out for evidence. Sargent's uncritical references to 'Igbo' and 'Yoruba' to characterize relations involving such societies as Aboh, Akure, Aro, Ekiti and Onitsha that were at best peripheral to groups that later blossomed into these ethnic groups is problematic. For an understudied region, Sargent can ill-afford to omit Austin Shelton's important work on Igbo–Igala relations and Dike and Ekejiuba's on the Aro.

Despite its imperfections, by taking on an entire region and the complex relationships among and within the polities, and making explicit comparisons of structures and processes, Sargent has undoubtedly given us the opportunity to see general patterns and interconnections impossible to glean from a patchwork of local studies.

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<sup>1</sup> R. J. Harrison Church, *West Africa: A Study of the Environment and of Man's Use of It* (2nd edn, London, 1974), 173, 420–1; William A. Hance, *The Geography of Modern Africa* (New York, 1964), 174, 175.



## EUROPEAN IMAGES OF THE KHOISAN

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*L'invention du Hottentot: histoire du regard occidental sur les Khoisan (XVe–XIXe siècle)*. By FRANÇOIS-XAVIER FAUVELLE-AYMAR. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2002. Pp. 415. €30, paperback (ISBN 2-85944-445-9).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, exploration/travel, hunter-gatherers, Western images of Africa.

This book bears testimony to the depth of research on South Africa emerging in France. For the past decade, French geographers and sociologists have produced ground-breaking studies on changing South Africa. Fauvelle-Aymar's book indicates that this scholarship is now extending into the domain of history. *L'invention du Hottentot* is a history of the changing ways in which Europeans have looked at the Khoisan. The book starts in the fifteenth century, when the first Portuguese explorers stumbled on the Khoisan, a people they soon came to regard with fear. It closes at the end of the nineteenth century, by which time Europeans had focused both their imagination and their science on the Khoisan. The book says less about Africa than about the way Europeans saw Africa; and its strongest chapters cover the period of the Enlightenment.

By the mid-sixteenth century, the accounts of Portuguese explorers were assembled in popular compilations, often translated into Italian and German. Fifty years later accounts of the 'kaffirs' (as the Khoisan and Bantu-speakers were originally known) started to emerge in English, Dutch and French. However it is only on p. 76 that we reach the descriptions of the Khoisan recorded by these early explorers, often ship's captains, surgeons or merchants on their way to the east. Their fearful first encounter accounts were replaced, at the end of the sixteenth century, by a new genre of description that concentrated on the Khoisan body and its functions. Europeans en route to the East could only compare the Khoisan unfavourably with the moghuls they encountered in Persia, India or Indonesia. Gradually a stereotype emerged as the Khoisan were qualified as small of stature, ugly, smeared in smelly animal fat, dressed in greasy animal skins and wearing outlandish necklaces of animal intestines that they ate, raw, when hungry. They gobbled like turkeys or spoke a language made up of a series of hiccups. It was only in the mid-seventeenth century that the first Khoi words were inscribed in the wordlists of passing sailors. But by this time the disagreeable reputation of the Khoi had taken a turn for the worse and they were reported to be cannibals, at times eating each other. In 1634 Thomas Herbert revived some of Pliny's imagery when he described the Khoi as troglodytes living in caves without the benefit of laws against incest or even names. Their men were 'semi-eunuchs' who increased their ferociousness through the excision of a testicle. Most importantly, he found physical and linguistic resemblances between the Khoi and monkeys. For Herbert, and a growing number of observers, the Khoi were of interest because they represented the antithesis of civilization.

As the Dutch settlement at the Cape spread, many Khoi lost their cattle, along with their dignity, and became 'colonial Hottentots'. They soon lost their reputation for savagery and cannibalism and became known, instead, for laziness and theft. Visitors to the Cape were then increasingly attracted by the 'wild Hottentots' living beyond the frontier. In 1689 the French Jesuit, Father Tachard, stopped at the Cape on his way to the east and described the Khoisan as children of nature who were closer to God than many Christians. These contradictory readings would become an integral aspect of the way in which Europeans regarded the Khoisan.

Half-way through the book we get to the great Dutch compiler of knowledge about Africa, Olfert Dapper; but it was Peter Kolbe who left the most detailed and influential picture of the Khoisan, partly because he concentrated his book on the

Cape of Good Hope, but mainly because he described the Khoisan as they existed on the eve of the devastating smallpox epidemic of 1713. Kolbe's sympathetic account of the Khoi would reverberate in the writings of some of the most influential philosophers of the Enlightenment.

Rousseau, Voltaire and Diderot never visited the land of the Hottentots but, nevertheless, had firm (although often contradictory) views on their customs and creeds. More authoritative accounts emerged from French visitors to the Cape: the astronomer Abbé de la Caille (who corrected Kolbe), Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (who went on to write *Paul et Virginie*) and the Abbé Raynal (who praised the peaceful disposition of the Hottentots and left their 'atrocious customs' unexplored).

In the seventh and final chapter Fauvelle-Aymar turns to a new body of scholarship on the Khoisan: that of the naturalists and anthropologists who started to arrive at the Cape in the 1770s. These men had training in the observation of detail, skills of classification and a strong sense of curiosity that took them on long trips into the interior. Robert Jacob Gordon provided the first ethnographic accounts of the Khoisan, followed by Thunberg, Sparrman, Sonnerat, Masson and Levaillant. These scientists were no more able to agree on the place of the Khoisan in the order of humanity than their predecessors. While Sparrman exhausted his powder shooting at 'Bushmen', Levaillant saw 'savage Hottentots' as superior to degraded 'colonial Hottentots'. More serious was the growing attempt by scientists to classify the Khoisan as a race apart. This had started with Linnaeus but grew in intensity with the fieldwork of François Peron at the start of the nineteenth century. 'Hottentots' and 'Bushmen' soon came to play an important role in debates over the origin, composition and structure of humanity. This situation was encouraged by the disposition of the Khoisan towards steatopygia (excess fat on the buttocks), the existence of a vaginal 'apron' and the ritual excision of a testicle. For these reasons, many of the leading scientists in the world were drawn to examine the body of the Khoisan – and to depart with the conviction that they were an inferior race only one stage above the orang-utang. The book finishes with descriptions of how the market for ethnographic curiosities towards the end of the nineteenth century brought Hottentots to be displayed in human zoos.

Fauvelle-Aymar's definition of his subject will disturb some readers. Several Khoisan scholars see 'Bushmen' as 'Hottentots' deprived of their cattle (as did Abbé de la Caille); but few will agree with Fauvelle-Aymar when he distinguishes a 'Bushman' as 'a Hottentot who had not yet come under colonial domination' (pp. 320–1, 323 n. 54). His definition of 'Khoisan' tends, in practice, to exclude the 'Bushmen' whose abodes in the interior are seldom visited by his travellers. In this regard, he ignores the classic works on the 'Bushman' by Wilhelm Bleek (or Fauvelle-Aymar's compatriot Louis Péringuey) and takes no account of the findings of modern scholars like John Wright, Pippa Skotnes or Sue Newton-King. Fauvelle-Aymar's wide scholarship, however, more than balances the inconveniences of this unconventional approach. He brings together, in this fine synthesis, a wide and sympathetic reading of texts in six languages. *L'invention du Hottentot* can be read most usefully in conjunction with a new collection of original sources on the Hottentots in French, edited by Dominique Lanni; as well as with a work by Carl Jung on Carl Thunberg's views on the Hottentots.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dominique Lanni, *Fureur et barbarie: récits de voyageurs chez les Cafres et les Hottentots, 1665–1721* (Paris, 2001); Carl Jung, *Kaross und Kimono: 'Hottentoten' und Japaner im Spiegel des Reiseberichts von Carl Peter Thunberg (1743–1828)* (Stuttgart, 2002).

## THE JESUITS IN ETHIOPIA

doi:10.1017/S0021853705260346

*Des Jésuites au royaume du prêtre Jean (Éthiopie) : stratégies, rencontres et tentatives d'implantation 1495–1633.* By HERVÉ PENNEC. Paris: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2003. Pp. 373. No price given (ISBN 972-8462-32-8).

KEY WORDS: Ethiopia, Christianity, kingdoms and states, missions.

State and church in Ethiopia have been deeply intertwined. Solomonic kingship, established with the violent seizure of the throne in 1270, dominated the country until the deposition of Haile Sellassie in 1974. An essential component of Solomonic kingship was its relationship with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which, doctrinally, accepted the authority of the Patriarchs of Alexandria. The Ethiopian Church was rooted in its monasteries and ruled, only loosely, by a bishop appointed from Alexandria in association with the royal court. A model of the Ethiopian Orthodox king was set by King Zār'a Ya'eqob (r. 1434–68), who presided over a major church council and wrote influential theological texts.<sup>1</sup>

For a brief period, from 1621 to 1632, the court, led by King Susenyos (r. 1607–32), pronounced its formal submission to the authority of Rome and converted to Roman Catholicism, which, thereby, became the established church of the country. The establishment of Catholicism was preceded by violent resistance, a resistance which only intensified until it forced the king's abdication and a return to Ethiopian Orthodoxy. The outlines of this story have been known for a very long time. Indeed, it is embedded in the foundations of the study of Ethiopian history, at least in European languages, and the publication of English translations of some of the major sources has sustained it as a significant episode, at least for Anglophones.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, modern scholarship, textual publication apart, has largely ignored the story, the last source-based, fully referenced account having appeared forty years ago.<sup>3</sup>

Hervé Pennec corrects this long neglect with the excellent work under review. *Des Jésuites au royaume du prêtre Jean* rests on a thorough reading of the primary material, which was written in Portuguese, Ge'ez, Spanish and Latin. This material he supplements with information gathered in a field trip in 1998 to some of the principal places of Jesuit residence in Ethiopia. He presents his findings clearly and with the assistance of an array of tables, figures, maps and photographs.

<sup>1</sup> The standard account of the Solomonic kingdom, in its first iteration from 1270 to 1527, remains Tadesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia 1270–1527* (Oxford, 1972).

<sup>2</sup> C. F. Beckingham and G. W. B. Huntingford (eds. and trans.), *Some Records of Ethiopia 1593–1646 Being Extracts from the History of High Ethiopia or Abassia by Manoel de Almeida together with Bahrey's History of the Gallas* (London, 1954); *idem*, *The Prester John of the Indies. A True Relation of the Lands of the Prester John Being the Narrative of the Portuguese Embassy to Ethiopia in 1520 Written by Father Francisco Alvares ...* (2 vols.) (Cambridge, 1961); and *The Itinerário of Jerónimo Lobo Translated by Donald M. Lockhart from the Portuguese Text Established and Edited by M. G. Da Costa with an Introduction and Notes by C. F. Beckingham* (London, 1984). In Ethiopia the story is rather different, the clerical literati who wrote the country's history sought to suppress the memory of Susenyos.

<sup>3</sup> Girmah Beshah and Merid Wold Aregay, *The Question of the Union of the Churches in Luso-Ethiopian Relations (1500–1632)* (Lisbon: Junta de Investigações do Ultramar and Centro de Estudios Históricos Ultramarinos, 1964). Philip Caraman has written a more popular account: *The Lost Empire: The Story of the Jesuits in Ethiopia, 1555–1634* (Notre Dame IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1985).

The photographs (in color) are nicely presented and, with advanced but unintrusive graphics, integrated with plans of the sites represented. He organizes the book into five chapters plus a short conclusion. Each chapter has something original and valuable to say.

Chapter 1 explores the foundations of the mission, making clear that, from the very beginning, the Jesuits saw their job as not simply to 'correct' Ethiopian doctrinal errors, but also to bring Ethiopian religious practices into conformity with those of the Western, Latin Church – no compromises with Eastern rites here. Chapter 2 explores the role of Goa in shaping Jesuit and Luso-Spanish policies towards Ethiopia. I have not read previously any Ethiopian-oriented account which so fully and clearly lays out just how much of an impact the local authorities had on the course of events. This chapter also tries to pin down just how many Jesuits were involved in the Ethiopian mission and what their formation was. At one point, the Ethiopian mission was the largest of the Jesuit missions from eastern Africa through to Japan. On the other hand, it was frequently understaffed – the original party of 1557 consisted of six, and dwindled to zero in the 1590s; on the formal commitment of the royal court to Catholicism in 1621, there were only four Jesuits in the country, their numbers rising, in the last half of the decade, to twenty-two.

Chapter 3 explores the geography of Jesuit activity throughout the seventy-five years of their presence in Ethiopia. The findings here confirm earlier impressions, but do so with greater precision. Chapter 4 is the heart of the book. Here Pennec explores the conversion from the standpoint of the Ethiopian court. Without minimizing the revolutionary nature of Susenyos's commitment, he makes clear just how many of the king's actions can best be understood in light of long-standing Solomonic practices towards the church, interpreting the new Catholic foundation of Azäzo Gännätä Iyäsus in light of two hundred years of founding of royal churches, and the Jesuits as a monastic order analogous, in the king's eyes, to indigenous monastic orders. In short, this is the best account we have of the Ethiopian politics of conversion to Catholicism. Chapter 5 concludes the book with a critical examination of the major Jesuit 'histories' of Ethiopia, demonstrating how, at the same time as they provide us with invaluable information, they were profoundly shaped by the order's missionary objectives.

*Des Jésuites au royaume du prêtre Jean* is a significant contribution to the understanding of a major episode in Ethiopian history, of European missionary activity in Africa in the early modern period and of the global Jesuit missionary enterprise. Highly recommended.

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## COFFEE ECONOMIES: A GLOBAL COMPARISON

doi:10.1017/S0021853705270342

*The Global Coffee Economy in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, 1500–1989*. Edited by WILLIAM GERVASE CLARENCE-SMITH and STEVEN TOPIK. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Pp. xviii+486. £60; \$80 (ISBN 0-521-81851-6).

KEY WORDS: Agriculture, trade.

This volume is the outcome of a conference in 1998 at St. Antony's College, Oxford. Its flyleaf states that coffee is a long-standing manifestation of globalization,

that its focus is world-wide in scope and that the emphasis is on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It promises that analysis will be directed to the role of markets, the place of race, ethnicity, gender and class, the interaction between technology and ecology and to the impact of colonial rule, nationalist regimes and the forces of the world economy. The pledge is successfully kept by editor Clarence-Smith (SOAS), who moves from his previous work on cocoa, and editor Topik (University of California at Irvine), who continues his interest in Latin America, the major coffee-producing area, and the history of international trade generally.

The reader must (or should) begin this book with a sense of anticipation because of the ten pages of maps positioned before the text. Coffee production is entirely tropical, and the detailed regional maps of southern Mexico, Guatemala and El Salvador, the highlands of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, southeast Brazil, southwest Cameroon, east coastal Madagascar, the high country of East Africa, Yemen, southern India, Sri Lanka and Java give promise of a geographical tour-de-force, which this book is.

Coffee originated in Africa, and even after the center of production shifted to Latin America, Africans were the major workers in the industry (as slaves) until the abolition of slavery in Brazil in 1888. But in a process covering several centuries it spread around the world, as the essays in the volume discuss.

In the initial section, on the origins of the world coffee economy, Michael Tuchscherer begins with coffee in the Red Sea area from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, followed by Gwyn Campbell on coffee in Réunion and Madagascar, Clarence-Smith on turmoil in the markets from 1870 to 1914 and Mario Samper on links between producers and consumers with emphasis on Costa Rica. In part 2, on peasants and the coffee economy, M. R. Fernando deals with Java, Rachel Kurian with race and gender in Ceylon, David McCreery with indigenous labor in Guatemala, Elizabeth Dore with debt peonage on Nicaraguan estates and Julie Charlip with small farmers in Nicaragua. Part 3 is entitled 'Coffee, politics, and state building'. Jan Rus writes on Indian labor during the 'recolonization' of the Chiapas Highlands in Mexico, 1892–1912, Andreas Eckert compares production conditions in Cameroon and Tanganyika, Kenneth Curtis focuses on economies of scale in colonial Tanganyika, Lowell Gudmundson on commercial capital and output in Costa Rica and Hildete Pereira de Melo on the Rio de Janeiro economy, 1888–1920. An appendix by Samper and Fernando presents historical statistics on coffee prices, production and trade, 1700–1960, and is a valuable resource for researchers.

In their interesting final chapter, the editors tie together the many disparate contributions with an accounting of findings. Justifiably, given the evidence of this book, they warn that 'comprehensive metanarratives are suspect'. Previously in their introduction they had already identified ten conventional propositions about coffee (derived primarily from perceptions of Latin America) and here in their conclusion they modify or even debunk the majority of them. First, against the notion that coffee was primarily a product of large landholdings, the editors insist that there was great variety in the physical size of coffee holdings, and in many areas quite small farms predominated. Second, they qualify the proposition that there were significant economies of scale in coffee growing: such economies did exist in processing and transportation, but not necessarily in growing. Third, on the view that coffee was a frontier crop, meaning that its cultivation had no opportunity costs, they endorse the premise, but not the conclusion: the land and labor had alternative uses so opportunity costs – especially ecological ones – were important. Fourth, they reject the claim that coffee exports led inexorably to monoculture. Actually, coffee monoculture was relatively uncommon. Fifth, to the

idea that workers on coffee were largely male and part of the cultural majority, they reply that – on the contrary – there was frequently great variety in the labor force: with women and children at work and minorities heavily represented. Sixth, while Clarence-Smith and Topik accept that in some areas cocoa workers made up a rural proletariat ripe for political revolution, they note that this was not true in others. Seventh, to the notion that merchant-intermediaries either played only a small role or a negative one, resulting in prejudice against them (as in countries that established marketing boards), the editors believe that in general a more positive view of intermediaries is justified. Eighth, they accept that the great coffee planters were a force for technical change and modernization, but argue that in general smallholders had a greater impact. Ninth, on the notion that the coffee industry was a vehicle that carried countries toward industrialization, they observe that sometimes it was, but more commonly it was not. Finally, on the proposition that coffee growers were a force in the creation of liberal national states, Clarence-Smith and Topik emphasize the different results in Latin America and Africa, and the variety of outcomes within these regions. Given the evidence of these essays, the caution is entirely justified.

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## VARIETIES OF INCARCERATION

doi:10.1017/S0021853705280349

*A History of Prison and Confinement in Africa.* Edited by FLORENCE BERNAULT.

Translated by JANET ROITMAN. Heinemann: Portsmouth NH, 2003. Pp. x + 287.

No price given (ISBN 0-325-07119-5); \$28.95, paperback (ISBN 0-325-07125-X).

KEY WORDS: Prison, precolonial, colonial, postcolonial.

Following the publication in 1999 of *Enfermement, prison et châtements en Afrique du 19e siècle à nos jours* (Paris), we now have an English language edition of papers on the prison and confinement, translated from French by Janet Roitman and somewhat reorganized under the editorship of Florence Bernault. Despite its centrality to the colonial experience throughout the continent, the history of the prison has been surprisingly neglected. However, this volume encapsulates the idea of incarceration within the broader process of ‘l’enfermement de l’espace’, by which whole territories were captured and confined. Enclosure and constraint, both broader and more general in meaning than simple physical imprisonment, are therefore important themes.

The result is an unsatisfactory, sprawling book. Bernault’s introduction explains the idea of spatial, territorial constraint, but focuses more upon the significance of the prison. This is surely where the collection might make a more telling contribution, but the ‘two main hypotheses’ she proposes do not take us very far. The first is ‘that the prison system was successfully grafted on to Africa’; the second, that the ‘transplant gave birth to specific, highly original models of penal incarceration’. If the first is blindingly obvious, the second at least holds the prospect of insight. But, disappointingly, Bernault does not elaborate on these ‘highly original models’, other than to imply that decay of the colonial penal system has led to a variety of hybrids. There is also a lack of clarity on theory. For Bernault, though not all of her contributors, it seems that a Foucaultian model of the prison will not do for Africa. But there is no explicit discussion of what should replace it; or whether different models should apply to different places (the legacies of different kinds of colonialism, perhaps); or whether they might suit different types of

institution (can the local chief's lock-up really be lumped together with the large state prison?).

The sheer variety of incarceration as practice, and the many structural forms that places of confinement took in twentieth-century Africa, demands typology or categorization. Bernault provides neither, leaving the reader to marvel at the bewildering confusion of it all. A section of the introduction on southern Africa gives historical depth, but there is no other contribution in the book dealing with the sub-region. Similarly, the several examples quoted in the introduction from eastern Africa hang without supporting evidence or elaboration. The terms prison, penitentiary and jail seem to be used inter-changeably, without reference to the particularities of their emergence and usage. The opacity of the writing hardly helps. We are told, for example, that 'Europeans tended to describe mobility as aberrant, apprehending local crises and disorders as provoked by pathological fluidity', and then that 'colonial rule privileged spatial confinement as a transformational and eugenic technique' (both p. 36).

Among the eleven chapters that follow the introduction, the best contributions come at either end of the collection. Jan Vansina's examination of the history of incarceration in Angola takes us far beyond a twentieth-century focus to consider the emergence and disappearance of earlier forms of imprisonment, especially those connected with the slave trade. He also reminds us of the importance of hostage taking – a topic that merits deeper study. Michele Wagner adopts a similar longer-term perspective in her account of imprisonment in Rwanda. Splendidly written, this chapter moves seamlessly between the events of the 1990s post-genocide and earlier forms of colonial punishment, to show that the decentralization of political authority in Rwanda has acted to cloak abuse. Wagner's comments seem all the more pertinent in light of recent controversies surrounding the release of genocide prisoners and the operation of the *gacaca* courts.

The rest of the book has a strong Francophone bias, leaning heavily toward West Africa. Six chapters deal with the prison. Thierno Bah's short survey of incarceration in nineteenth-century West Africa is based entirely upon secondary sources. For Senegal, Ibrahima Thiob provides a fascinating account of the penitentiary schools for juvenile prisoners, while Dior Konate gives a very brief account of the experience of women prisoners. Odile Georg places the prison within wider urban histories of Conakry and Freetown, while Laurent Fourchard explores the 'everyday life' of the prison in Upper Volta. This is perhaps the book's most thorough and thought-provoking chapter.

It is then left to David Killingray to summarize the experience of all of British colonial Africa, in a crisply written twenty pages. Killingray does more than enough to indicate the importance of establishing a typology of incarceration, and relates this to variations in legal practice and changing views on punishment. The lack of clear discussion of these aspects for French colonial Africa leaves open the question of how similar or different the two colonial regimes may have been in the administration and organization of their prison systems.

The three remaining chapters explore broader definitions of colonial confinement. All are stimulating essays. The late Christopher Gray deals with the manner in which a colonial territorial substructure was established to 'confine' the peoples of Gabon. This is a highly competent and thorough paper. In similar vein, Sean Hanretta's richly documented account of the Elisabethville mining camps in the inter-war period demonstrates the power of European notions of African social life in shaping colonial practices. Pierre Boilley's chapter is the most unexpected in the book, outlining the process by which nomadic Tuareg were gradually confined first by French administrative edict, and then by postcolonial constraints.

The breadth of this collection must ultimately be viewed as its weakness. There remains a pressing need for a coherent overview of the history of the prison in colonial Africa, integrating experience across different colonial regimes, addressing substantive questions of theory and offering explanations for the condition of prisons in the postcolonial era. Let us hope that the better papers in this collection will spark greater interest in what is a fascinating and still largely neglected topic.

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## URBAN HISTORY IN AFRICA

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*The Urban Experience in Eastern Africa c. 1750–2000*. Edited by ANDREW BURTON. Nairobi: The British Institute in Eastern Africa, 2002. Pp. xi + 264. £15; \$24, paperback (ISBN 1-872566-26-X).

*De la ville coloniale à la cour africaine : espaces, pouvoirs et sociétés à Ouagadougou et à Bobo-Dioulasso (Haute-Volta) fin XIXe siècle–1960*. By LAURENT FOUCARD. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001. Pp. 427. €35 paperback (ISBN 2-7475-2307-1).

KEY WORDS: Eastern Africa, precolonial, colonial, postcolonial, urban.

Of all the major regions in the world today, Africa is still one of the least urbanized. During the twentieth century, however, rapid urbanization can be regarded as one of the most important socio-economic trends across the African continent. It is widely held that the colonial experience had the greatest effect on urban formation and function south of the Sahara. Although dramatic urban growth is a relatively recent phenomenon, only dating back to the period after the Second World War, Africa's urban history covers a far longer period. As some chapters in Andrew Burton's edited volume on the urban experience in Eastern Africa show again, there were complex precolonial urban settings south of the Sahara. As Burton notes in his excellent introduction, sources on precolonial urbanization are generally scarce. This may have to do not only with the lack of written material but also with the fact that urban centres have in many cases left negligible archaeological traces due to the organic materials with which they were constructed. The nature of precolonial urban settings differed considerably. Military aspects often played an important role. In his chapter focusing on Ethiopia, Eritrea and Buganda, Richard Reid discusses the complex relationship between town and conflicts. He convincingly demonstrates that military factors, in combination with a wide range of other influences, were fundamental to the indigenous process of urban development. In many cases, cyclical conflict served to marginalize existing settlements and undermine 'natural' processes of urbanization. On the other hand, warfare and military activity could also be of considerable importance to the growth of concentrated centres of population.

One of the main characteristics of colonial urban planning was spatial segregation and the promotion of the separation of 'races'. The bifurcated nature of colonial urban space was originally conceived to 'protect' Europeans from 'disease' thought to be carried exclusively by Africans. Segregation was particularly rigid in those colonies such as Kenya where substantial settler communities emerged. Milcah Amolo Achola's chapter demonstrates for Nairobi how urban health policy was applied in a fundamentally discriminatory manner that reinforced spatial segregation. According to Achola, the irony of British health policy during the colonial period is that, in the emergence of Nairobi's overcrowded urban settlements, colonialism fostered environments in which disease and ill-health



were more serious threats than in the supposedly primitive communities of the precolonial period. David Anderson's contribution on African housing and urban development in colonial Nairobi also considers the issue of segregation. His main concern, however, is the failure of municipal housing policies. He concludes that by the eve of independence, 'the Nairobi cityscape was already characterized not by "model" housing estates, but by burgeoning shanties, whose poverty and squalor stood as testament to the historic inadequacies of colonial municipal government' (p. 140). In his – as usual – extremely insightful essay, John Lonsdale proposes salient themes for an emerging urban historiography on colonial Kenya which are also very useful for other parts of Africa. One important issue he raises is the complex relationship between the rural and the urban. To what extent can the lives of urban citizens be understood as a distinct urban experience? Lonsdale makes the important point, not only relevant to Kenyan urban history, that most African townsmen were probably 'straddlers', 'hoping to invest their urban income in improving, or at least saving, their farmland "back home"' (pp. 208ff).

In African historiography, issues such as control over land, land conflicts and land law are treated almost exclusively in rural contexts. Although the importance of landed property and conflicts over land is more frequently mentioned in the fast-growing literature on Africa's urban past, very few historians have used land issues as a tool to explore broader questions of urban development during the colonial and postcolonial periods. Laurent Fourchard's fine book is one of the exceptions that confirms the rule, although strategies of acquiring urban land and social divisions mirrored in land ownership are only some of the many themes discussed by the author. His comparative study of Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso in colonial Burkina Faso, the first a political and administrative centre, the latter an old merchant town, challenges (admittedly not for the first time) the classical view of the colonial city as a dual city, consisting of an 'indigenous' and a 'European' city. Fourchard identifies a multitude of urban spaces, for instance spaces of Islam and Catholicism, of aristocrats and lineage chiefs, of the military and of prostitution. Colonial governments found these spaces extremely difficult to control.

Central to social relations in the two Burkinabe cities were the courts and palaces of the notables and the big traders as sites of social and political networks, of business and, especially after 1945, of political demands. As mentioned, some of the most interesting chapters of Fourchard's study deal with the access to and use of urban land. Only a few Africans, mainly government employees and big traders, used European land law and acquired urban plots with the authorization of the colonial authorities. The overall majority of the African population was subjected to a number of urbanization schemes whose impact varied considerably. However, in Bobo-Dioulasso as well as in Ouagadougou, at least until the 1950s, local chiefs and notables succeeded to a considerable extent in slowing down these schemes. They were also very reluctant to allow migrants and 'strangers' to settle in their quarters. In their view, these newcomers disturbed the long-established neighbourhood solidarity, as they refused to submit themselves to the principal obligations of the town quarter such as the collective repairing of houses during the dry season.

All in all, the authors of *The Urban Experience in Eastern Africa* as well as Fourchard do a very good job in presenting the wide range of historiographical issues linked to urbanization processes in Africa. However, as Burton underlines, these are still the early days in the emergence of an urban historiography. This is true not only for eastern Africa, but for most parts of the continent. The books reviewed here clearly demonstrate the promise of the comparatively new field of African urban history and lay important foundations for future research.

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## CHALLENGING THE 'AUTONOMY THESIS' IN MAGHREBI HISTORIOGRAPHY

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*The Regency of Tunis and the Ottoman Porte, 1777–1814: Army and Government of a North-African Ottoman Eyalet at the End of the Eighteenth Century.* By ASMA MOALLA. Routledge Curzon: London, 2004. Pp. xxiii + 175. £55 (ISBN 0-415-29781-8).

KEY WORDS: Northwestern Africa, Tunisia, governance, international relations, political.

With the emergence of Maghrebi nationalisms during the second half of the twentieth century many young historians in the former French colonies of North Africa began to challenge the traditional and colonial interpretations of their past. According to these interpretations countries like Algeria or Tunisia were nothing more than 'regencies' or dependencies of the Ottoman Empire with Istanbul as the seat of real power and the beys or deys of Tunis or Algiers as mere executioners of policies and orders initiated by the Ottoman Porte. Therefore, the aim of the nationalist school of historiography was not only to prove the existence of authentic state institutions in the North African regencies prior to French colonization, but also to underline the large degree of autonomy enjoyed by the rulers of these Ottoman territories. Strangely enough, French colonial historiography during much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had resorted to the same thesis to justify French colonial claims vis-à-vis the Ottoman Porte, since in their view, Istanbul had for a long time ceased to exercise any effective control over its North African dependencies.

Now it seems that the nationalist phase of Maghrebi historiography is over and a new generation of younger historians like Asma Moalla is starting to challenge the arguments of what she calls 'the autonomy thesis'. It is from this perspective that the author defines her own argument. Her line runs counter to both the colonialist and nationalist schools of historiography and consists in seeking to demonstrate that precolonial Tunisian history cannot be understood outside the Ottoman framework. Necessarily she had to be sceptical of European sources, which she assumes are biased in favour of the autonomy thesis, and to rely more on local chroniclers such as Ibn Abi Al-Diyyaf. Her approach consists in investigating first, the political links between the regency and the Ottoman Empire during the long rule of Hammuda Pasha (1777–1814) and how his policies of reform and centralization reflected, in fact, the policies of the Porte, and second, to show that the political, military and administrative structures of the Tunisian regency during this period matched the Ottoman institutions found either at the centre or in other Arab provinces of the empire.

Chapters 3 and 4 are devoted to the first aspect and aim to demonstrate that the regency of Tunis in its relations with Istanbul, with the Algerian and Tripolitan neighbours and with the European powers tended to act within the limits of Ottoman political interests. The wars that the regency fought or the alliances it contracted with the European powers 'were closely linked to the policies of the Porte' (p. 49). Furthermore, this alignment on Ottoman policies was reinforced by the symbols of power, particularly through the ceremonial of investiture (the *bay'a*), the granting of titles and the bestowal of privileges. Other marks of Ottoman sovereignty included the Friday sermon read in the name of the Ottoman sultan, as well as the coinage which was also done in his name.

The remaining three chapters (5, 6 and 7) are devoted to the second aspect, that of Tunisian institutions and how they were modelled on their Ottoman

counterparts. Here Moalla presents a detailed description of the Tunisian administrative, military and fiscal arrangements up to 1814. The challenges that Hammuda Pasha faced in his dealings with these institutions were not different from what the Ottoman sultan experienced with their counterparts in Istanbul. The growing arrogance of the janissaries, the rise of tribal notables as the real loci of local power and the increasing erosion of fiscal revenues were challenges found both at the level of the regency and that of the Porte in Istanbul. Therefore, it was only natural that the reform policies adopted by the Porte were 'closely copied in the Regency' (p. 142).

How far the author has succeeded in refuting the 'autonomy thesis' could be a matter of debate. It remains a fact, however, that the present study is a valuable academic contribution to the ongoing debate among Maghrebi historians about a period of their history which is far from being fully understood. Hopefully, similar studies on the neighbouring Maghrebi states in their relation with the Ottoman Porte will allow us to rewrite the history of the Maghreb on the basis of solid historical investigation, like the one we have here, rather than on mere hypothetical assumptions.

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MOHAMED EL MANSOUR

## REVISION AND CONTINUITY IN SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

doi:10.1017/S0021853705310346

*The Great Treks: The Transformation of Southern Africa, 1815–1854.* By NORMAN ETHERINGTON. London: Longman, 2001. Pp. xxv + 366. £16.99 (ISBN 0-582-31567-0).

KEY WORDS: Southern Africa, historiography, kingdoms and states, imperialism.

In the preface to this demanding and challenging book, Norman Etherington throws down the gauntlet to historians of South Africa. Those writing 'in the era of Nelson Mandela', he says, need to put an end to the 'pernicious tradition' (p. xiii) of viewing South African history from behind the expanding Cape settler frontier. South African history, apparently, continues to be written from the 'perspective of the colonizer' (p. xiii). Few would counteract such laudable aims, yet it seems, as far as Etherington is concerned, that most (all?) historians have failed to liberate the history of nineteenth-century southern Africa from its colonial moorings.

Much happened in southern Africa in the first half of the nineteenth century, and by far the most important contribution of this volume is the fact that it brings together, in a single study, these highly complex, interlocked and tumultuous events. The author contends that the decades between 1815 (when Britain sealed its control over the former Dutch colony) and 1854 (when it finally recognized the claims of the infant trekker states to vast swathes of the South African interior) represented a crucial turning point in South African history. These years of massive violence (the 'Mfecane' of old) were marked by the rise of new (though not particularly novel) states and the entry of 'foreign invaders' into the southern African 'heartland'. First came the vanguard of the Cape's trekboer economy, in the form of Griqua and Kora (slave) raiding bands. They were followed by the trekboers themselves and, finally, there came the British army, spurred on by governors with delusions of grandeur and their barely concealed allies, the land surveyors and speculators. These decades gave birth to a generation of African

leaders and warriors who have become the stuff of twentieth-century mythology. There emerged the unpredictable Adam Kok with his multiple personalities, much written about and perhaps least understood. A figure of a quite different kind was Shaka, whose contribution to the period was not his particular penchant for warfare, but the 'heightened ruthlessness' with which his state – a 'perpetual cattle-raiding machine' – went to work (pp. 85, 86). Mzilikazi, his voice described as "'soft and feminine'" (p. 163) by Robert Moffat, was nevertheless capable of leading armies which for a decade feared none. And, of course, pride of place has to go to Moshoeshoe, arguably the greatest diplomat and state-builder of nineteenth-century southern Africa. But by the end of the first half of the nineteenth century, the map of southern Africa, as it is recognized today, had been drawn. Mzilikazi's armies had learned at Vegkop that a simple *laager* and few firearms could effectively combat a 5,000-strong army; Moshoeshoe was confined to his mountain stronghold of contemporary Lesotho; the fertile sheep lands of Adam Kok's Philippolis captaincy had effectively been leased and sold off and in any case survived for just a few more years before Kok led his heroic trek across the Drakensberg. The way had effectively been cleared for Sir Harry Smith to have the Caledon River Valley surveyed and parcelled, thus setting a model of white settler occupation of the rest of the South African interior.

There is much to digest in this volume, and much to quibble with. Not all readers will appreciate the lecture note style, particularly evident in the earlier chapters, or the banal chapter titles. But there are more substantive issues in question. This remains a history of elites, whether settler or African. The assertion that the sources are lacking to tell the history of 'common people' is a half-truth at best (p. xix). In this particular quest the author is severely limited by his exclusive use of secondary and published material. His strategy for correcting these lacunae, the telling of the 'significant anecdote' (p. xix), is a poor substitute for archival research. The details of such anecdotes are so vague and scant that they illuminate little. The archives in Cape Town, Bloemfontein and even London are overflowing with details of everyday life in the first half of the nineteenth century. Those seeking to understand the nature of the servile society that emerged on the 'Bushman frontier', the domestication of *inboekselings* and *oorlams* in the Transgariiep, will find answers buried (not too deeply) in the national archives in Bloemfontein.

Is this, then, a new kind of history, free from the 'perspective of the colonizer'? The way forward, as Etherington sees it, is to look at the South African interior from the other side of the Cape frontier, even though his title – *The Great Treks* – is entirely derived from settler colonial agendas. Where those before had failed, including such notables as Adam Kok and Moshoeshoe, the author apparently 'did not have much difficulty cutting the British government down to size' (p. xix). The town of present-day Harrismith is supposedly the perfect vantage point from which to view events as they unfolded in the 'heartland'. The narrow strip of coastal land stretching from Cape Town becomes the 'pan-handle'. The region known to most historians as the Cape Colony is renamed the 'British zone', seemingly inspired by those who have worked on the New Zealand Wars.

Such innovations are, of course, to be welcomed. But, unless they result in the telling of a different kind of story, the results are no more than cosmetic. There is nothing in this volume to re-cast fundamentally the existing literature on the region to the south of the Gariiep, whether called the British zone or the Cape Colony. In the end, this volume, too, cannot resist looking at the 'heartland' with reference back to the south. One of its most important concluding points – that the Cape exported its system of labour north of the Gariiep and all the way to Kenya's

White Highlands – is drawn straight from Robert Ross, that doyen of the Cape side of the frontier. Those seeking to make sense of the complex sets of events that occurred in the southern African interior in the first half of the nineteenth century will find a great deal of help in this volume. Those looking for novel statements about an array of historical questions that have dogged the period – Sir Harry Smith's land grab in the Transgariep, the precise nature of Griqua slave raiding, the trekboer economy and its relationship with merchant capital, the slave trade to Delagoa Bay, to name but a few – will be disappointed.

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WAYNE DOOLING

## CRITICAL MASS AND PRODUCTIVE TENSION

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*South Africa's Environmental History: Cases and Comparisons.* Edited by STEPHEN DOVERS, RUTH EDGECOMB and BILL GUEST. Cape Town: David Philip, 2002; Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 2003. Pp. ix + 326. \$24.95, paperback (ISBN 0-8214-1498-4 [Ohio], 0-86486-492-2 [David Philip]).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, environment.

In spite of claims that African environmental history got a late start compared to other regions of the world, this collection shows that the environment in South Africa is receiving creative, insightful investigation with enough critical mass to sustain substantial debate. This volume contributes to a burgeoning literature, supported by the work of established scholars along with detailed empirical research by local writers and activists, complemented by comparative commentary from leading environmental historians of other regions.

The book's structure is innovative, well suited to presenting new local knowledge and fostering wider debates. In the first of 17 chapters, Carruthers provides a superb overview of environmental historiography in South Africa. The next section, about two-thirds of the book, comprises various case studies that span a broad – though far from comprehensive – range of time and place. Human history prior to the nineteenth century and the Western Cape are conspicuously absent. The final third of the book is general commentary on South African environmental history, emphasizing comparative elements focusing on Australia, South America, South Asia and Africa as a whole. This self-conscious integration of local, regional and global perspectives is potentially productive. This volume achieves a juxtaposition of three levels of investigation, but does not completely live up to the promise of the format.

The various contributions are uneven. Some chapters are theoretically informed and eloquently insert South Africa into wider environmental history debates (the case studies by Jacobs, Beinart and van Sittert). Several chapters capitalize on the localized, case-study approach to begin the difficult but vitally important work of uncovering precolonial African practices regarding nature, land use and environmental ideologies, situating conflict around those beliefs in colonial or later periods (Lambert, Sithole, Jacobs and Beinart). This direction is the least researched but arguably most crucial aspect of South African environmental history. Precolonial African attitudes toward nature and use of resources too often are either assumed or overlooked. These four chapters offer important insights.

Other case studies, however, are parochial and descriptive, lacking broader analytical frameworks. More significantly, those chapters directly concerned with the status of local ecologies (Archer, Ellis, Kotze, McAllister and Thompson) either claim or imply that their research should affect current policy debates. Although each chapter raises significant issues for consideration, none of them offers firm conclusions or prescriptions for action. Granted, historians are not policy makers, but in a field such as environmental history where a guiding precept is political relevance, published research in this vein should strive for more than simply documenting change. As van Sittert's essay exemplifies, environmental history is not just about change in the natural world but also about changing human attitudes and practices.

There are productive tensions in this book. Unfortunately, too few of these issues are addressed explicitly. In a volume that grew out of a conference, one expects direct dialog across the chapters. This absence is glaring in the case of forestry. Government-sponsored, capitalist, white-owned tree farming (as described in Witt's essay) directly affected the Eastern Shore of St. Lucia and Wakkerstroom, as well as grasslands and agricultural terrain elsewhere in South Africa. Ellis points out that the colonial settlement of Durban relied initially on local trees. The result was deforestation of the local environments, which must have led to the need for cultivated trees in Natal. Thus, at least five of the case studies could be enhanced by considering the ways in which commercial forestry changed the ways in which people viewed land use.

The case studies in question are aware of forestry and its effects on the local ecology. But somewhere between the forest and the trees, it seems a story got lost. Witt documents the difficulty of encouraging farmers to cultivate trees. There is a crucial and compelling irony here between the extent of the impact of trees and the initial reluctance to cultivate them.

Another example is the tension surrounding climax vegetation. While Archer and McAllister lay out explicit critiques, other chapters seem fundamentally based on degradationist assumptions (Ellis, Kotze, Lambert, Thompson). Maddox's lively commentary essay clearly lays out current critiques in scholarship on other regions of Africa, but unfortunately the essay does not engage the case studies of this volume.

Other than Beinart, who uses examples from the book to point out holes in current South African environmental scholarship, the commentators do not address the case studies directly, which is a pity. They do, however, provide groundwork for broad comparisons. Although the editors do not explicitly acknowledge a south-south lens, this emphasis responds to a critique that South African studies rely too much on North American comparisons.

The book makes an important contribution as a repository of empirical data and signposts for future research directions. It impressively incorporates contributions from four continents and a variety of intellectual perspectives. The juxtaposition of case studies with comparative essays poses new questions at both the local and global level that merit scholarly consideration.

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LAURA J. MITCHELL

## MISSIONS AND EMPIRE

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*The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions, 1880–1914*. Edited by ANDREW PORTER. Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2003. Pp. xiii + 250. £32.99, paperback (ISBN 0-8028-6087-7).

*Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*. Edited by BRIAN STANLEY and ALAINE LOW. Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2003. Pp. x + 313. \$45; £32.99, paperback (ISBN 0-8028-2166-2).

KEY WORDS: Decolonization, missions, imperialism, nationalism.

These two volumes serve as bookends for the history of British protestant missions, examining their roles in the establishment of British colonialism as well as in its demise. While individual essays range across Britain, Africa, India and China, they focus almost exclusively on the theology, culture and practice of missions and missionaries, with little attention paid to Africans' roles in mission or to the complex ways they interpreted and appropriated Christianity for themselves.

The first volume, *The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions, 1880–1914*, focuses on late nineteenth-century mission culture and theology. D. W. Bebbington discusses the development by evangelical Anglican, Nonconformist and Presbyterian churches of a 'theology of empire', supporting imperialism as a means of countering evil, atoning for one's sins, and eradicating those of others. In contrast, Steven Maughan explores the failure of Anglican missionary activities to affect domestic theological conflicts between Anglo-Catholic High Church and evangelical Low Church Anglicans. Brian Stanley then studies the deliberations of the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference on the relations between missions and governments, finding that missionaries generally adopted prevailing racial attitudes, advocated active imperial intervention and counseled obedience to colonial authorities, while Andrew C. Ross finds that missionaries reinforced contemporary racism with holiness theology. If missionaries developed a 'theology of empire' and embraced secular racism, John M. MacKenzie finds they also embraced a 'natural theology' and sought to impose an orderly 'moral geography' on disorderly societies, while Deborah Gaitskell shows that women missionaries largely conformed to prevailing gender ideologies in spite of their increasing activities. Studies by Chandra Mallampalli and Lauren F. Pfister of missionaries in India and China conclude the case studies.

In contrast to the narrow foci of the micro studies, John W. de Gruchy's concluding essay poses a series of probing questions regarding the multiple confessional, social and political identities of missionaries as well as the diverse ways that Africans adapted the religious ideas and cultural baggage missionaries brought with them. While missionaries generally reflected the racial, scientific and gendered ideas of their age, then, they did so to varying degrees that confound attempts at easy generalizations. Yet the individual authors often fail to acknowledge that here or to engage differing interpretations between them. Thus, while the individual studies offer some interesting insights into particular missions and missionaries, few broader conclusions emerge.

The second volume, *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, moves from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth, while maintaining a similar focus to the first. Adrian Hastings opens with an insightful discussion of the degree to which imperial nationalism trumped Christian universalism and later African nationalism, as missions struggled to retain control of expanding African Christianity into the postcolonial period. Hartmut Lehmann then probes the

dilemma of German protestant missions in ex-German colonies; Richard Elphick discusses the role of Dutch Reformed missionaries in the construction of apartheid; and Andrew Porter explores the struggle of the High Churchmen of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) to preserve ecclesiastical authority and rural Africa in the face of increasing nationalism and urbanization.

The following section explores the emergence of Christian and national identities in colonial Asia, where Hinduism in India (Judith M. Brown) and secularism in China (Ka-che Yip and Daniel H. Bays) displaced Christianity in defining new national identities, while in Africa, Christians adapted the language of the Bible to define nationalist ideals (Derek Peterson).

The final section focuses on mission responses to the end of empire in Africa. John Stuart assesses the varying responses of the Anglo-Catholic UMCA, the evangelical Church Missionary Society (CMS), and Scottish Presbyterians to nationalism in Kenya and the Central African Federation. Caroline Howell analyzes the *kabaka* crisis in Buganda, in which the CMS and the Native Anglican Church became caught between the Baganda and the colonial state, on the one hand, and Bugandan and Ugandan nationalism, on the other. Philip Boobbyer explores the brief attempts of Moral Re-Armament to promote racial harmony in Africa. And Deborah Gaitskell shows how a liberal churchwoman was better able to identify with African interests than the missionaries who preceded her.

Ironically, Ogbu U. Kalu, in his concluding essay, is the first author in either volume to tackle central issues in African interpretations and appropriations of Christianity and to place the transition from colonial mission to African church not just in the context of African nationalism, but, more critically, in that of long-standing conflicts between missionaries and Africans over theology and control of the church. Thus, not only did missionaries generally fail in their belated attempts to reform the church in order to retain control in the face of overwhelming African opposition, according to Kalu, but Africans were also ultimately able to reestablish African pneumatic religious cosmology to transform Christianity itself. Sadly, this insightful, far reaching and complex analysis, which should have informed the preceding essays, is left to last, thereby exposing the limited analytical frameworks of the other essays.

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THOMAS SPEAR

## MAKING HISTORY AND DOING POLITICS IN IBADAN

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*'Civil Disorder is the Disease of Ibadan': Chieftaincy and Civic Culture in a Yoruba City.* By RUTH WATSON. Oxford: James Currey, 2003. Pp. xii + 180. £45 (ISBN 0-85255-459-1); £16.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-454-0).

Watson presents the Yoruba city of Ibadan as a case study of civic culture as historical process, rather than as a fixed set of political attitudes. The book discusses how between 1829 and 1939 the political process of the making and re-making of an Ibadan civic community shifted 'from the battlefield to a discursive field' (see below). In doing so, this careful study addresses important questions about political competition, inclusion and exclusion, kinship and identity. It does this, not by focusing on political structures, but by exploring the ways in which city residents perceived Ibadan politics and their shifting roles as urban social actors.



To an extent this is of course a familiar agenda in current research. However, Watson actually achieves these aims. She does this through an impressive, lucid argument, which manages to stay close to the perceptions and experiences of the social actors, while at the same time offering an ongoing explicit critical evaluation of interpretations in the existing literature.

Over the past decades, the literature on chieftaincy has attacked two related assumptions: that chiefs speak for and exercise authority within a civic community, and that chiefly authority is traditional and uncontested. A number of insightful studies such as Olufemi Vaughan (*Nigerian Chiefs: Traditional Power in Modern Politics*, 2000) and Mahmood Mamdani (*Citizen and Subject*, 1996) have historicized chieftaincy in the specific context of colonial interaction. Watson adds a sharp appreciation of how chieftaincy was equally contested and continually re-made during the precolonial period. Thus changes to chieftaincy and civic culture that occurred during the colonial period came on top of already existing patterns of change. In Watson's view, chieftaincy does not become perverted or less significant during the colonial period. It merely changes continually to adapt to new social, economic or political realities. What makes Watson's analysis so convincing is the way she traces the subtle interaction between an already very dynamic existing political culture, colonial assumptions about traditional authority, the importance of individual personalities of residents and district officers, the importance of the personalities of the various Africans involved and the impact of changing economic circumstances and new sources of wealth.

The first chapters focus on nineteenth-century Ibadan, introducing the city as an anomaly within the model of Yoruba urbanism. Watson sketches a rapidly changing city, with refugees from various conflicts in Yoruba land streaming in and needing to be incorporated. The centres for incorporation and political mobilization were the compounds or *ile*, founded by warriors: heterogeneous, constantly changing armies, largely consisting of the families of war-boys and slaves. Soldiers built up their military retinues and then left to set up their own *ile*. Chieftaincy titles were not reserved to particular *ile*, but allocated to leaders according to pragmatic criteria of military merit and maintenance of a large following. Here we find the explanation of the book's title: Ibadan's 'civil disorder' was the manifestation of an ongoing, intense and violent power struggle among Ibadan chiefs. In this contest, 'external' warfare and 'internal' disorder were intimately connected.

The following chapters discuss the change from 'the battlefield to the discursive field'. The basic consequence of the imposition of colonial rule, that the battlefield was no longer available as a political arena – to incorporate strangers into *ile*, or to compete for office – forced a change in the ways in which Ibadan political competition was conducted. Attempts by administrators to incorporate Ibadan in a rigid application of the system of indirect rule came on top of this. However, what becomes clear in Watson's analysis is the extent to which the interpretation of indirect rule was mediated, on the one hand by the personalities of specific British administrative officers, their personal judgements and likes and dislikes, and on the other hand by the way in which local chiefs and influential citizens presented their cases to the administration. Ibadan chieftaincy remained important, and fierce competition for political office continued, now in the different form of the 'war of the pen'. New entrants managed to use wealth acquired in the colonial economy to underpin their claims to office, and they found a language, and enough supporters, to see their claims through. In the final chapters, Watson moves beyond discussing the written language of these claims and counter-claims to consider the language of material culture.

While Watson introduces and repeatedly refers to Ibadan as an anomaly, none of the processes described here in such admirable detail appear to be unique to this city. On the contrary, after finishing the book the reader is left with the feeling, not of having read about an anomaly, but rather of having gained more insight into the functioning of civic culture more generally. This very subtle analysis drives home some points that are equally relevant elsewhere in Africa: the need to be wary of simplistic assumptions about the impact of the ideology of indirect rule, and also to pay attention to the subtle and continuous changing of civic culture during, before and after the colonial period. What is more, Watson has shown us a fruitful approach to analysing these changes to build up a dynamic understanding of local political culture.

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DMITRI VAN DEN BERSSELAAR

## PRECOLONIAL HISTORY BY AN AFRICAN RULER

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*'The History of Ashanti Kings and the Whole Country Itself' and Other Writings by Otumfuo, Nana Agyeman Prempeh I.* Edited by A. ADU BOAHEN, EMMANUEL AKYEAMPONG, NANCY LAWLER, T. C. McCASKIE and IVOR WILKS. Oxford: The British Academy, 2003. Pp. x + 224. £30 (ISBN 0-19-726261-9).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, text editions, kingdoms and states.

On 17 January 1896, British forces entered the city of Kumase – capital of the Ashanti Kingdom – and, in what resembled nothing less than a coup d'état, abducted its young king, Nana Agyeman Prempeh, together with his powerful mother, the *Asantehemaa* (queenmother) Yaa Kyaa, and an assembly of influential chiefs. The captive group, along with spouses, children and attendants, was ultimately exiled to the Seychelles Islands, where many of the elderly would die, where a new generation of Asante royals would be born and from whence some would eventually return in 1924, among them the exiled king. During this long banishment, Nana Agyeman Prempeh not only saw to the exile community's welfare and to the education of its children, but converted to Christianity and learned to speak, read and write English. Inspired by his mother's concern that the names of the exiled be remembered for posterity, Prempeh decided to 'make use of the written word' to record 'something of the ways of Asante before its loss of independence' (p. 60). In 1907, with son Frederick serving as his scribe, Prempeh began *'The History of Ashanti Kings and the Whole Country Itself'*.

The 87-page, handwritten text of *'The History of Ashanti Kings'* – its fleeting appearances in public and private archival collections and its numerous mutations over the past half century – is both the subject of and the inspiration for this important collection. Collaboratively edited by five prominent historians (four of them leading scholars of Asante history), the book is comprised of nine chapters. Four of the chapters establish the historical context in which *'The History of Ashanti Kings'* was written and the remaining ones reproduce the text itself, along with a set of complementary documents authored by Prempeh.

In the collection's first chapter, T. C. McCaskie explores the life and times of Agyeman Prempeh, from his birth in 1872 until his exile in 1896. The chapter sets important groundwork by carefully explaining the intricacies of royal kinship in Asante and detailing from an Asante-centred perspective the critical events leading

up to 1896. We are allowed to see Prempeh's world the way Prempeh must have seen it. In chapter 2, Adu Boahen follows Nana Prempeh and the other captives to the Seychelles, where we gain insight into the organization of the exile community, its daily life and its emphasis on education and learning. Through deaths and births, conversion and Christian marriage, the burning desire to return home never faded. Emmanuel Akyeampong follows the captives home in Chapter 3, as he explores the challenges Prempeh faced as private citizen and then as Kumasehene (1926), and recounts his skills in negotiating the political landscape of indirect rule and laying the foundations for modern kingship in Asante.

The volume's fourth chapter, authored by Ivor Wilks, introduces us to the text itself. Lest readers inadvertently conclude that the exiled *Asantehene's* history writing was something new – a by-product of colonialism and European education – Wilks reminds us that at least a century before, *Asantehene* Osei Tutu Kwame, with the aid of Muslim advisors, produced a set of written historical records, including a chronology of Asante kings. Wilks goes on to reconstruct from the scanty evidence how Prempeh's *The History of Ashanti Kings* was conceived and written, for whom and why, and then turns to the fugitive history of the text itself – its surfacings and disappearances, its partial transcriptions and muddled photocopyings, its mutilation and disintegration and, finally, its move into the public realm through the efforts of Adu Boahen.

The remaining chapters of the collection are devoted to Prempeh's writings. Chapter 5 directly reproduces the historical sections of *The History of Ashanti Kings* from Frederick's handwritten notebooks. Chapter 6 includes the sections which are more ethnographic than historical, while Chapter 7 reproduces its genealogies and office lists. What the editors have categorized as 'memoirs' constitute the collection's eighth chapter. Included are Prempeh's 1913 petition to return to Asante and his 1922–4 accounts of events leading up to his capture and exile. Chapter 9, eloquently titled 'Reporting to the living, accounting for the dead', reproduces Prempeh's 1925 report to the chiefs and people of his nearly thirty years of captivity. In addition to digitalized reproductions of some of the original text (also available on the British Academy's website at [www.britac.ac.uk/pubs/src/fha/ashanti](http://www.britac.ac.uk/pubs/src/fha/ashanti)), the book is much enhanced by a stunning collection of photographs, a thorough bibliography and a concordance indexing all of the people and places referenced in Prempeh's writings.

Over the past three decades, scholars have extensively explored oral history and oral tradition in Africa through the prisms of method, theory and content. In contrast, African texts (with the important exception of Arabic documents) remain woefully underappreciated and understudied. *The History of Ashanti Kings*, in addition to being a monumental contribution to the corpus of historical work on Asante, is an important reminder, both to skilled researchers and to novice undergraduate students, that African history writing (outside the Muslim world), did not begin at the University of London or the University of Wisconsin. One only hopes that the British Academy has made arrangements for this important collection to reach audiences in Ghana. It would be a real tragedy if this 'early – and perhaps the earliest – history writing in English by an African ruler', as the cover jacket extols, was doomed to exile, largely inaccessible to the descendants of Nana Prempeh's original audience.

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## GROWING KHAT FOR THE PARALLEL MARKET

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*Leaf of Allah: Khat and Agricultural Transformation in Harerge, Ethiopia, 1875–1991.* By EZEKIEL GEBISSA. Oxford: James Currey; Hargeisa: Btec; Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004. Pp. xiv + 210. £50 (ISBN 0-85255-481-8); £16.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-480-X).

KEY WORDS: Ethiopia, agriculture, fertility, drugs, markets, smuggling.

This impressive book is a well-researched case study of socio-economic change caused by the production, distribution and consumption of khat in eastern Ethiopia since the late nineteenth century. Khat is a psychoactive shrub produced in Harerge province whose leaves have been chewed in the Horn of Africa and parts of west Asia for a millennium. More rarely, dried leaves and twigs have been boiled for drinking or rolled into cigarettes and smoked.

The study is a revised doctoral dissertation that employs a wide variety of sources, including archives in Ethiopia, Britain, the United States and France, interviews with local people and a plethora of published works in English, French, Italian, German and Amharic. The strength of the research is the wealth of local sources the author was able to find in Harerge, especially provincial archives, interviews and local studies and newspaper accounts in Amharic. British archives were useful in tracing the path of the drug into Aden and Somalia in the 1940s and 1950s, while French archives allowed him to follow it into Djibouti.

As a whole, the book supports two major conceptual points that should affect how we look at peasants and traders in many of the world's agricultural societies. With regard to peasant cultivators, the book's data 'contradicts the well-entrenched assumption that peasant agriculture is invariably subsistence-oriented' (p. 22). Rather, in Harerge province, massive numbers of Oromo peasants took up the cultivation of khat, usually intercropped with food crops such as sorghum or potatoes, particularly between 1975 and the early 1990s. Thus, in 1975, khat took up 6.6 per cent of the land under cultivation in Harerge, but by 1983 that amount had doubled to 13 per cent. The amount of domestically marketed khat increased from about 1,300 tons annually in the early 1960s to 4,800 tons by the late 1980s. Annual foreign-exchange earnings from the legal export of khat increased seven-fold between the 1970s and late 1980s (pp. 141–2). The book documents in detail how the cultivators responded to market forces and opportunities during the twentieth century to become what some experts believe to be the second largest Ethiopian export crop after coffee.

The second broad conceptual point made by the book has to do with the author's use of the term 'parallel market' to explain the type of process used by khat traders as they have had to adapt to changing circumstances over the years. He argues that this concept, rather than that of the 'black market' or 'underground market', best fits the system of khat production and sale. In Ethiopia, khat is a legal product, but since traders do not always conform to the ever-changing government regulations concerning licensing and customs, most of it is sold illegally. From the perspective of the traders, and – it appears – the general public, such activity is not seen as immoral or criminal, but as a counter-strategy to oppressive government regulations (pp. 24–8).

Chapter 9 tries to document the extent of the parallel market, including the export of several primary goods such as khat, live animals (cattle, sheep, goats and camels) and coffee which all provided the foreign exchange necessary to smuggle consumer goods into the country. Although the nature of parallel markets makes statistics difficult to determine, according to the author conservative

estimates indicate that illegal khat exports resulted in an 'astonishing' 42 million US dollars' worth of imports being smuggled annually into Ethiopia in the 1980s (p. 172).

In conclusion, the author carefully describes the 'dilemma of khat-based development' in Chapter 10 (p. 179). On the one hand, khat production and marketing has transformed the life of Harerge's population. Farmers who used to struggle to support their families have used profits from khat to purchase vehicles and consumer goods such as radios, televisions and tape recorders. Many dress in imported jeans and shoes. 'The most enduring impact' of the trade was the provision of 'badly needed capital' enabling 'individuals to leave their farms and look for non-agricultural opportunities ... The transport businesses, brick factories, filling stations and small shops that sprouted all over the Harerge highlands were results of khat-generated capital' (p. 183). Some bought urban houses to rent. The economy of Harerge is able to support adequately a population of 400 people per square kilometer (pp. 180–4).

On the other hand, structural problems exist that may cause economic problems in the future. Population growth has increased pressure on the arable land. Increasing cash crop production has led to lower output of sorghum and maize. This has reduced the amount of fodder for animals, and thereby decreased the availability of manure. An ecological crisis may be looming 'in the near future' (p. 184). Perhaps future studies by the author will return to this ecological issue in more depth. It would also be useful to see in greater detail the impact of policies by the government which came to power in 1991 on the creative and adaptable population of Harerge province.

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JAMES QUIRIN

## GERMAN GOVERNANCE IN NAMIBIA

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*Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner: Staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im kolonialen Namibia* (German Governance of Africans: Stately Claims to Power, and Reality in Colonial Namibia). By JÜRGEN ZIMMERER. Hamburg: Lit Verlag, 2001. Pp. xiv + 329. €35.90 (ISBN 3-8258-7473-7); €24.90, paperback (ISBN 3-8258-5047-1).

KEY WORDS: Namibia, colonial, governance, violence.

Exactly one hundred years ago the first genocide of the twentieth century was committed by Imperial Germany in German South West Africa (GSWA), present-day Namibia. A number of books have appeared recently that have sought to deal with this poorly lit and sordid aspect of Germany's Imperial past. Interestingly, apart from a few newspaper articles and raving diatribes, the academic analysis of this dreadful event has generally been conducted by German historians, or those of recent German descent.<sup>1</sup> In contrast to Maji Maji or Mau Mau, the Herero and Nama genocides of Namibia have not been subject to concerted international academic attention. To be sure, in the immediate aftermath of Namibian Independence in 1990, there was an upsurge in interest in Namibian

<sup>1</sup> The most notable exception being Casper Erichsen who recently completed the first History MA awarded at the University of Namibia, 2004 for which he submitted a thesis entitled: "'The Angel of Death has descended violently among them': a study of Namibia's concentration camps and prisoners of war, 1904–08'.

history, and a plethora of studies in English dealing with Namibia's past came to be published. However, most of these works were constrained by reliance on English language skills, remaining firmly within the period 1915–48, when the bulk of Namibia's administration (hence its archival record) was conducted in English, and not in German or Afrikaans. Those historians with German language skills also needed to be able to read *Sütterlin*, the handwriting style favoured by German bureaucrats at the time, although the introduction of the typewriter into colonial service in 1906 has substantially eased the job of historians in the present. The detailed work of Jürgen Zimmerer, which ought to be published in English, has made the work for historians dealing with Namibian and German history even easier.

Based on research that spans all the relevant literature in German and English, as well as all the German archives in *Sütterlin* in Germany and Namibia, Zimmerer's book will be the point of reference for all historical work dealing with Namibian history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The study examines relations between German colonial authorities and Africans in GSWA, and seeks to uncover the discrepancy between the colonial state's legal and its actual power.<sup>2</sup> In particular Zimmerer looks at the evolution and development of the *Eingeborenenverordnungen* (Native Ordinances) that were introduced into Namibia in an effort to control and contain the Native population in order to ensure access to African labour. The racial intent, extent and scope of these ordinances – briefly discussed pp. 77–84 – can be gathered from the following example. All Africans over the age of seven were obliged by law to carry a pass. A small bronze disc embossed with the Imperial crown, name of the magisterial district, and personal number. In addition: 'Every Native obliged to carry a pass (*passpflichtige Eingeborene*) can be stopped by every White person, and, should he be found to be without a pass, handed over to the nearest police officer' (p. 82, reviewer's translation).

These laws which formed the basis for a structured *Eingeborenenpolitik* (Native policy) came to be introduced in the aftermath of the Herero war, but as Zimmerer clearly shows, were not the result of the war. Rather, they already existed before the war, but had not been implemented. One of the strengths of Zimmerer's work is, thus, that he shows that the war was far from being a break in German policies with regard to its African subjects: these policies had already been drafted and were awaiting an opportune moment for application. Thus the continuities touched upon in a moment of insight by Hannah Arendt, who saw in the colonization of Africa elements and origins of the total control that would be Nazi Germany, are driven back to the offices of bureaucrats in Imperial Germany in 1900.<sup>3</sup> In this Zimmerer clearly indicates the dialectical manner in which colonial rule in the empire functioned as events in the metropole affected the periphery and vice versa. However, though bureaucrats in Berlin may have drafted legislation that provided colonial authorities with *de jure* total control in GSWA, the reality on the ground

<sup>2</sup> In this Zimmerer pursues an approach which has also been applied by Rob J. Gordon in relation to the South African state in Namibia. Gordon, 'Vagrancy, law and "shadow knowledge": internal pacification, 1915–1939', in P. Hayes *et al.*, (eds.), *Namibia under South African Rule* (Oxford, 1998), 51–76.

<sup>3</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft* (München, 1986). Zimmerer has pursued the links between colonialism and Nazism: Jürgen Zimmerer, 'Colonialism and the holocaust', in A. D. Moses (ed.), *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History* (New York, 2004), 49–76; Zimmerer, 'Die Geburt des "Ostlandes" aus dem Geiste des Kolonialismus: Ein postkolonialer Blick auf die NS-Eroberungs- und Vernichtungspolitik', *Sozial Geschichte*, 1 (2004), 10–43.

was that *de facto* the colonial authorities did not have total control. In this, another strength of Zimmerer's work is to be found as he analyses the manner in which local colonial authorities, the *Bezirks- und Distriktsamtleute* (district officials) attempted to implement legislation and their relations with the central authorities and Africans. The implementation of colonial authority was far from easy and dependent on many more factors than brute force, legislation or subjects alone.

This is a remarkable study, well written by a German historian whose work will thankfully not be confined to the German-speaking world. The book provides an excellent insight into the manner in which German history influenced the colonies, but more importantly how the colonies influenced Germany. In a discipline in which the credo 'bureaucracies enable genocide' is becoming ever more apparent, Zimmerer has provided us with great insight into the manufacturing of legislation by bureaucracy, as well as its disastrous effects. Total subjugation, humiliation, destruction and death was often decided upon by people in offices 8,000 km away.

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JAN-BART GEWALD

### CASEMENT ON KING LEOPOLD'S CONGO

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*The Eyes of Another Race: Roger Casement's Congo Report and 1903 Diary*. Edited by SÉAMAS Ó SÍOCHÁIN and MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN. Dublin: University College of Dublin Press, 2003. Pp. xvi + 350. £39.95 (ISBN 1-900621-99-1); £18.95 paperback (ISBN 1-900621-98-3).

KEY WORDS: Congo – Democratic Republic of, colonialism, human rights.

Roger Casement was a controversial figure in his lifetime and remains so today, a man who has attracted much attention from writers, both scholarly and popular. The narrative of his life is quite well known: his birth in Ireland, then orphaned by thirteen; his first Africa-related job as a purser with the Elder-Dempster line; his career as a British consul in Lourenço Marques, Luanda and Boma; his report of atrocities in the Congo Free State and his influence over E. D. Morel, founder of the Congo Reform Association; his work as a consul in Rio de Janeiro and other South American locations and his influential report on atrocities in the rubber-producing region of Putumayo; his growing commitment to the Irish liberation struggle; his journey to Germany during the First World War, and his unwise and unsuccessful efforts to enlist Irish prisoners-of-war in German camps for the Irish Volunteer Brigade; his return to Ireland and his capture and imprisonment by British authorities; and his trial in London for high treason – a charge he admitted – and subsequent execution in 1916. Beyond the narrative, two factors are particularly controversial for those who would assess his life: his homosexual activities which many believed colored judicial refusal to grant clemency, and the authenticity of diaries attributed to him. Not questioned, however, is Casement's record as a humanitarian and human rights' activist. Nor in doubt is the significance of his 1903 Report that documented brutalities in the upper Congo and contributed to the end of the Leopoldian system and the establishment of Belgian Congo five years later.

The one hundredth anniversary of Casement's Congo Report and Diary provided the occasion for the publication of this book. Instead of publishing the official British government Report of 1904 which was a reworked official version of Casement's original (among other things, it deleted all proper names of places and individuals) – as others have done – the editors here have produced Casement's

own Report, which they have meticulously and exhaustively annotated. It reads as a highly informed account of conditions in the upper Congo where Casement was dispatched by the British government, initially to investigate the treatment of British subjects – mainly workers from West Africa – but ultimately to document the situation on a much broader front. The Report confirms beyond doubt the multiple atrocities carried out by agents of the Free State, in particular the *Force Publique*, as they carried out the wholesale disruption of societies, requisitioned food supplies and enforced rubber-collection quotas by the most brutal methods. The power of the account derives from its character, not as a sensational document – the descriptions and the depositions of witnesses speak for themselves – but as the work of a consul, who is an expert on the legal rights of British subjects and an authority on the dynamics of power in the Congo Free State. Particularly telling for Foreign Office officials, according to the editors, was Casement's ability to contrast conditions in 1903 with those he had experienced during his previous travels in the upper Congo in 1887. Where once there were thriving towns, for example, people had died or had fled, leaving trails of desolation. In convincing the British parliament and influential members of the public of devastation in Congo, Casement was instrumental in converting what had been verbal sparring between diplomats into an outcry that helped end Free State rule.

The editors have added to the value of their book by also publishing Casement's 1903 Diary, voluminously annotated. A more personal and emotional account of the voyage up the Congo river, the small details of daily life and social contacts and the human tragedy of state and concessionary company excesses, the Diary complements and contextualizes the Report well. A nice touch are intermittent notes with practical information on sailing, statistics and government decrees, the kind of information useful to a traveling consul. The 1903 Diary was one of several so-called 'Black Diaries' that were to be used as evidence against Casement in the last years of his life. Documenting his homosexuality, they were thought by many of his supporters to be forgeries written to discredit him. The editors of this book, citing the scientific analysis of a hand-writing expert and a range of contemporary documents now open to public scrutiny, conclude that the 1903 Diary was, indeed, authentic.

Altogether this is a very worthwhile publication. Casement's account demonstrates beyond doubt the apocalyptic era that was the early colonial period in Congo, the concern of a few for human rights in an age of high imperialism and the contribution of this extraordinary Irishman to ending the rule of the Congo Free State.

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## WINDOWS INTO THE EXPERIENCE OF AN AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCH

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*The Man of Heaven and the Beautiful Ones of God: Umuntu Wasezulwini Nabantu Abahle Bakankulunkulu. Writings from Ibandla lamaNazaretha, a South African Church.* By ELIZABETH GUNNER. Leiden: Brill, 2002. Pp. xvi + 245. €85; \$99 (ISBN 90-04-12542-6).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, Christianity, social, cultural.

Membership of African Independent Churches (AICs) in South Africa began outstripping that of 'mission' churches in the 1960s. Yet historians, frustrated by the paucity of primary sources on their origins, growth, beliefs and practices, often



leave AICs to anthropologists and theologians. The Nazareth Baptist Church provides a striking exception. Founded by Isaiah Shembe in Durban round 1910–11, with perhaps a million members and an acknowledged public presence today, this AIC looks set to become the best documented. Its eloquent hymns – often also danced, to ‘crush Satan’ – were first published in 1940. Studies of Shembe himself range from Dube’s 1936 biography through work by Sundkler, Oosthuizen and Vilakazi. Ten years ago, Irving Hexham produced an edited version of *The Scriptures of the amaNazaretha of EKuphaKameni* (Calgary, 1994) (reviewed in *Journal of African History*, 37 [1996], 332–4), and has overseen four further volumes of Nazarite oral history, counsels and prayers through the Edwin Mellen Press, 1996–2002.

Half the text which Liz Gunner offers here, representing the first third of a document entitled ‘Histories and laws’, reprises (careful scrutiny reveals) half of Part 1 of Hexham’s 1994 material. The rest, never published before, comprises the testimony of a fervent disciple, Meshack Hadebe, and then (the last of the three manuscript books lent to Gunner by Bishop Londa Shembe in 1987) a selection of hymns recorded by the ebullient Edendale temple secretary, Lazarus Maphumulo. For linguists and students of Zulu, it is obviously a unique boon to have here, alongside Gunner’s translations (checked with six native-speakers), the full transcription of the original Zulu. However, in view of the existence of the English-language version of the complete history, from a translation by the very bishop who originally gave her the books, the reader needs more detailed guidance (beyond one reference, p. 52 n. 10) as to how Gunner’s Book 1 differs from or is an advance on that earlier version. It would be helpful to know more, also, about what was omitted (and why) from Books 2 and 3. This invaluable work, then, though it has new strengths to offer, still needs complementing by other sources on Shembe and the Nazarites.

Gunner’s fifty-page introduction conveys the ‘resistance’ embodied in simple church gatherings, under trees or bridges, creating religious community in the face of oppression. It is particularly fascinating on the relationship between orality and literacy in an AIC with many unschooled members for whom the remembered Bible is the read-aloud Bible. The Zulu word *izwi*, intriguingly, encompasses both: the ‘voice’ of God and the revealed, written biblical ‘word’. Excited at possessing the Gospel for himself, Shembe saw his preaching of it ‘setting the mountain on fire’ (p. 9), yet appreciated the importance of writing too, carrying notebooks and using amanuenses when on the move setting up church centres. If inspiration came for a new hymn or organizational matters needed recording, he would say, ‘Bhale ntombazane’ (Write girl) (p. 27).

While healing is important to Nazarites, Gunner argues that this is also, distinctively, a church of narratives and testimony (prominent in regular services and annual meetings, not just women’s groups), as well as of writing and recording. Individual members make guiding texts of the spoken word by recording and circulating in private notebooks inspiring sermons and hymns, church ‘laws’ and personal accounts of supernatural experiences. Books 2 and 3 have just such origins, though Hadebe concluded that recording the countless miracles Shembe performed ‘right in front of our very eyes’ would ‘use up all the pieces of paper in the world’ (p. 191).

Though Gunner provides more historical background than Hexham, the texts themselves are very lightly annotated. The historian in me wanted more on the context and impact of writings from the 1920s and 1930s, when Shembe was trying to organize his church in the face of recalcitrant subordinates and difficult higher authorities. His immersion in biblical language is striking – echoes of the Beatitudes or the injunction style of the Epistles will repay more investigation.

Readers should note, however, that the book of 'Jacob' does not exist – James is meant, as Hexham's version confirms – while 'Levi' is presumably Leviticus.

The language can be lively and accessible, as when Shembe urges each male leader to show gentleness even if falsely accused, looking at the ground and never raising his voice 'because he is the young bride (*umakoti*) of the house' (p. 105). Being circumspect about one's gaze also matters: 'A man who constantly makes his eyes sparkle and who flirts with his eyes is not a man of God' (p. 105). The grim references to Indians and whites making Zulu girls pregnant and then flinging them aside as the daughters of 'prisoners' (p. 111) – cast in jail by Jehovah, in punishment for not worshipping him – are balanced by assurances that God still has pity on the Zulu and wants to free them: 'don't be intimidated by the cowards that say Jehovah has no time for the brown person' (p. 119). Though explicit references to Christ are very few, Shembe is powerfully in touch with the divine: God 'is indeed very beautiful ... if you sit in the presence of God, you know him, you are sitting in brilliant light which doesn't even need the sun' (p. 173). And who could not identify with Hymn 40: 'The sun rose and set/Today O Lord/I have not done/What I should have done' (p. 221)?

Surprisingly, a couple of basic questions about language are not addressed at all. Gunner writes informatively about Shembe preaching round 1906 in a Sotho 'language corridor' (p. 21) of informal evangelical activity extending from the Transvaal through his Harrismith base in the Orange River Colony on into modern Lesotho. But just as Hadebe's family made a visionary journey to unfamiliar Zulu territory and learnt the language, so Shembe, who speaks to Hadebe's father 'in rich Sotho' (p. 151), is later described by a hostile Natal Wesleyan as 'a Msotho' (p. 169), an outsider. Even leaving aside how the return to 'Zulu-ness' was effected, making Shembe a fixture on the Natal scene, did his years among Sotho-speakers result in his speaking and writing a different sort of Zulu? And does Hadebe's Sotho heritage show in his language-use?

Gunner displays welcome familiarity with the church's ongoing life today and includes some glossy, evocative photographs. Her literary skills are put to good use in evaluating the variety of genres and registers in these Zulu writings, made accessible in turn via her linguistic and translation abilities, a unique combination distinguishing her work from the composite effort under Hexham's aegis. It is good to learn that the University of KwaZulu Natal is bringing out a paperback version. The *amaNazareth*a can then pore over the Zulu originals themselves, continuing that ongoing dialectic between sacred spoken and written word which is so striking a feature of this unusual church.

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## RAILWAYMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES

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*Working with Gender: Wage Labor and Social Change in Southwestern Nigeria.* By LISA A. LINDSAY. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann, 2003. Pp. xvi + 241. No price given (ISBN 0-325-00188-X); \$23.95, paperback (ISBN 0-325-00187-1).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, colonial, postcolonial, education, family, gender, labour, transport.

In this carefully documented archival and field research study, Lindsay takes on the literature about labor in the African formal sector through the lens of

the social history of Nigerian railway workers. The choice is an inspired one. Railway workers did not belong to the labor categories that have received the most research attention: elite educated cadres, casual unskilled workers, labor migrants and the peasants and laborers of the rural sector. They were trained and highly disciplined workers in a sector of fundamental importance to the colonial and postcolonial economy: the sector whose very existence defined which parts of the colonies were 'useful'. And they were numerous (about 16,000 in 1941), stratified by skill (29.6 per cent were 'established'), organized into labor unions very early (at least by 1919, with 41 unions by 1941), employed by a parastatal, and dispersed over the rail network of the entire country. The book poses these conditions and then asks what modern social and political forms these workers created for themselves, by private decision and public struggle.

As the title announces, the key theme is gender and domestic life. Here Lindsay presents a more historically nuanced interpretation than others, largely by including the place of the family in labor struggles for pay, benefits and working conditions alongside a social history of workers' family life. Lindsay suggests that for Nigerian workers both the personal *and* the public models of gender and the family were complex, changing and responsive to conditions. Nigerian workers' wives never stopped earning their own livings, and yet the family allowance and various benefits for families (days of leave, sick leave, membership in the Provident Fund) were vigorously demanded by the union in the 1930s as if the worker were the sole breadwinner. The 'breadwinner' wage was a central demand of the strike in 1945 which was sustained – paradoxically, as Lindsay points out – by the earnings of the workers' trader wives. Eventually gaining more benefits, the senior workers did tend, in some ways, to live the 'nuclear' model, remaining monogamous and investing in life styles that reinforced the differentiation within the railway labor force. By the 1964 general strike, the disparities in the conditions of different levels of workers were at the heart of the resentment of the lower level workers, with a special focus on family and other social allowances. Nevertheless, in the process these established workers had created 'big man' compounds, and their wives had never stopped working. So the argument is made, and well supported, that gendered masculinity was argued and lived in varied and changing ways. The question is not only how, but why.

The study could have ramified in many directions but the argument is kept tightly focused. As the author cites (although briefly) there is a large literature on the Nigerian labor movement in national politics and the international labor movement. By maintaining her own theme, Lindsay is able to give full play to her archival and interview material to show the internal complexities of the familial imagery that made it such a key resource. For example, she does not resolve her interpretation of the 'big man' complex, characteristic of the well-paid senior workers of the 1950s, into one or other of the components she sees informing it: the family allowances, travel subsidies and education funds of the top colonial brass on the one hand and the Nigerian concept of the large compound with many dependants on the other.

There is one component of her evidence, however, which I think could have been pursued further. All the evidence suggests that responsibility for *children* was a key component of masculinity. Or perhaps it was a commitment of parenthood in general. Lindsay argues, against some of the literature, that it is the 'proliferation of possibilities' (p. 205) in Yoruba gender practices that gives gender such salience. I might suggest, echoing Berry's argument, that the manner of working with a malleable gender ideology and practice reflected, at another level, the profound

Yoruba commitment to education over this period.<sup>1</sup> In the 1950s, the Western Region voted to raise taxes to support Universal Primary Education. Perhaps education was a more important goal of Yoruba modernity than gender, giving focus to the aspirations of all kinds, levels and genders of workers. This excellent study allows us to consider such a possibility, and to follow the implications for the analysis of economic life in the turbulent present.

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## THE PRIMACY OF THE PERSONAL

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*Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania.* By KELLY M. ASKEW. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002. Pp. 417 + xviii, 1 CD. \$72 (ISBN 0-226-02980-8); \$34, paperback (ISBN 0-226-02981-6).

KEY WORDS: Tanzania, music, popular culture.

Early in this often fascinating book, ethnomusicologist Kelly Askew describes her bewilderment upon first witnessing *taarab*, a Swahili musical genre, usually associated with weddings, in which a vocalist sings heavily metaphorical texts to a mixed accompaniment of Arab, Western and African instruments. At frequent intervals throughout the performance, a member of the virtually all-female audience would jump up and, with extravagant fanfare, dance her way to the front to tip the performer. Among other members of the audience, such displays provoked inexplicable peals of laughter, fury or shame.

Many who have visited East Africa will have shared this bewilderment. Yet as Askew demonstrates, to fail to understand the dynamics of tipping is to fail to understand the very heart of the genre. For all that *taarab*, unusually for African musical forms, involves musicians standing on a stage before a seated, non-dancing audience (lazy peoples' music, some of my Tanzanian friends call it), it is an intensely participatory form of performance. Audiences possess a keen knowledge of the particular oeuvre of the ensemble on stage, to the point of being able to anticipate the text of each song and quickly comprehend its hidden meaning. They also possess a keen knowledge of local gossip. So when a woman gets up to tip at the start of a song that expresses (for example) thickly veiled contempt for the sexual behavior of a romantic rival, all understand to whom her innuendo is directed. Though invented in the nineteenth century as courtly entertainment, *taarab* was quickly adapted by Swahili women to the old popular practice of using poetic and musical performances as venues for public competition.

Askew's training as an anthropologist, her years of residence in a popular neighborhood in Tanga and her accomplishments as a skilled *taarab* performer in her own right combine to make her uniquely qualified as a guide to these complex interpersonal dynamics, and her accounts of them are engrossing. Given her background, however, one would have expected Askew to pursue her analysis of *taarab* performances in ways that would make them gateways to a thick description of the tensions of gender, power and ethnicity in this urban community. Instead, she focuses on the construction of national culture. On the surface this seems a

<sup>1</sup> Sara Berry, *No Condition Is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison, 1993).

surprising choice. In making it, Askew's opening position is the assertion that *taarab* performance is 'predominantly political'; that conflicts over tipping are mechanisms for 'the constitution of social relations'. But in her account, the relations that are contested in the forum of *taarab* (Askew never adduces evidence that they are actually 'constituted' there) are not social but personal, and, most often, sexual.

*Taarab*, in other words, is resolutely apolitical. Askew does not fully acknowledge this until late in the book, in a satisfying chapter about efforts to appropriate *taarab* to nationalist projects. Until the 1990s, official descriptions of national culture in mainland Tanzania excluded *taarab* because of its associations with Arab influence. The introduction of multi-party competition pressured politicians to bow to the genre's popularity, but *taarab* musicians have nevertheless managed to evade all state projects of meaning-making. That, Askew shows, is because of the inherently dialogic nature of a *taarab* performance, which audiences deem successful only if they are able to utilize it for signaling meanings of their own.

*Taarab* thus serves to illustrate the inability of state-directed projects to determine the culture of the postcolonial nation; in the end, as an enlightened cultural officer tells Askew, 'Tanzanian national culture is whatever Tanzanians want it to be'. Askew's wisdom in accepting this assessment is admirable, but it leaves one wondering about the point of some of the preceding discussions. A chapter-long history of national cultural policy, for example, merely establishes that the policy existed only on paper. A chapter on a state-sponsored competition in the performance of *ngoma* (ethnically specific traditions of drumming-and-dance) ably shows how nationalist discourse employs the rhetoric of 'authenticity' even as the dances themselves are emptied of the context and innovation that are at their core in village performances. But at the end, far from the 'ethnography of Tanzanian nationalism' Askew promises (to say nothing of a 'performative analysis' of 'the emergence of the Tanzanian state'), we learn little about the nature of Tanzanian national culture, or even if such a thing exists. Why, for example, did official definitions always embrace theater and *kwaya* (church-derived choral music), both unmistakably imported genres, but reject *taarab* as inherently foreign? Askew's explanation, which stresses the unsuitability of dialogic *taarab* performance to serve as a vehicle for delivering fixed political messages, is excellent as far as it goes. But it says more about political tactics than about debates over national culture. To explain why *taarab*'s taint of Arabness was deemed more noxious than the Western derivations of the other genres would require historical research into a taboo topic: the connections between TANU nationalism and discourses of race.

These reservations are not meant to detract from Askew's central accomplishment, but merely to express disappointment that she did not build more on her impressive strengths as an ethnographer and musician. Indeed, given her skills, and given that her book appears in a prestigious series in ethnomusicology, it is surprising how little of it is about music at all. This lack has partly to do with the genre itself. Though in her introduction Askew critiques the 'logocentrism' that pervades most performance studies, the central characteristic of *taarab* for most aficionados are the poetic texts, and the performances of the audience members who tip are entirely non-musical. Still, Askew's few stabs at musicological analysis read like conventional music criticism: general assertions about style (e.g., *taarab* rhythms are 'local', scale structures are sometimes Arab), without any effort at technical demonstration. Such demonstrations would have been especially useful in this case. To the uneducated ear, *taarab* sounds unmistakably Arab or Indian. But Askew informs us that it is yet another example of Swahili-speakers' well-known gift for 'assembling transnational ... bricolages'. A precise musicological

analysis, in which Askew identified each piece of bric-à-brac and showed how it was deployed in the finished performance, could have rendered the songs marvelous documents revealing something of the processes by which this cosmopolitan culture has been created.

Mention must be made of the book's invaluable end matter: an extensive discography of three genres of East African music, song texts and, best of all, a compact disc of thoughtfully selected examples (including a masterful performance by Askew herself) that, with the aid of the accompanying notes and translations, even someone with no particular taste for *taarab* can listen to with interest and pleasure.

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## MEMORIALS IN SOUTH AFRICA AFTER 1994

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*History after Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa.* By ANNIE E. COOMBES. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2004. Pp. xviii + 366. £21.50, paperback (ISBN 0-8223-3072-5).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, apartheid, museums and memorials, memory.

This well-written and very engaging book investigates several significant monuments, museums and historical sites in South Africa as a way of examining the past, both as an artifact of scholarship and as it survives in the popular consciousness. She is both respectful and irreverent about the past: respectful in that she takes the social and cultural significance of the past seriously; irreverent in that she is equally serious about narratives and artwork that undermine established historical accounts, satirize them and even eviscerate them.

*History after Apartheid* is part historiography and part travelogue. For example, in a chapter focused on the question of what the South African government and various constituencies wanted to do with the infamous Robben Island post-1994, Coombes sketches the history of the island, describes the political questions surrounding its memorialization and details her own two touristic excursions there, in 1997 and 2000. She creates an account that is sensitive to different popular ideas about what life was like on the island, constructed through plays, art installations, documentaries, autobiographical accounts, museum shows and the in-flight magazine for South African Airways; examines the subtle and not-so-subtle commodification of the prison (that plays on a kind of historical voyeurism); and describes the island's transition as a tourist destination from a fairly raw and unmediated experience (in 1997) to a slick production number with high-end transportation and an elite-educated tour guide who exhibited a polished skepticism about the veracity of any historical account (in 2000). 'Toward the end of the tour she [the tour guide] tries to give the group the sense that all histories are simply versions of a truth and may be contested: "All history is usually opinion"' (p. 77). In some sense the tour guide seems to be a local stand-in for Coombes, who, ultimately, is adept at reading the narratives inscribed in monuments and artwork, but is somewhat loath to choose which of the possible historical narratives and memorials might be the most appropriate representations of these various sites, thus giving credence to the idea that there are many versions of the truth.

In that same chapter, Coombes contrasts the large amounts of time and resources spent on transforming Robben Island into a major memorial and tourist destination with the more complex and fraught history of the development of the Monument to the Women of South Africa, set in the Union Buildings in Pretoria. As Coombes notes, there was considerable controversy over what the memorial should contain. More troubling for her, however, is how difficult it is for the public to visit this 'public' memorial. Coombes describes in an amusing way the numerous obstacles she had to overcome simply to get in to see the monument, and draws the justifiable conclusion that while the memorial exists as a material object, it has no presence in the public consciousness. This fact, when combined with the absence of any commemoration of women political prisoners at Robben Island (which was an all-male institution), allows people to forget (or never to learn) that women were also part of 'the struggle'.

Coombes also explores the Voortrekker Monument, which she aptly describes as a huge, 1930s Bakelite radio. Were it not for the tragic outcome of the rise of Afrikaner nationalism, the monument would achieve self-parody; but given South Africa's history, it and the historical narrative enshrined within it, have to be taken seriously. Coombes does an excellent job of discussing the significance of the monument in the 1930s and 40s, as well as the more recent debates on what should be done with it, or how a new, post-apartheid narrative can be read into the friezes and iron grille-work. Less convincing is her interpretation of a 1995 pornographic photo essay in the magazine *Loslyf* as a 'subversive reading' of the Monument. This interpretation turns, in part, on the fact that the woman in the photos was Hendrik Potgieter's great-great granddaughter, who then was semi-dressed as an 'indigenous flower' in faux leopard skin shorts and open safari jacket as she posed beside the Monument. No doubt Hendrik Potgieter would have disapproved, but reading the photos as political subversion seems forced.

Coombes discusses a long list of controversies over the construction of public memory in post-apartheid South Africa. This list includes an exploration of museums, especially the debate over the life-casts in the 'Bushman Diorama', as well as the commemoration of the history of District Six, and attempts by recent South African artists to construct a new aesthetic that maintains some political content. This is an enjoyable book that underlines the importance of history as a narrative constructed for an audience, which the audience then uses in the construction of their own popular consciousness.

*Amherst College*

SEAN REDDING

## CONVERSIONS AND TRANSACTIONS

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*Marginal Gains: Monetary Transactions in Atlantic Africa.* By JANE I. GUYER.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004. Pp. xvii + 207. No price given (ISBN 0-226-31115-5); \$15; £10.50, paperback (ISBN 0-226-31116-3).

KEY WORDS: Western Africa, anthropology, economic, credit, money.

A work of anthropology, this extremely fascinating book benefits from and makes significant contributions to economics and history. Originating in the 1997 Lewis Henry Morgan Lecture series at the University of Rochester, the volume synthesizes many of the fruits of the author's career of African research. It draws

on the extensive historical, ethnographic and other literature on various themes surrounding money, banking, exchange and other financial institutions and transactions in Atlantic Africa. Graduate students will find it invaluable, including its 16 pages of references.

The Introduction addresses the ‘bewilderments’, the puzzles, of the economies of Atlantic Africa. The six puzzles examined could actually be suggested as the beginning of a long list of social and economic performance indicators that have baffled scholars. Obviously, there have been definite gains in what we know of African currency transformations, conversions, calculations and ultimately transactions. These knowledge gains are presented in Part II, with chapters on calculation and social hierarchies, as well as quality selection and prices.

Newer information and interpretations are presented in Part III. Chapter 6 on volatility is not only well written, but the part about petrol shortage and near-crisis situations at the pump is also funny. Chapter 7, ‘Institutions’, begins with a discussion of the ‘open economy’ and ends with how institutions severely affect and are affected by the degree of economic dependence, predictability and instability. Here, Guyer presents her research in Idere, a small town in Western Nigeria, comparing the findings of her research in 1968–9 and 1988.

Chapter 8, unlike the other chapters, is not based on Guyer’s own research, but rather is a reassessment of the Ghana Living Standard Survey of 1991–2, carried out by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) and published in 1995. Guyer’s indebtedness to the GSS, and to Shobha Shagle, who carried out the re-analysis of the data, are clearly acknowledged. Guyer’s main contribution here seems to be in repackaging the data and isolating more vividly the differences between single- and multi-person households. She also demonstrates that although there is a dichotomy between ‘economic evidence’ and ‘historical and anthropological evidence’ (p. 147), both can be employed successfully to complement and reinforce each other.

Perhaps the most intriguing essay is Chapter 9, which begins by partly denying and partly lamenting the absence of formalities in the economies of Atlantic Africa. Guyer states that ‘Formality is experienced by the population in its plural and concrete forms, “as papers”, rather than as an enduring generalizable principle’ (p. 158). But she goes on to say that ‘In Africa, what is being created is more plausibly a coral reef of separate formalities that coexist with – and shade into – conversionary modes of exchange’ (p. 159). Using the Abacha regime in Nigeria (the dual exchange rate and 419 fraudsters) as an example, she reveals how a government and the elite can exploit the cracks in the ‘coral reef of formalities’. While Guyer does not see these statements on formality as contradictory, she recognizes the complexities in modernist and postmodernist analyses of Atlantic African economies – the so-called dichotomies between formal and informal economic sectors.

In the same chapter, Guyer turns her attention to ‘time and the economic document’ (p. 159), foreshadowing Toyin Falola’s point about ‘time and season’ in Africa as calculable but indefinite.<sup>1</sup> Guyer makes clear that ‘time–money logic’ held no place in Atlantic African economies. Interest on credit in the Atlantic African economies was and is not a rate but an amount. So, over an indefinite period a loan might be fully paid or the debt forgiven.

*Marginal Gains* draws heavily from Guyer’s researches in Nigeria, more specifically in Yorubaland. Some of her concepts of transaction are rooted in Yoruba language and cultural usages. Here there are two related minor errors that

<sup>1</sup> Toyin Falola, *A Mouth Sweeter than Salt: An African Memoir* (Ann Arbor, 2004), 1–28.



must be corrected in future editions. In Chapter 6, Guyer establishes ‘three different judgmental terms for the match of value registers that result in a money price’ (p. 104): *ojúlówó*, *wón* and *àjèjù*. There are several problems with this. These three do not form a logical sequence. More importantly, *ojúlówó* refers to quality not price. The correct term is *ojúowó*, the cost price. Also, *wón* is an adjective; the correct term is *òwón*, a noun referring to a high price rather than scarcity. Finally, by itself *àjèjù* does not say much; in this case it needs to be qualified by *èrè*, profit. The logical sequence then becomes *ojúowó* (normal or cost price), *òwón* (expensive because the seller has added normal profit) and *èrè àjèjù* (priced out of reach because of seller’s unbridled profit making). *Ojúlówó* is not irrelevant; it belongs in Chapter 5, in place of the less definite *gidi gidi*, as a mark of high quality – the real McCoy.

The author states that the title, *Marginal Gains*, refers to the ‘indefensibly small increments, as in the “gains” that African popular economies have been able to make’ (pp. 25–6). In content, however, the book is more profuse on the scholarly ‘gains’ in anthropology and African Studies generally, and in the contribution of the latter to the former. On this, *Marginal Gains* is a good read.

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## SHORTER NOTICES

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*Le roi Kanyok au milieu de quatre coins*. By RIK CEYSSENS. Fribourg, Switzerland: Editions Universitaires, 2003. Pp. 559. No price given (ISBN 3-7278-1397-0).

KEY WORDS: Congo – Democratic Republic of, precolonial, kingdoms and states, political culture, ritual, spatial patterns.

Anthropologist Rik Ceysens has produced numerous publications concerning domestic architecture, masks and myths among peoples living in the Kasai region of Congo. His latest book seeks to explore the society that developed around the Kanyok king (*Mwin Kányòk*) during the later nineteenth century, as European explorers ventured into the region and facilitated the expansion of colonial control. Kanyok, according to Ceysens, was less a ‘classic’ ethnonym than the spatial expression of the complex and changing political relations between the king and his highly variegated tribute- and homage-paying subjects (pp. 23, 31, 45). Indeed, Ceysens shows how the king situated himself at the ‘seat of power’, at the interstices of *quatre coins* in the Kanyok world, symbolized on different levels by the mat, the royal court, the region of Kanyok and the earthly world (pp. 45, 116).

The first half of the book delineates the Kanyok universe, focusing on what Ceysens describes as the ‘interchangeability’ of ‘the individual citizen at the village level and the king, on one hand, and ... [of] the king and all of his tributary subjects, on the other’ (p. 46). He begins by investigating the spatial and bodily practices of the citizen (and the king as a citizen) within the personal spaces of the kitchen and the house and in marriage. The analysis then shifts to another political and spatial level, examining the royal town (*ngánd áá Kányòk*), mapping the spaces in which the king exercised his power. He explores the investiture of the king, and finally examines the *pays Kanyok* and the tributary relations that both produced and were contained within that changing space. Throughout this analysis, the author seeks to place Kanyok in a broader African context, comparing practices in

kingdoms as far ranging as ancient Egypt to Abomey. The second half of the book, 'The royal entourage', documents in extraordinary detail the authority, ritual practices and responsibilities of the king's royal court, which included titled members of the royal family, prominent commoners, royal wives, warriors and slaves.

In order to reconstruct these past spaces and ritual practices of the Kanyok king, his court and subjects, the author relies upon a rich reserve of explorers' accounts from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and on his field research conducted between 1969 and 1990. Although this late twentieth-century Kanyok kingdom in which Ceyskens conducted field research only dimly reflected its former dynamism, he sought to identify 'residues and traces' of the past that people lived with and used (pp. 39, 357). The end-matter of the book provides extensive endnotes, a comprehensive bibliography, a royal genealogy, multiple indexes and a fascinating collection of old and contemporary photographs of Kanyok society.

The great strengths of the book are its rich ethnographic detail and its remarkable examination of the spatial dimensions of Kanyok kingly power. Ceyskens provides a densely layered, nuanced and copiously documented analysis of the symbolic practices and spaces of the Kanyok kingship in the nineteenth century. The work is not, however, particularly accessible to non-specialists. The author does incorporate comparative historical and ethnographic material into his study as a means of both 'de-particulariz[ing]' Kanyok (p. 44), and underscoring the limits of comparative analysis (pp. 61–2). But too often the comparative examples appear without sufficient elaboration. Nevertheless, specialists will find much to savor here.

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*Documents on South Africa: The Lienemann Collection (1970–1992)*. Edited by KATRIN KUZMIERZ. Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien Namibia Resource Centre – Southern Africa Library, 2000. Pp. 240. CHF 30 (ISBN 3-905141-75-2).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, Namibia, archives.

Since its founding by Carl Schlettwein in 1971 the Basler Afrika Bibliographien (BAB), also known as the Namibia Resource Centre – Southern Africa Library, has evolved to become the world's premier archive and research library dealing with Namibia. Over the years this unique institution has slowly but surely amassed an expanding collection of printed material (including posters, newspapers and magazines) and a unique archive which, apart from magnificent photographic collections, includes the personal and research papers of many involved in South Africa and Namibia. As specific archival collections are catalogued and sorted, BAB regularly publishes specific guides for these collections.

The Lienemann Collection consists of the collected research material of professors Christine Lienemann-Perrin and Wolfgang Lienemann, theologians who conducted research for the Protestant Institute for Interdisciplinary Research (FEST) in Heidelberg, Germany, on the theological and ethical issues raised by the apartheid regime. The material covers the period 1970–90 and, though focused on South Africa, includes material from the region as well as Germany and to a lesser extent Switzerland. The collection provides extensive insight into the

activities and contacts of German-speaking ecumenical groups with South African theologians, churches, trade unions and anti-apartheid activists. The material has been arranged in 36 files and contains published and unpublished material in English and German. Seven topics have been defined by BAB: (1) problems raised by apartheid and the political situation in South Africa in general; (2) the relationship of the churches in South Africa to the apartheid state; (3) the South African Council of Churches; (4) the World Council of Churches' Programme to Combat Racism; (5) economic aspects of apartheid, and the economic relations of Europe and the US with apartheid South Africa; (6) FEST and the Study and Dialogue Group on Southern Africa of the Evangelical Church in Germany; texts on the post-apartheid South Africa of the 1990s.

The Lienemann collection will prove to be invaluable and essential to any historian seeking to deal with the last three decades of apartheid South Africa. For specialists working on diverse topics such as the Detainees' Parents' Support Committee, the homelands or South Africa's trade unions, this archival collection will prove to be a veritable treasure trove and good start. Thankfully BAB, through the hard work of Katrin Kusmierz, has produced a detailed guide to the collection, that can be easily accessed, and in itself provides insight into what were troubling times.

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*Denmark and the National Liberation in Southern Africa.* By CHRISTOPHER MUNTHE MORGENSTIERNE. Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 2003. Pp. 142. No price given (ISBN 91-7106-517-2).

KEY WORDS: Southern Africa, apartheid, international relations.

The ambitious and very successful project to detail the history and political dynamics of the Nordic countries' involvement in the struggle against colonialism and minority rule in southern Africa is now complete with the publication of the book on Denmark in this regard. The author details how Denmark, from the early 1960s to 1986, changed from reacting hesitantly to initiatives taken by the other Nordic countries to becoming the first Western country to impose sanctions on South Africa.

The perhaps all too brief 112 pages of analysis reads well despite the many details and references. I particularly enjoyed Chapters 2–4 (the eighty-page bulk of the book) where the author obviously invested most of his energy. The reader is presented with much detail on how the issues of whether and how Denmark should provide assistance to the liberation movements were addressed in civil society, parliament and government. With a focus on the two latter arenas, the author accounts for how policies and principles were adopted, stretched and subsequently changed in response to new political and diplomatic conditions.

I will note three shortcomings of the text. I would have liked to see a more intensive use of the interview material, as the reflections of some of those who had been directly involved in one way or another would have helped us better to understand the political complexities while adding some 'colour' to an otherwise somewhat detached text. Secondly, the author unfortunately assumes the reader is familiar with Danish politics. As much of the focus is on the parliamentary arena, both the institutions and cultures of Danish parliamentarianism and the different parties should have been presented in a more general and comparative fashion so as

to provide international readers with familiar references. Finally, as much as I was impressed by the descriptive narrative throughout the book – the ‘*how-question*’ – I was confused by the author stating his ambition also to explain *why* the Danish support developed as it did. As the analysis lacks any theoretical and methodological frameworks for offering such an explanation the author in some instances provides only informed speculation. To stop at description is no lesser accomplishment: Morgenstjerne’s rich account is definitely obligatory reading for future research on Danish foreign policy.

University of Uppsala

PER STRAND

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*Afrikanische Beziehungen, Netzwerke und Räume: African Networks, Exchange and Spatial Dynamics: Dynamiques spatiales, réseaux et échanges africains.* Edited by LAURENCE MARFAING and BRIGITTE REINWALD. Münster: Lit Verlag, 2001. Pp. 458. €40.90 (ISBN 3-8258-5705-0).

KEY WORDS: Historiography, politics, trade, spatial patterns.

This volume is a festschrift for Leonhard Harding on the occasion of his retirement from the chair of African History at the University of Hamburg. All such collections are difficult to review, but this one is particularly so, consisting as it does of 33 mostly brief contributions on a great variety of topics. The editors themselves conclude their (also brief) introduction with a ‘renunciation of any summary statement’ (p. 9). However, the real integrative force of the book (and its title) is less the content of the essays than their link to Harding’s career as a scholar, teacher and organizer of exchanges between Hamburg and various African universities. As the editors note, these efforts produced their own ‘network of wide spatial extent and finely-branched structure (*einem räumlich weit gespannten und fein verzweigten Netzwerk*).’

The substantive chapters cover a variety of themes, including those indicated in the title as well as other issues in African historiography and politics which concerned Harding, such as practices of everyday life, periodization and the post-colonial state. The individual essays are a mixture of ‘think pieces’ on broad themes and small monographs. The quality varies but it would be invidious to attempt any specific evaluations of their scholarship in such a short review.

It is, however, worth noting that this is a festschrift very much focused on the object of celebration and his personal efforts. The range of European and African contributors, their use of three languages and the frequent references to Harding’s support in their own work attests to the extent and intensity of this Hamburg-centered network. The position is placed in its own historical context by Jochen Meissner’s account of the checkered history of ‘extra-European history’ at Hamburg before Harding’s arrival in 1982. The volume concludes with two engaging accounts of German undergraduate experiences as exchange students in, respectively, Cameroon and Senegal. None of the four authors of those chapters have gone on to academic careers, but they are all still very much involved with Africa, itself a tribute to the wide range of Harding’s influence.

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