

## REVIEWS

### SURVEYING ANCIENT AFRICA

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702218290

*Africa and Africans in Antiquity*. Edited by EDWIN M. YAMAUCHI. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001. Pp. xv + 324. \$28.95, paperback (ISBN 0-87013-507-4).

KEY WORD: Archaeology.

The end of the last century and beginning of a new millennium have provided the excuse for many of us, of whatever profession, to inundate ourselves with summings up of the past and dire warnings and prophesies for the future. Whether or not this publication was intended to coincide with the beginning of the new millennium, it remains timely.

The volume presents nine papers revised from a conference at Miami University (Oxford, Ohio) in 1991, together with a tenth to round out its geographical scope. All the contributors except for one co-author are American. This is important, for only in the United States could a volume be produced with the stated aim of taking issue with both Eurocentric *and* Afrocentric interpretations of the subject. While undoubtedly an important issue in the US, it has a curiously hollow ring to this reviewer, who found little that could be seen as controversial. For a text attempting to bridge these two polar views of ancient Africa, it is a rather odd mixture. Many of the papers are general introductory regional outlines (Egypt and Nubia, Egypt and Kush, Meroë, Ballaña, Berbers and Carthage, Cyrenaica and Marmarica) by acknowledged experts on each (Frank Yurco, Edna Russmann, Stanley Burstein, William Adams, Reuben Bullard and Donald White, respectively), following the title and its historical theme and fitting together well. These are allied with topical essays (colour prejudice, linguistics, state formation, modern archaeological disinformation) that, with the exception of the first, do not fit so well.

Most authors assume the reader has only a general knowledge of his or her region, and so provide a basic background and overview. These, then, are excellent summary introductions to the geographical region and chronological period(s) they encompass, and could be required reading for students of their subject. They are basic enough to be understood by both layman and student, yet sufficiently interesting to profit scholars of more comprehensive background: few of the latter are well versed in all the civilizations, chronological periods and geographical regions covered here, and reading the papers beyond one's area of expertise will prove rewarding.

Some, however, require previous specialist knowledge in order to comprehend the arguments put forth. Non-linguists can get through the technical half of Carlton Hodge's 'Afroasiatic' paper with a little struggle, but Bullard's essay on the Berbers requires detailed knowledge of geological terminology in order to comprehend the importance he himself places on its geology for cultural development in the region. Frank Snowdon's paper is a slightly updated encapsulation of his excellent *Before Color Prejudice* (1983), but readers are advised to consult the book before (rather than?) reading the essay; the latter is far too concise. It would have been far better if Rodolfo Fattovich and Kathryn Bard, in the only paper not presented at the conference, had penned an overview of Ethiopian civilizations through Classical and indigenous evidence, in keeping with the volume's theme and the majority of its other essays, rather than a comparison of state formation in

Egypt and Ethiopia. The only apparent excuse for inclusion of Maynard Swanson's essay on Great Zimbabwe seems to be the early colonialist assumption of a non-indigenous and specifically Semitic origin. Nonetheless, this last paper serves as the volume's best, or at least its most overt, statement of how historical research, archaeology and interpretation have evolved over the past century (fittingly, the volume is dedicated to his memory); and as a warning against distortion of evidence for political or aggrandizing motives in the next. Euro- and Afrocentrists, both take heed.

Unfortunately, some essays were not fully brought up to date for publication. To give but two examples, Hodge cites the first (1982) volume only of the *Dictionary of Late Egyptian* and the remainder as 'in progress' (p. 25), when the fifth and last already had appeared in 1990, a year before the original conference. And Bard and Fattovich cite their 'Proto-Aksumite' levels as the earliest at Aksum (pp. 282–2), when concurrent BIEA excavations in 1995–6 had already unearthed clear and substantial 'Pre-Aksumite' occupation levels dating a half-millennium earlier; see *Azania* 31 (1996), 99–148; D. W. Phillipson, *Archaeology at Aksum, Ethiopia, 1993–7* (2000).

It must be said that little actually *new* is presented here. The essays are essentially summations of the current *status quo* in the various fields discussed. For this reason, if no other, the volume is a useful addition to one's library.

*McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge*      JACKIE PHILLIPS

## NEW FINDINGS IN LIVESTOCK HISTORY

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702228297

*The Origins and Development of African Livestock: Archaeology, Genetics, Linguistics and Ethnography*. Edited by ROGER M. BLENCH and KEVIN C. MACDONALD. London: University College London Press, 2000. Pp. xx + 546. £90 (ISBN 1-84142-018-2).

KEY WORDS: Animal husbandry, linguistics, archaeology, pre-colonial.

The history of livestock in Africa normally turns up at the beginning and end of survey courses on African history. In the beginning, precocious African hunters, fishers and foragers add agriculture to their food systems, especially in the Saharan zones where they domesticated stock before they domesticated plants. In the end, livestock suffer brutal losses during late nineteenth-century conquest and early twentieth-century experiments in colonial control. Specialists in African agricultural history and teachers of survey courses in the African past will need to consult the present volume to update their research questions and course syllabi.

Most of the 27 essays published here were first presented at a meeting held at the Institute of Archaeology in London in September 1995. The editors Roger Blench (a linguist and development consultant) and Kevin MacDonald (an archaeologist) selected the participants and shaped the papers with an eye to providing 'a new overview of the topic' (p. viii). The result is a surprisingly well-integrated introduction to the latest findings in four disciplinary fields of research. Archaeological essays tend to take a regional focus. Essays that combine ethnographic and linguistic evidence mostly focus on individual species, such as donkeys, pigs, chickens or bees. Essays based on molecular biological evidence focus solely on cattle. Three essays deal with goat breeds and a single essay deals with dogs.

The volume offers new information on the history of livestock in Africa and about the fit between findings from the different disciplines represented. Drawing on work presented in this volume, Juliet Clutton-Brock tells us that molecular biological evidence, bone evidence and archaeology all point to the likelihood 'that

African cattle may have had a separate and autochthonous evolution, both from the taurine cattle of Europe and from the zebu cattle of south Asia' (p. 33). The domestication of African cattle from the indigenous *Bos primigenius africanus* occurred somewhere in North Africa. Archaeological evidence suggests that the Eastern Sahara and Sudan, from as early as 9000 BP, was one large area of development. Linguistic evidence discussed by M. Bechhaus-Gerst (Chapter 24) points to a date well before 6000 BP (p. 457) for familiarity with cattle herding by proto Eastern Sudanic speakers living somewhere between Darfur and Kordofan. Domestic cattle turn up between the Zambezi basin and the Cape province around 1,600 years ago. Given what linguistic and other sources of evidence suggest about the importance of the Horn to the history of African agriculture, we still possess surprisingly little archaeological evidence bearing on that story. Most authors suggest that the domestication of cattle revolutionized life for hunters, gatherers and fishers (but see F. Marshall for a contrary position, pp. 212–14). In the greater Saharan zones and much of dryland eastern Africa, Kevin MacDonald writes, livestock domestication preceded cereal domestication 'by at least two to three thousand years' (p. 10). Christophe Mbida (Université de Yaoundé) working at Nkang, near the Sanaga River in Cameroon, unearthed the earliest evidence in Central Africa for goats and sheep. He excavated thirteen different refuse pits at Nkang and found small stock in three of them at levels dated between 830 BC and 260 BC (pp. 165–7).

The volume contains other gems. Fekri Hassan (Chapter 5) reviews evidence for climate change and the spread of cattle in Africa north of the equator and west of the Horn. His chapter will help teachers prepare a lecture on this topic. Kay Williamson provides a magisterial overview of linguistic evidence for chickens in Africa (Chapter 23) that opens up a vast number of related research projects. Wim Van Neer highlights the important work of Kanimba Misago and A. Gatere at the little-known site of Tongo, 50 km north of Lake Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo. They discovered domestic cattle, sheep and goats at all levels of this site, from the third century AD, and found that the ratio of domesticates to wild animals remained constant across the entire Iron Age sequence (pp. 172–5, 184–7). Chapters on the history of working animals in Africa, by Paul Starkey, and on bees and bee-keeping, by Andrew Kidd and Berthold Schimpf, are rich introductions to these little-known topics.

The work's vast regional, disciplinary and chronological sweep and its narrow topical range make it hard to read straight through. Its great value lies in combining scope with recent research. Yet, for all the emphasis on presenting the latest findings on the basic outline of the history of livestock in Africa, this is a story worth telling, presumably, because of the importance of livestock to African societies. We hear far too little about social, cultural and economic dimensions of the stories. And a valuable attempt at putting historical process into conversation with current 'livestock development' goals boils down to calls for conserving the genetic diversity of livestock on the continent.

These comments notwithstanding, this a valuable volume of essays with something to offer both specialists and generalists.

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## EXCAVATIONS AT AKSUM

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702238293

*Archaeology at Aksum, Ethiopia, 1993–7*. 2 vols. Edited by DAVID W. PHILLIPSON.

London: British Institute in Eastern Africa and the Society of Antiquaries of London, 2000. Pp. xii + 538. £95 (ISBN 1-872566-13-8).

KEY WORDS: Ethiopia, archaeology.

These two volumes are the final report of the excavations the British Institute in Eastern Africa conducted with the support of the Society of Antiquaries of London at Aksum, Tigray, in northern Ethiopia from 1993 to 1997, under the direction of David W. Phillipson. The volumes are edited by David W. Phillipson with the assistance of Jacke Phillips. They contain contributions by Ayele Tarekegn, Sheila Boardman, Chester C. Cain, Helen Cook, Ann Feuerbach, Niall Finneran, Jennifer P. Ford, Rowena Gale, Michael Harlow, Graham C. Morgan, Paul Pettitt, Jillian B. Phillips, Laurel Phillipson, Andrew Reynolds, Roger Schneider, Klara Spandl, Tekle Hagos, Jess Tipper, Martin Watts and David Williams. The project was the continuation of a major programme of excavations the British Institute in Eastern Africa started in the ancient town of Aksum, under the direction of the late Neville H. Chittick, in the early 1970s.

Aksum was the capital city of a powerful kingdom, which dominated the southern Red Sea in the first millennium AD and was an important commercial partner of the Roman and early Byzantine Empire. The chronology, history and cultural development of the kingdom are poorly known, as textual, epigraphic and numismatic evidence is scarce, and Aksumite archaeology is in its early stages. The archaeological area of Aksum is still largely unexplored despite excavations conducted throughout the twentieth century. All fieldwork was suspended in 1975 because of the outbreak of the civil war under the Derg regime, and for eighteen years Aksum was closed to archaeologists.

In 1993, two archaeological expeditions resumed fieldwork in this region: the BIEA expedition and the Joint Expedition of the Istituto Universitario Orientale, Naples, and Boston University under the direction of Kathryn Bard (BU) and Rodolfo Fattovich (IUO). The BIEA expedition mainly investigated the ancient town and surrounding plain. The IUO/BU expedition is still investigating the upper part of the hill of Bieta Giyorgis to the north-west of Aksum. The results of these expeditions complement each other and provide a better insight into the development of Aksum from late prehistory to medieval times. A solid chronology for the development of the Aksumite kingdom has been established on the basis of 32 radiocarbon dates from the BIEA excavations and 35 radiocarbon dates from the IUO/BU excavations.

A very important aspect of the BIEA project was to investigate not only elite monumental areas, such as the so-called Stele Park and Gudit Stelae Field, but also domestic areas, such as Kidane Mehret and Maleke Aksum, providing more evidence about non-elite people. The stele quarries around Aksum were also investigated and a possible road to transport the stelae from the main quarry at Gobedra, about 5 km to the west of the town, to the Stele Park has been identified, contributing information about the off-site archaeology of the region. Finally, late prehistoric sites, including rock shelters and lithic workshops, were recorded in a survey within a radius of about 10 km around the town. From such investigations the expedition was able to place Aksum in its culture-historical context, demonstrating that the region was frequented in the Pleistocene and was continuously occupied during the Holocene. The discovery of a Pre-Aksumite domestic site (c. 800–400 BC) at Kidane Mehret (the so-called D site) is particularly relevant. This site confirms that the urban development of Aksum began in the mid-first millennium BC, as some finds from Bieta Giyorgis also suggest.

The results of the expedition have also improved our knowledge of ancient Aksumite technology. In particular, the analysis of carved pieces of furniture and a female figurine made of ivory from the 'Tomb of the Brick Arches' suggest local manufacture of ivory artefacts and a high level of craftsmanship. The study of the lithic industry definitely demonstrates that stone tools were manufactured and used at Aksum until recent times.

On the whole, this report is a very important contribution to Aksumite archaeology, and represents a great step forward in reconstructing and understanding the cultural development of Aksum and the history of this ancient African kingdom.

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RODOLFO FATTOVICH

## COASTAL INTERACTIONS

DOI: 10.1017/S002185370224829X

*The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. By MARK HORTON and JOHN MIDDLETON. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000. Pp. 282. £40; \$54.95 (ISBN 0-631-18919-X).

KEY WORDS: Eastern Africa, archaeology, migration, trade.

The Swahili have been an enigmatic society that has developed at the confluence between the continental world of Africa and the maritime world of the Indian Ocean. Their historiography has therefore been rent between a 'colonial' perspective of the older scholars who tended to see them as an oriental transplant on the East African coast and an equally extreme Africanist/nationalist position that has deliberately set its back to the ocean and wants to identify them as purely African. What has been lacking is an analysis of the evolution of this obviously cosmopolitan society based on a constant interaction between the littoral populations and a constant stream of sailors, merchants and settlers from across the ocean over the past two millennia. The book under review is an attempt by an archaeologist and an anthropologist to make sense of this society from the differing perspectives and methodologies of their disciplines.

The first part of the book is an historical reconstruction based on considerable archaeological work done along the coast over the past couple of decades. The authors point to the arrival of Bantu agriculturists in the coastal hinterland during the second century, although some nationalist archaeologists wish to push back the date to the time of the *Periplus*. However, there is much evidence to confirm commercial intercourse between the East African coast and the lands across the Indian Ocean from a very early period. East African gum copal has been found in Mesopotamia dating to 2500 BC, although long-distance maritime trade with the East African coast is said to have become important during the first century of the Christian era. Fifth–sixth century Mediterranean pottery has been unearthed on Zanzibar, and Persian pottery of a similar date has been found at Zanzibar and Chibuene on the Mozambique coast.

Although they warn against 'the modern and politically fuelled project to create a totally indigenous African civilisation', the authors seem to fall into the same camp when they argue that the Arabs and Persians did not have 'anything much to do with Swahili origins'. It is disingenuous to look for 'colonies' when, apart from the more massive Omani migration during the nineteenth century, the pattern of economic and social interaction across the Indian Ocean has demonstrably been *longue durée* slow percolation of individual sailors and merchants who have been intermarrying with the local people since the time of the *Periplus*: a slow process, but one whose effect has nevertheless been profound. They similarly dismiss the Shirazi tradition despite the new evidence from Zanzibar that

seems to reinforce its historicity. Silver and copper coins discovered at Kilwa, Mafia, Zanzibar and Pemba now seem to confirm the Kilwa chronicle that a closely related dynasty may have lived on these islands from AD 1000. And yet Horton would prefer to conclude that the Shirazi were not immigrants from the Persian Gulf but only Swahili Muslims migrating from further north.

Mark Horton himself has also done some exciting work on the introduction of Islam and its indigenization along the coast, although some of his conclusions about Ibadis and Shi'ites must remain speculative for the time being. He argues that although pre-Islamic Swahili communities existed along the coast, their acceptance of Islam represented a defining moment of their cultural development. By the tenth century Islam was fairly widespread along the Swahili coast. What is surprising is that archaeologists have found so little evidence for the non-Muslim religious activities or syncretism that the authors say became important only after the ending of slavery. Nevertheless, they revert to their nationalist tune when they assert that 'African Islam forms part of the indigenous achievement of coastal civilisation', and that the Swahili civilization is fundamentally an African civilization, although nowhere is there a discussion of what constitutes such a civilization, whereas there is a very useful exposition on the fundamentals of the Swahili civilization. 'The lady doth protest too much', it seems to me.

On the other hand, contrary to what would have been expected from their perspective, the authors seem to focus inordinately on the mercantile role of the Swahili almost to the exclusion of a serious consideration of the way of life of a majority of the Swahili fishermen and peasants living in the so-called mud or commoners' towns, whose link to international trade must have been tenuous. The authors admit that only a small elite in this society has been mercantile, but they argue that their society has long been engaged in commerce and that their culture has been based on mercantile values. In this sense Middleton's earlier book (*The World of the Swahili*) achieves a better balance. The book is nevertheless a good summation on the state of knowledge about this coastal community that only whets our appetite for Horton's long-promised monograph on Zanzibar. However, one wonders whether the authors are correct in estimating the Swahili population at less than half a million when the population of Zanzibar alone now stands at about 800,000.

*Zanzibar Museums*

ABDUL SHERIFF

### DATED SYNTHESIS?

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702258296

*Histoire de la Mauritanie: des origines à l'indépendance*. By GENEVIÈVE DÉSIRÉ-VUILLEMIN. Paris: Editions Karthala, 1997. Pp. 652. FF 190, paperback (ISBN: 2-86537-788-1).

KEY WORDS: Northern Africa, Mauritania, general, historiography.

This book represents the summation of Geneviève Désiré-Vuillemin's fifty-year involvement with Mauritanian historiography. It is a grand synthesis that exceeds in geographical and chronological scope even the ambitious programme implied in its title. In fact, a third of the book has little to do with Mauritania – or at least the modern territories designated by that name. After a summary of archaeological evidence on the prehistoric south-western Sahara, Désiré-Vuillemin embarks on an extended digression on North Africa in Carthaginian and Roman times, followed by more than a hundred pages on the Muslim conquests and the diffusion of Islam into sub-Saharan Africa.

The material on Mauritania proper begins with a discussion of the Almoravid

movement and the migration of Arabic-speaking nomads southward from the Moroccan Sahara. It continues with an account of the Sharrubba conflict of the seventeenth century, the emergence of emirates in southern and central Mauritania and the consequences of French imperialism in the nineteenth and twentieth century. The book concludes with an extended section on the colonial period and a brief summary of developments since independence in 1960.

*Histoire de la Mauritanie* is a work of synthesis based upon published sources. Désiré-Vuillemin enlivens her text by incorporating well-chosen quotations from a range of primary source materials that are available in translation. Her section on Roman North African history shows an impressive familiarity with classical sources, while her treatment of the Arab conquests and the Almoravid movement quotes from French translations of medieval Arabic sources, both those of Cuq and other translations such as de Slane's. Her discussion of early European exploration of coastal Mauritania draws upon contemporary accounts such as those of Valentim Fernandes and Cada Mosto, while her treatment of events such as Sharubba draws upon colonial-era translations of key words of traditional Mauritanian scholarship, notably those of Muhammad al-Yadali and Muhammad al-Walid.

Several flaws mar *Histoire de la Mauritanie*. First, its interpretations of Mauritanian history and social order are traditional, if not outmoded. Désiré-Vuillemin sketches a picture of pre-colonial society that is little changed from that of colonial-era writers such as Paul Marty, whose influential but problematic treatises of the 1910s and 1920s are among her major sources. Two features of colonial-era historiography, both discredited, make an unwanted appearance. The first is the habit of attributing an ethnic origin to cleavages of class and status. An example is the conventional division of society into two elite classes, the merchant-cleric class (*zwaya* or *tolba*) and a class of professional warriors. Désiré-Vuillemin follows Marty in tracing the origins of this bifurcated social order to ethnic conflicts between the autochthonous Znaga Berber population and Arab migrants who entered the region later. The second feature might be termed *historical catastrophism*. It is a tendency to search for the 'origins' of the Mauritanian social order in specific episodes of violent upheaval in the past. The classic example is Sharrubba, the decade-long conflict that erupted in south-western Mauritania during the seventeenth century. Like the colonial-era scholars, Désiré-Vuillemin sees Sharubba as the genesis of the socio-political order that prevailed in western Mauritania during the late pre-colonial period, with its emirates and the subordination of *zwaya* clerical groups to Arabic-speaking warriors.

Another flaw is a near-total neglect of eastern and south-eastern Mauritania. Given the space the author devotes to Carthage or Roman North Africa, it is surprising to discover that the Hodh, Assaba, Gorgol or Guidimaka are seemingly beyond the scope of a 'history of Mauritania'. In fact, this neglect is another legacy of colonial-era scholarship. Writers such as Marty were deeply influenced by *zwaya* informants from the Gibla region of south-western Mauritania and tended to portray this region as the country's historical and cultural centre-of-gravity. Most contemporary scholars have recognized the need to contextualize more broadly.

Beyond the problems mentioned above, the book betrays certain stylistic tendencies that seem incongruous in a serious historical work. One is a tendency to weave stirring narratives and indulge in speculative reconstructions based upon the most fragmentary of evidence. Passages like the following abound, a reference to events in 1630s: 'Les rivaux armés éliminés ... les O. Ben Daman et O. Ahmad Ben Dâman passent à la second partie de leur projet: la sujétion des Zouaiya, soupçonnés, pas tout à fait à tort, d'avoir projeté une alliance avec les O. Rizg précédemment vaincus' (p. 269). Neither the sources Désiré-Vuillemin cites, nor

any other of which I am aware, support such an analysis of plans, motives and suspicions.

In sum, *Histoire de la Mauritanie* contains much useful information but does not reflect the state of current historiography.

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RAYMOND M. TAYLOR

## ISLAM AND THE MARINID STATE

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702268292

*The Berbers and the Islamic State: The Marinid Experience in Pre-Protectorate Morocco.* By MAYA SHATZMILLER. Princeton: Marcus Wiener Publications, 2000. Pp. xvii + 200. £58.95 (ISBN 1-55876-209-4); £22.95, paperback (ISBN 1-55876-224-8).

KEY WORDS: Morocco, Islam, kingdoms and states, pre-colonial.

This book gathers together nine articles written by Maya Shatzmiller between 1976 and 1991 and updated for this volume. It is organized in sections on Berber historiography, the construction of the Marinid state and Marinid institutions. Theoretically all the articles tackle the thorny issue of Berber identity *vis-à-vis* Islam and Arabic, an issue central to Maghribi historiography and also to contemporary debates about identity within Morocco and Algeria, where the definition of the post-colonial state as Arab Muslim has provoked a reaction from those who consider themselves Berber and resent their *de facto* cultural exclusion and oppression by the state. Quoting the Algerian Berber writer, Kateb Yacine, Shatzmiller suggests a paradigm of repeated episodes of Berber resistance and acculturation to conquering cultures, Roman-Christian and then Arab-Islamic. Her aim is to investigate these processes during the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries when the Zanata Berber Marinids ruled Morocco.

In the first section on Muslim Berber historiography Shatzmiller grapples with its ambiguity. What is specifically Berber about political or cultural artefacts if they are conveyed using Arabic and Islamic idioms? In support of a thesis of resistance, she presents an 'unofficial' Berber history which asserts that they were drawn to Islam before the Arab conquest in contrast to the 'official' Arab version of conquest followed by conversion. In Chapter 2 she discusses literary myths attributing an Arab genealogy to the Berbers and its widespread Maghribi rejection, and in Chapter 3 the development of literature praising the Berber race in response to Andalus Arab 'Berberophobia' (p. 35). This raises a query. Can one describe the Berbers as actively resisting when the catalyst for the generation of a counter-history is actually Arab hostility towards them? The Andalus source of this historiographical material also undermines the arguments for Maghribi resistance, a point Shatzmiller acknowledges by stating that 'For Berbers in North Africa the challenge was not Islamic or Arab normative legitimation, neither intellectual nor literary' (p. 38) but the construction of an Islamic state.

Section two on Marinid state formation is more convincing. Chapter 4 refutes the usual thesis that the Marinid state did not have a religious basis and shows how the Marinids used Islamic discourse to legitimize their political mission. Chapter 5 examines the difficulties they faced in fulfilling this mission by studying their relations with the Fasi scholars and their use of Jewish administrators. It suggests that although they wished to uphold Islamic norms they contravened them by employing Jews when it was expedient but then allowed persecution of the Jews in return for scholarly support. Chapter 6 looks at the disgracing of a Marinid official for embezzlement and the combination of Berber and Islamic legal mechanisms used to resolve the matter. Here one could argue that neither



pragmatic recruitment and dismissal nor recourse to customary methods of conflict resolution are specifically Berber, but rather are common occurrences in Islamic societies.

The final section looks at the Marinid approach to key Islamic institutions. Chapter 7 suggests that the Marinids introduced the *madrasa* primarily to create a new, possibly Zanata Berber, 'ulamâ' to counter-balance the frequently hostile Fasi 'ulamâ' who dominated the mosques. The next chapter analyses royal *waqf* and considers the Marinid preference for endowing *madrasas* and books rather than mosques. The final chapter looks at the extent to which landholding and taxation conformed to Islamic law. Presumably this section demonstrates Marinid acculturation to Islamic norms, but this is unclear.

It is debatable whether this volume achieves its stated aim. Several articles sit uncomfortably under its central rubric: an analysis of the relationship between the Berbers and the Arab Islamic state. That said, it usefully gathers together several thought-provoking articles which give insightful new perspectives on the Marinid state. As such, it is an invaluable addition to our knowledge of the rather understudied Marinid centuries.

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### CATALOGUING PRE-COLONIAL ART

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702278299

*African Art and Artefacts in European Collections, 1400–1800*. By EZIO BASSANI.

Edited by MALCOLM MCLEOD. London: British Museum Press, 2000. Pp. xxxix + 328 + diskette. No price given (ISBN 0-7141-235744).

KEY WORDS: Arts, pre-colonial.

This catalogue contains well over 800 entries, of which 681 deal with objects still kept in European or American collections and the remainder with objects of sub-Saharan African origin illustrated in Europe before 1800, as well as with undocumented ivories of African origin in Europe. Appendices about ivory horns from Calabar, two sculptures in wood by the master of Bamba, Kongo art and Afro-Portuguese ivories round off the volume. Bassani's book, the fruit of many decades of research, is a complete record of all objects still extant or illustrated in Europe and a nearly complete record of those mentioned in written sources as having been sent to Europe. It is a monumental achievement.

A catalogue such as this is a precondition for any well-grounded history of older art in sub-Saharan Africa. For along with a few illustrations drawn by Europeans in Africa, findings from archaeological sites (rather little apart from ceramics) and some antiquities brought to Europe only during the nineteenth century (think of Benin art), this constitutes the corpus on which such a history must draw. Hence the publication of this book constitutes a landmark, for by its very nature it is as of now an indispensable reference tool. It will be used and used again by generations of researchers, who probably will have no inkling of how much time, dedication and work was needed to compile it. They will just find its existence 'natural' and that may well be the highest of accolades for its author.

This catalogue should also attract the attention of social and economic historians because most entries concern objects used in daily life. True there are many entries concerning the well-known Western African ivories or Central African textiles and a few (five only) refer to figurative sculptures and one mask which are still found in collections today. But most of the entries concern ordinary objects such as items of dress or adornment, pipes, tableware, other household goods, musical instruments, weapons, charms and amulets and eighteenth-century carved

ostrich shells for export. Such items are precisely what historians need to obtain a better and more concrete image of daily life. Many, such as the baskets for instance, are too fragile to be found in archaeological deposits so that the virtuosity with which they were fashioned and the artistry lavished on them will be a revelation. Such objects illuminate the written record by their concrete presence which helps us to understand their use, value (for example, for inheritance), social significance as markers of wealth and class and sometimes symbolic meaning. Moreover, a detailed examination of many of them can yield a good deal of data about the intricacies of African technologies and economics of production. As has already happened in the case of the treatment of metals, one can expect that such studies will further rebut the all too prevalent prejudices about the so-called rudimentary level of African know-how.

Some of these surviving objects can carry a poignant message, as is the case with the two Angolan statues (brought back in 1692–7). Many documents about the Ambundu of Angola in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries refer to ubiquitous figurative ‘idols’, yet only these two survived in Europe and, as far as is known, none did in Angola. These two remind us of the magnitude of the loss of what had been a flourishing and widespread form of art. They also testify to the chilling efficiency of all those missionaries who tracked down such works of the Devil to burn them, singly or in triumphant bonfires, thus forever erasing the traces of Ambundu artistic expressions.

Bassani showed the way and his book demonstrates how great the need is for such a systematic catalogue. One hopes that his example will be followed and that his work will incite a scholar or a group of scholars to compose a further catalogue of the many objects brought back between 1800 and *c.* 1870, when the first massive collections began to be made for museums. Who will pick up the gauntlet?

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JAN VANSINA

### A CLASSIC REVISITED

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702288295

*L'évolution du royaume Rwanda des origines à 1900.* By JAN VANSINA. Brussels: Académie Royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer, 2000. Pp. 102. No price given, paperback (ISBN 90-75652-17-8).

KEY WORDS: Rwanda, pre-colonial, kingdoms and states, historiography.

This book was first published in 1962. It is now reissued, virtually unchanged, but with the addition of a valuable 1999 ‘Supplément’, with brief comments on the themes evoked in earlier chapters. The republication of this book represents a paradox: since it was written, the work of a generation of scholars has reassessed Rwandan history; furthermore, its republication has occurred almost simultaneously with another book by the same author on the same topic, *Le Rwanda ancien: le royaume nyiginya* (Karthala, 2000). And in the wake of the genocide, there has been a flood of recent work on Rwanda. So why republish *L'évolution du royaume Rwanda*, nearly forty years after its original issue?

There are several reasons. Often the new work ignores or misrepresents the intricate ‘prelude to the present’; in understanding recent events, there is ample need for critical history. Beyond that, while this is not some definitive ‘fixed’ history, *L'évolution* is nonetheless a classic of critical assessment on working with oral testimonies as historical sources, not for Rwanda alone but for the inter-lacustrine region as a whole; it is critique as much as history. Its earlier publication occurred as part of a series virtually inaccessible to a wider readership; its republication as a book on its own (and in such attractive form) rectifies that. In

addition, the simultaneous publication of the two books illustrates how far the field has moved: in other words, its reissue serves as a baseline for understanding the historiographical dimension of the more recent *Le Rwanda ancien*. Rather than being superseded by the newer book, *L'évolution du royaume Rwanda* situates the recent volume historiographically, since in some regards the older book presents a broader vision, both conceptually and regionally. The two works do different things.

However, each of these strengths carries a caveat. By its very accessibility and handsome presentation, this could be taken as a definitive intellectual statement on Rwanda's history; it is not. By its attention to oral sources, it could be interpreted as a guide to the current critique of oral testimony, when in fact it was only a first step in that process, encouraging later work and long since transcended by that work. By its succinct nature, it could be taken as 'the history of Rwanda', when in fact there are many points contested by today's understanding. So it needs to be used with caution, as an outline of the history and as an exercise in method – both representative of their day – rather than as a definitive monument.

The book is presented in five chapters, which consider, in turn, historiography, primary sources, chronology, the transformation of internal institutions and the expansion of the state. Each of these carries its interest today, as either neglected or misrepresented in some of the most visible recent commentaries. Vansina's review of the historiography is salutary, not least to remind readers of the quantity and often the quality of the early publications on Rwanda: here was a society which for many reasons attracted extensive inquiry, and evoked elaborate hypotheses and commentaries, both by Rwandans and outsiders; the works of such authors as Czeckanowski, Pagès, de Lacger, Delmas and Kagame are still noteworthy today. By 1960, this was clearly not *terra incognita*; the question was on what basis that knowledge was grounded.

Vansina uses this review of the sources to explore questions of historiography and the philosophy of history, both among European and Rwandan writers; he extends this in the second chapter (by far the longest), where he considers in detail numerous forms of Rwandan orality, and the relevance of each form to historical understanding. For its day, this chapter was revelatory, since the typology consists of Rwandan categories rather than categories derived from external analytic paradigms. The author's discussion reconsiders the philosophy of history and the cultural significance of historical precedent in defining political action. If historical knowledge is seen as essential to the exercise of power, it then becomes essential to maintain the pretence that the historical record is fixed, even while the very pressures of that 'philosophy of precedent' require that it be manipulated. Furthermore, if these sources were seen to 'fix' history – to provide an unchanging record through faithful transmission – then they could be used to equate dynastic longevity with dynastic legitimacy. But if fixed sources were said to be true sources, then only in those social domains where recitation could be controlled – i.e. the royal court – could a true history emerge. And so the history of Rwanda was presented as equivalent to the history of the royal dynasty.

The third chapter moves from a consideration of the sources to a critical reassessment of royal genealogy and the chronology of the kings, two topics of intense interest for many historians of Rwanda. Vansina questions the claims to an unbroken father-to-son succession, suggests several dynastic changes and proposes a substantially different dynastic chronology. But the importance of the chapter goes far beyond its content. As a sustained, comprehensive critique of royal claims and of court ideologies, the chronological critique in this chapter has proven of particular interest to historians working elsewhere, not only on chronological issues but on many other aspects dealing with the relationship of ideology and orality.

If Chapter 3 is a radical critique, Chapter 4, on the development of internal institutions of the state, is quite different. Here Vansina's dual training as both anthropologist and historian produced analytic tensions. Lacking the later work of others, which explored in some detail the local-level operations of the social institutions that characterized Rwandan society – among them, clientship, clanship, army corporations and court power – this chapter privileges the anthropological modelling of the day, building up speculative structures rather than tracing empirically the intersection of agency, ideology and institutions. Without local fieldwork of his own, the account here tends to solidify and simplify social processes that were much more complex and malleable, and the separation of cultural institutions from power relations is a weakness to this presentation.

The final chapter returns to conventional historical terrain: the expansion of the kingdom. Here Vansina reverts to his more critical role, the deconstruction of court imagery, with its contradictory claims of both the ancient character of the Rwandan state and its inexorable expansion. His analysis brings triumphalist ideology face to face with the historical record – and triumphalism dissolves. It is also noteworthy that this is one of the few chapters where Vansina considers the issue of ethnicity. He does so in different terms to that represented in academic understanding today. Nonetheless, that there appears – even in 1960 – so little discussion of pre-colonial ethnicity suggests the mistaken character of recent popular perceptions of ethnicity as an essentialist feature of Rwandan society rather than as the complicated and regionally differentiated identity that we have come to understand.

Divided into two sections, this chapter reveals divided loyalties. The first section fits easily within the anthropological paradigms of the day (in its reconstruction of state absorption). The second portion of the chapter works with the tools of historical method and moves beyond issues of social assimilation to political expansion; it is pathbreaking work for later analysts who thereafter could look on the construction of a state hegemony as a political process, not a historical inevitability – to account for losses to the conquered as well as gain to the victors, where militarist programs, not moralist predestination, served as the defining feature of the expansionist state.

So in method as well as substance there is plenty of food for thought in this book, both in its insightful innovations and in its *lacunae*. While in some ways the field has moved beyond this book, it is still a serviceable, succinct introduction to the history and issues associated with Rwandan historiography. It is salutary to pause from time to time and to take stock of how far our predecessors had moved in their day, how much our understanding today depends on their hard work before us and simultaneously how ephemeral is even the best intellectual work, today as much as then. In a paradoxical fashion, here is a work whose lessons are simultaneously enduring and eclipsed.

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DAVID NEWBURY

### GIVING AKYEM HISTORY ITS DUE

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702298291

*The Akyem Factor in Ghana's History, 1700–1875*. By KOFI AFFRIFAH. Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 2000. Pp. xiv + 242. £14.95; \$24.95 (ISBN 9964-3-0261-4).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, pre-colonial.

For a long time the history of Akyem was treated as a footnote to Asante history, but in this study Affrifah has given Akyem history its due. Founded in the

sixteenth century by migrant lineages from Adanse, by the end of the seventeenth century Kotoku and Abuakwa were established respectively, 'between the Pra and its third largest tributary river Anuru' and 'between the Pra and its second largest tributary river Birem'.

Wealth and firearms, accruing from the Atlantic trade in gold, tempted the Akyem states to seek to control the coastal trade for their benefit, an ambition which came to fruition after their defeat of Akwamu in 1730. Abuakwa did not only enlarge her territory by incorporating the abandoned Akwamu territory, but also reorganized the small polities of the Akwapem hills into a typical Akan state under the rule of a branch of the Abuakwa royal family. The Akyem 'empire' proved transient, collapsing in 1742–4 under pressure of persistent Asante invasions. For the next forty years the Akyem states lost their unity of purpose and action. In the second decade of the nineteenth century they renewed resistance to Asante claims of suzerainty over them. This culminated, in 1825, in the relocation of the Kotoku state from its ancestral home of Akam, north of the Pra, to Akim south of the Pra. With the help of the Danes and the British, a southern alliance of states, including the Akyem states, defeated Asante in 1826 and secured their liberation from the Asante yoke under the peace treaty of 1831.

Hostility between Akyem and Asante did not come to an end. From their new domicile in the protectorate, the Kotoku engaged in a vendetta with Asante. Hardly had British intervention defused the tension than Kotoku and Asante found themselves on opposite sides in a new crisis that engulfed the Lower Volta basin between 1867 and 1870. By December 1872, Kotoku and Asante were once more on the brink of war. Having rejected conditions set by Asante for calling off her planned invasion of the protectorate, Britain organized a counter-invasion of Asante in February 1874.

The defeat of Asante in the Sagrenti War led directly to the proclamation of the Gold Coast colony and protectorate to hedge the southern states against periodic Asante interference. It also sparked off an influx of refugees into Akyem, comprising on the one hand Akyem nationals then living in Asante against their will, and on the other Asante fugitives fleeing the fury of Asante retribution. The latter eventually became rehabilitated on Abuakwa soil (in the protectorate) as the modern state of New Dwaben.

Affrifah attempts to contribute to the academic debate on the pre-eighteenth-century ethnic identity or affiliation of the Kotoku people. He states unequivocally that Abuakwa and Kotoku were kindred 'tribes'. The evidence for this assertion is, however, tenuous. He states categorically that seventeenth-century Akyem was made up of both Akim and the Akan or Akam of the 1629 and 1729 European maps of the 'Gold Coast' (p. 7); and indeed calls Akam 'northern Akyem' instead of describing it as lying to the north of 'Akim'. This assertion contradicts his own admission that 'Akim' and 'Akam' of the seventeenth-century European maps were founded as separate polities by Asona and Agona clan lineages, respectively. The author states that in migrating to Akam in the course of the seventeenth century, later Kotoku emigrants were sure that 'they would be welcomed by their kinsmen who had gone to settle there in the sixteenth century' (pp. 11–13). What was the clan affiliation of the kinsmen referred to in this context? Affrifah again states that the Kotoku were 'in language, culture, manners, religious outlook ... every bit akin to the Asante' (p. 76), much more than others including the Abuakwa. Is Reindorf not right then in saying that the Kotoku adopted the prefix 'Akyem' only after 'they finally settled in Akyem country' (p. 11), that is after 1825?

Furthermore, the author thinks that the rift that occurred after the Kotoku–Abuakwa war of 1860 between the Kotokuhene, who 'was of the Agona clan', and his war captain Dompere, who 'belonged to the Asona *abusua*', was

caused by the latter's failure to kill the Abuakwa king when he had him in his power. The Kotokuhene felt that Dompere 'should have allowed Kotoku national and military interests to take precedence over (*abusua*) obligations' (p. 172). On what basis then does the author consider the royal houses of Kotoku (Agona) and Abuakwa (Asona) as sharing kinship (*abusua*) ties, and *ipso facto* constituting sections of one and the same kinship group? Clearly we must await further research into this issue.

It is regrettable that this meticulous study was unable to add anything significant to the historiography of the Bosome state, the third and smallest of the Akyem states. Typographical errors are remarkably few and insignificant, but the quality of the printing leaves much to be desired.

*The Akyem Factor in Ghana's History* is a scintillating and scholarly work: well researched, rich in documentation and highly readable. It brings a new and refreshing depth to the analysis of the role of the Akyem states in the pre-colonial history of Ghana. Several historical conclusions in earlier studies have also been given cogent reinterpretation.

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ROBERT ADDO-FENING

## ENSLAVEMENT AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702308296

*History and Memory in the Age of Enslavement: Becoming Merina in Highland Madagascar, 1770–1822*. By PIER M. LARSON. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann; Oxford: James Currey; Cape Town: David Philip, 2000. Pp. xxxii + 414. \$65.00 (ISBN 0-325-00217-7); \$24.95, paperback (ISBN 0-325-00216-9).

KEY WORDS: Madagascar, slave trade, slavery, ethnicity.

Madagascar has frequently languished on the periphery of African historical studies, especially in the Anglophone world. In this stimulating, richly textured and finely crafted work, Pier Larson discusses socio-economic, political, and cultural change in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century highland Madagascar within the context of comparable developments elsewhere in pre-colonial Africa. In so doing, he demonstrates convincingly that a fuller understanding of important aspects of the African experience is impossible unless the islands of the southwestern Indian Ocean are incorporated into the mainstream of African history, and that future work on slavery and the external slave trade's impact on African peoples, cultures and states that ignores the Merina case will do so at its peril.

Larson seeks to reconstruct and assess the external slave trade's cultural impact upon the Merina who occupy the highland areas of central Madagascar. More specifically, he argues that modern Merina ethnic identity and some of the distinguishing cultural traditions of this part of the Grande Ile were 'fashioned and refashioned through localized experiences of enslavement and mercantile capitalism and by a tension-filled political dialogue between common highland Malagasy and their rulers' (p. xv). Larson also considers how concepts and practices of sovereignty developed in pre-colonial African polities. He argues that discussions of the African diaspora must include the African continent as well as those areas external to it, that Indian Ocean maritime history may be closely linked to transformations in hinterland societies and that history and memory are separate but complementary ways of understanding the past and attributing meaning to it (pp. xv–xvii).

The first of the seven chapters considers the conceptual problems and issues at hand (such as the ideology and origins of ethnic identity), reviews earlier scholarship on cultural transformations elsewhere in Africa that have been linked to slavery and the external slave trade and discusses the sources upon which this study rests. The book's remaining chapters are organized into two parts. The three chapters in Part 1 draw mostly upon contemporary European sources to reconstruct the origins and organization of the slave trade from highland Madagascar to the Mascarene Islands between *c.* 1770 and the early 1820s; enslavement in Imerina; and how peoples in this region reshaped their culture and social, economic and political relationships in response to this export trade. In Part 2, Larson turns his attention to the construction of social memory among highland Malagasy and questions of how and why the external slave trade transformed local cultural identities and practices. Chapter 5 focuses on the social, political and cultural transformations that occurred under the Merina state's founder, Andrianampoinimerina (reigned *c.* 1785–1809), while Chapter 6 examines the reign of his son and successor, Radama I, during which Merina identity was refashioned into an ethnicity. The concluding chapter considers why highland Malagasy came to ignore slavery in their collective social memory.

Larson draws upon archival materials in England, France, Madagascar, Mauritius and Norway, as well 135 interviews conducted with local informants between 1989 and 1997. His command of the secondary literature on slavery and the slave trade's impact on African societies is equally impressive, and permits him to draw the kind of informed comparisons between the experiences of highland Malagasy and other African peoples such as the Imbangala and Nguni that are a hallmark of first-rate scholarship. Larson is similarly well versed in the literature on ethnicity, identity and nationalism, and his command of the relevant issues, questions and theories further underscore the quality and sophistication of the argument he advances.

This is an excellent book that merits a wide readership among not only Africanists, but also students of slavery elsewhere in the non-western world. Larson's detailed and well-documented account is an important contribution to the historiography of a part of the world usually overlooked by historians, and his reinterpretation of various aspects of Merina history and culture will give Malagasy specialists much to ponder. His sensitive and careful examination and analysis of complex sociocultural transformations in light of highland Madagascar's expanding economic and political connections with the Mascarenes and the western Indian Ocean attests to a refreshing willingness to put the blinders of geographical and disciplinary parochialism firmly aside. Finally, by challenging the accepted wisdom about the dynamics of identity, ethnicity and state formation, Larson raises important questions that future studies of pre-colonial Africa and slavery in the wider non-western world will have to take into consideration.

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RICHARD B. ALLEN

## CONSTRUCTIONS OF SHAKA

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702318292

*Savage Delight: White Myths of Shaka.* By DAN WYLIE. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2000. Pp. xi + 270. Rand 145; £15.95; \$34.95, paperback (ISBN 0-86980-955-5).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, historiography.

I have two divergent opinions on this book. One relates to the thrust of several of its individual chapters, which, in my view, make a major contribution to the

growing critical historiography of Shaka and the early Zulu kingdom. The other relates to the substance of the author's overall argument, which, in my view, is in danger of taking readers off in a wrong direction.

Dan Wylie has been publishing critical essays since the early 1990s on the ways in which white writers have treated the historical figure of Shaka, who, as is well known, ruled the Zulu kingdom from the late 1810s until his assassination by some of his brothers in 1828. Some of these essays, in modified or revised form, reappear in parts of the book under review. The most important focus on the roles played in producing and disseminating images of Shaka by those 'disreputable adventurers' of the 1820s and 1830s, Nathaniel Isaacs and Henry Fynn, and by the popularizer Ernst Ritter and his editor Edward Hyams in the 1950s.

Isaacs's *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa* (1836) was the first detailed eyewitness account of Shaka's reign to be published and was hugely influential in establishing the image of Shaka the Monster which has fed into western writings on Shaka ever since. By the same token, Fynn's writings as edited by James Stuart and Daniel Malcolm in *The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn* (1950) have been a major source of evidence for historians of Shaka's kingdom for half a century. Historians have criticized these texts before; Wylie's close-grained analysis of the circumstances in which the texts were written and published leaves in tatters any notion that they can be taken at face-value as sources on Shaka and his times.

Probably even more influential in shaping popular images of Shaka in the west has been Ritter's fictionalized history, *Shaka Zulu*, first published in 1955 and as far as I know still in print. Wylie's examination of the history of its writing and editing leads him to the conclusion that it is a product of 'shabby scholarship, incomplete reading, personal predilections, conscious fictionalising, and outright deceit' (p. 231). As a historical source on Shaka, it turns out to be worse than dangerous.

Wylie is similarly critical of numbers of other western writers on Shaka, notably Alfred Bryant, whose *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (1929) was for half a century the prime source on what is now the KwaZulu-Natal region in pre-colonial times. He places all the works which he considers in what he calls 'a distinct lineage, a relatively self-contained genealogy of white men and women's writing on Shaka' (p. 3). More or less all white writers on Shaka, he argues, have been concerned less to establish the historical realities about his reign than in effect to establish him as the key figure in a colonial mythology whose prime function, to put it simply, has been to help sustain the separate identities of a white masterclass and a black underclass in South Africa.

It may or may not be useful to portray white writers on Shaka in general as belonging to a single lineage; this is something that needs to be debated. But where Wylie goes wrong, in my view, is in seeing this lineage as being largely 'self-contained', in other words as largely uninfluenced by ideas about Shaka developed over the years by black people. He accepts that 'neither Zulu and colonial identities, nor their literary productions, were forged in absolute isolation from one another' (p. 4), but he seems to see contacts between black and white intellectuals as having involved little more than 'exchanges of information' (p. 244). In the process of erecting 'a panoply of white supremacist structures' (p. 5) and bolstering 'their peculiarly situated senses of identity' (p. 5), white writers on Shaka, in Wylie's view, have generally ignored 'Zulu self-conceptions' (p. 4).

These arguments stand in sharp contrast to those put forward by Carolyn Hamilton in another historical study of the imaging of Shaka by white intellectuals in *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention*, which was published in 1998. To pick out some of her themes, at the risk of simplifying again: Hamilton argues that in constructing the notion of Shaka as a despotic monster in the 1830s, Nathaniel Isaacs was not simply reflecting the



views of white colonials but also drawing on stories circulated by Shaka's black enemies in the Zulu kingdom. Later, in seeking to establish an effective system of native administration in colonial Natal, officials like Theophilus Shepstone drew on ideas about Shaka's way of ruling that were current among black people in the colony and in the Zulu kingdom. In the early 1900s, in publicly advocating the revival of the Shepstone system of government, another colonial official, James Stuart, supported his arguments with information derived from the often detailed statements made to him about Shaka's reign by numerous black informants.

In Hamilton's view, ideas about Shaka developed by black people and by white people fed into one another from the beginnings of contact between them. This view has received empirical support from further research, so far unpublished, recently done by Carolyn Hamilton and myself. In a jointly written paper, we reveal the degree to which, in their writings on Zulu history in the 1920s, Alfred Bryant and James Stuart drew on the ideas of black informants, and the degree to which, in the 1930s, black author Rolfe Dhlomo in turn drew on the works of Bryant and Stuart in writing his fictionalized history, *UShaka*. In another unpublished paper, I have argued that Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's effusions over the years about Shaka were influenced as much by white colonial views of the past as by 'Zulu traditions'.

Wylie is, of course, fully aware of the thrust of Hamilton's work but in taking the position early on in his book (p. 8) that their views are 'complementary' to, rather than at odds with, each other, he seems to me to have ducked the opportunity of launching what could have been a lively historiographical and epistemological debate. Perhaps he will do this in a future publication. I much hope so: as a literary scholar, he brings to bear on Shakan historiography insights, concepts and a vocabulary which are often new to the historians in the field. As we move in South Africa from colonial to post-colonial public constructions of Shaka (Shaka the Reconciler, Shaka the Democrat), Wylie's brand of critical commentary needs to be widely heard.

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JOHN WRIGHT

## MILITARY LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL STRUCTURES

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702328299

*Yoruba Warlords of the Nineteenth Century*. By TOYIN FALOLA and G. O. OGUNTOMISIN. Trenton NJ and Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press, 2001. Pp. xviii + 301. £17.99, paperback (ISBN 0-86543-784-X).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, kingdoms and states, military.

The nineteenth century was a period of endemic warfare among (and sometimes within) the various Yoruba states, as well as of military pressure from some of their non-Yoruba neighbours, notably Dahomey to the west; and it has long been accepted among historians that this prolonged and intensive warfare had significant effects on the political and social structures of many of the Yoruba states, promoting in the most general terms a militarization of ruling elites. This book is a sequel to the same authors' *The Military in Nineteenth Century Yoruba Politics*, published in Nigeria in 1984. It is distinguished from this earlier work partly by its sheer bulk (almost three times as long), but also by its conceptual framework and organization. It has two parts: the first, and larger, comprising nine chapters, offers biographical sketches of several Yoruba military leaders of the nineteenth century; the second, and shorter, is entitled 'Warlords and diplomacy', but of its

five chapters only three in fact focus on patterns of alliances among the warring Yoruba states, the final two dealing rather with the 'legacy' of the wars, in terms of population displacements and leadership 'styles'.

Both Falola and Oguntomisin have conducted important original research in nineteenth-century Yoruba history, but this book synthesizes the results of their own research with other publications, including works by local historians as well as fellow-academics. It does not advance a novel interpretation, but especially in the first section does provide some interesting illustrative material from less familiar cases, especially in eastern Yorubaland. The patterns of political change varied among the different Yoruba states, and involved a number of distinct (although related) processes which were not uniformly realized: most generally, the increasing professionalization of soldiering; very often also, the increased influence of military as opposed to civil title-holders; and in several cases, the emergence of leaders with private armies who operated outside the framework of existing political institutions, often as bandits or mercenaries, but sometimes in effect setting up new states of their own. In the new work, more than in the earlier study, these distinctions are left to emerge implicitly from the narrative, rather than being explicitly pursued and subjected to extended analysis; and they are arguably obscured rather than clarified by the blanket use of the term 'warlord', which seems strictly applicable only to those military leaders who operated outside rather than within the framework of existing states. The new book will probably be most useful if read in conjunction with the earlier work, providing greater density of empirical documentation of the more generalized argument of the latter.

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ROBIN LAW

## EARTH SHRINES AND DAGARA SETTLEMENT HISTORY

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702338295

*Les Dagara et leurs voisins : histoire de peuplement et relations interethniques au sud-ouest du Burkina Faso.* Edited by RICHARD KUBA, CAROLA LENTZ and KATJA WERTHMANN. Frankfurt am Main: Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, 2001. Pp. 188. No price given, paperback (ISBN 3-9806129-4-5).

KEY WORDS: Burkina Faso, decentralized societies, ethnicity, migration, oral narratives.

This book results from a continuing project on the cultural history of the Dagara peoples. The study was initiated in north-west Ghana in the late 1980s by Carola Lentz. After being integrated in a broader project on 'Kulturenwirkung und sprachgeschichte im Naturraum Westafrikanische Savanne' its focus shifted to settlement histories of the populations of south-west Burkina Faso. The present volume, consisting of fourteen chapters written by authors who have carried out research in different parts of the area, seeks to outline the historical processes characterizing Dagara migration, settlement and ethnic relations with neighbouring populations. The approach is to use oral narratives collected from different settlements to comment on the making of history within an acephalous society.

The editors' introduction states the problem as understanding the dynamics of the massive intrusion of the Dagara into this region over the last two hundred years with emphasis on how their social organization is linked to their migration, their strategies of appropriating space and the intensity of their inter-ethnic contacts with their current neighbours. It also includes a description of the approach adopted for data collection and analysis. Since oral narratives are the major source,

the personal and intellectual collaboration between Burkinabe and German researchers working individually or in pairs, and in various villages, was the basis for practical research work. While collecting the data, it was noticed that there were commonly differences between oral accounts within individual settlements and sometimes within the same kin groups. The authors therefore worked with the hypothesis that a critical comparative study of the variations in the narratives on chosen settlements would enable them to distinguish between true historical accounts and others which are based on personal interests of informants. To compose chronologically ordered accounts, the researchers focused on two institutions: the custody and guardianship of the earth shrine (*téngan sob*), and the possession of the right to shed sacrificial blood (*suo sob*).

Lentz's own chapter outlines the village settlement history of Ouessa through ethnographic description of the identity of her informants, recounting their stories and proceeding to a critical assessment of the history of ethnicity and social conflict. The chapters by Leutz and Dabiré on settlements in Oronkua are complementary: one recounting settlement procedures in terms of acquisition of the earth cult, the other describing the immigration of groups. There is a similar pattern in the chapters of T. Somé and Schmengler on the settlement areas of Dano and Fafo, respectively, and in those of C. Somé and Bürger on the settlement of Bonzan. On the other hand, the contributions of Rudolf, Oberhofer and Werthmann *et al.* discuss issues not directly in line with this settlement pattern. The social identity of the kin group, examined by Rudolf, is important for understanding the Dagara approach to ethnicity and the construction of social structures. Oberhofer's discussion of ethnic mutations and Werthmann *et al.*'s analysis of the injection of modern development ideas into settlement patterns provide important information on how 'modernity' is influencing history.

It is necessary to comment generally on the oral as a source of these histories and on the significance of particular institutions for settlement processes and ethnic relations. Because each contact tends to produce different version of events, the abundance of oral information creates the problem of understanding what constitutes a common history for a particular settlement, let alone for Dagara society as a whole. We should not suppose that 'people are deliberately falsifying "true" history' because there cannot be 'an authentic original version from which all other versions of history deviate', writes Lentz (p. 60). According to this approach, whatever oral tradition tells us can only be relevant for the history of the segment of the settlement group from which the information originated. This is precisely what Meyer Fortes meant when he said that the 'Tallensi have more in common among themselves ... than the component segments of Tale society have with other like units' (*The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi* [London, 1949], p. 2). Indeed, Jack Goody in the 1960s noticed that the Dagara did not permanently attach their identities to such group segments or settlement communities but rather linked their identities to differences in cultural practices. In other words, it is difficult to conceive how one can discuss the settlement history of the Dagara and their neighbours without referring to their cultural understanding of identity and the global composition of their social institutions.

Moreover, the focus on the earth cult as the only institutional source of history is done without a proper assessment of the social order. Neither oral information nor the works of earlier and recent scholars (it is unfortunate that many of the contributors tend to rely on J. Hébert, a missionary, and neglect the works of trained ethnologists and other social scientists) have shown that the earth cult is more important for settlement and ethnic relations than other institutions, such as the rain cult, the market shrine and the house. For a comprehensive study of Dagara settlement history and their ethnic relations with their neighbours, it is necessary to link the very rich ethnographic material provided here with a study of

those patri-focal institutions, such as the rain cult, that are identified at all times and in all places with the same house community as a social category.

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ALEXIS B. TENGAN

## FRENCH RULE AND MOROCCAN SOLDIERS

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702348291

*French Military Rule in Morocco: Colonialism and its Consequences.* By MOSHE GERSHOVICH. London: Frank Cass, 2000. Pp. 256. £39.50; \$54.50 (ISBN 0-7146-4949-X).

KEY WORDS: Morocco, colonial, military.

Almost half a century after Morocco's independence the French colonial experience in this country still attracts historians. More than other figures of French colonialism, Marshal Louis-Hubert Lyautey, being the symbol of the greatness of the French empire at its peak, continues to exert a hypnotizing charm on more than one scholar. After Alan Scham, Robin Bidwell, Daniel Rivet and William Hoisington, Moshe Gershovich will certainly be followed by others, even if in the case of Bidwell and Gershovich the studies follow the Lyautey heritage well beyond the end of Lyautey himself. What is the secret behind this attractiveness? Is it the heroic personality of a European conqueror who – practically – succeeded in taming one of the last refractory African empires? Or is it the success of a colonial experience that accommodated both the material superiority of the western conqueror and the genius of a conquered people which only a man like Lyautey appreciated *à sa juste valeur*? Or is it, as seems to be the case with Moshe Gershovich, the relevance of the whole colonial experience in the understanding of the relationship between the military and the other components of the Moroccan polity of today?

In fact, the title of this book should not mislead the reader. Despite the centrality of the word 'military' in the title, this study is much more than a conventional history of French military policy in Morocco. It is simply the history of French colonial policy in which the military is just the most important aspect. Far from limiting himself to a technical presentation of the French military institutions in Morocco during the colonial period, Moshe Gershovich chose to frame his subject within the wider perspective that takes into account not only the guiding lines of the colonizer's strategy, but also the historical background of the colonized people. These two elements are dealt with by way of introduction before the author tackles the core substance of his subject. Lyautey and his Moroccan policy is allotted more than a hundred pages, nearly half the book. This demonstrates the centrality of this figure and its importance in the understanding of the French experience in Morocco. As the author shows, the whole French policy after Lyautey's departure in 1925 was either a continuation of Lyautey's heritage or a reaction against it. The Lyautey legacy was so overwhelming and present that none of his successors could disregard it. Nowadays, even Moroccan historians are ready to admit that without understanding Lyautey and his legacy it would be impossible to comprehend the post-independence Moroccan polity. For instance, the hermetic separation still existing today between the military and the civilian spheres in Morocco is but a direct consequence of the colonial experience. Moshe Gershovich did not fail to underline this fact in his concluding chapter.

Stating this truism, however, is not the most original contribution of the author. Daniel Rivet has already shown in his authoritative work the perpetuation of Lyautey's legacy well beyond 1925. What Moshe Gershovich has done for the first time is to have closely followed the French military policy in Morocco, beginning

with the mechanisms of the conquest to the utilization of Moroccan troops in Europe to defend metropolitan France against the German threat. The different types of 'native' fighting units created to serve the French flag, either in Morocco itself or elsewhere, have been reviewed and their role analyzed at each stage of the colonial experience: the *goums*, the Regiments des Spahis Marocains, Regiments des Tirailleurs Marocains, Troupes Auxiliaires Marocaines etc. In fact, the French military command in Morocco never lacked the imagination to invent all kinds of military institutions or dismantle them at will depending on immediate French interests. The only rationale which guided Lyautey's policy was his eagerness to 'economize French blood' (p. 74) and fight the natives relying on the natives themselves – a plainly racist policy which neither Gershovich nor the previous historians of French colonial policy called by its name. This policy consisted in the local drafting of 'partisans', *goums* and other types of recruits and pushing them to the forefront of the battlefield where the chances of their survival were practically non-existent (p. 87). On the European fronts, during the two world wars, the same policy by which the North African 'indigène' was no more than cannon-fodder was implemented. During the First World War, for instance, the Moroccan brigade was ordered on the very first day of battle to move to the front, where it lost 80 per cent of its men (p. 173). The same policy resulted during the 1939–45 war in the destruction of entire Moroccan units. In this war the *goum* units which suffered 8,000 casualties lost four prisoners only to the Germans (p. 193)! Was it an 'act of bravery' as claimed by the French military or simply a deliberate policy of genocide *vis-à-vis* the North African natives to spare French blood?

The author provides sufficient data and facts, even if it is all drawn from the colonial archives, to allow for an answer. One should probably see in the present study an implicit invitation to the young generation of Moroccan historians, probably many of whom are sons or grandsons of former *goums*, to investigate an important aspect of their history and look at things from their own perspective.

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MOHAMED EL MANSOUR

### ASANTE LIVES

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702358298

*Asante Identities: History and Modernity in an African Village, 1850–1950*. By T. C. McCASKIE. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press for the International African Institute; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000. Pp. ix + 277. £14.95, paperback (ISBN 0-7486-1510-5).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, microhistory, sources.

Shortly after the Second World War, in 1945–6, an interdisciplinary team of three British researchers undertook a broad investigation of social change in Asante. Led by the eminent anthropologist Meyer Fortes, and with the enthusiastic support of the Colonial Office, the Colonial Research Council and the governments of the Gold Coast and Asante, the Ashanti Social Survey (ASS) generated an astounding mass of quantitative and qualitative data over an eighteen-month period. It relied heavily on Asante field staff (as many as 65 men and women) who worked in over a dozen villages and towns in the region, including their own hometowns. Because field staff often worked alone, independent of the British researchers, they directly shaped the course, as well as the results, of the survey. The end product was a unique, if unwieldy and diverse, mass of primary material generated via collaboration, in fact, if not in name. In 1946, however, when research was complete, all of the materials produced by the researchers and field staff – diaries, case histories, life histories, surveys, maps, copies of court

records – were packed off to the School of Geography at Oxford University. Over the next decade, the Survey's preliminary results were published, based largely on the quantitative data amassed, and Fortes's subsequent writings on marriage, kinship and descent were broadly informed by the survey's findings. But for the most part, the rich and voluminous qualitative data languished in unopened boxes, some with Fortes in Cambridge, the others with Steel in Oxford.

Enter fate and an enterprising scholar of Asante history. In the early 1980s Fortes began to pass on to T. C. McCaskie some of the ASS files he considered superfluous to his own work, but of possible interest to an historian. A few years later, McCaskie's chance meeting with Robert Steel, the ASS geographer, led to the revelation that much of the qualitative material from the Survey was stacked against a wall in Steel's garage. Over the next few years, Steel sent his share of the ASS papers to McCaskie. Reassembled in Birmingham, the ASS data was now in the hands of an historian of Asante who was far less concerned with what was quantifiable than with what was lived, how it was remembered, and how it was told.

McCaskie's *Asante Identities* is firmly rooted in the ASS material, particularly in the rich evidence from Adeεbeba – a small village to the south of Kumase which began life in the mid-nineteenth century as a hunting camp and today constitutes one of Kumase's southern suburbs. While some of that material is quantitative, the bulk of it includes the life histories and personal testimonies of individuals, some of whose memories stretch back to the 1860s. All of these oral accounts were generated and recorded by Asante field staff. In the hands of a less skilled historian, such dense, detailed and complex evidence might be pasteurized for easy digestion into a blended and bland discussion of life in an Asante village. In McCaskie's hands, this extraordinary evidence takes centre stage in a thick description of daily life, a *microhistoria* of a dynamic community and its inhabitants over the course of a century. It is the story of modernity filtered not through the paradigms of modernization theory, but through the lived experiences of ordinary men and women, old and young, rulers and ruled.

In a discipline for which beginnings and ends are too often tethered to the advent of colonial rule, *Asante Identities* defiantly crosses the great divide. The book opens with the founding of the village in the mid-nineteenth century and focuses on the processes by which it was peopled by subjects and slaves. Of central concern is how the early settlers laboured to make a viable community. While McCaskie foregrounds the local, never do we lose sight of the fact that Adeεbeba is part of larger worlds that impinge on the quotidian with varying degrees of urgency. The 1873–4 war with the British, the Asante civil war of the mid-1880s, the arrest of the Asantehene in 1896 and Asante's annexation in 1901 are all filtered, in refreshing ways, through the experiences and memories of Adeεbeba's inhabitants. The *yaa asantewaako* (Yaa Asantewaa Rising) thus becomes not just a rebellion against the British, but a struggle between and within Adeεbeba families. And we meet unforgettable characters like Amma Kyirimaa, an *ɔkɔmfɔ* (priest) to one of the local *abosom* (gods). Kyirimaa may never have made her way into the official colonial records, but she was clearly the very centre around which this community developed for a good seventy years. Indeed, of central concern to McCaskie is what community has meant to Asantes over time and how it been narrated via a 'shared ground of intelligibility' (p. 99). Toward that end, he investigates in Chapter 3 the language of witchcraft confessions as 'embodied understanding' within the community, and then moves to a critical discussion of Asante modernity as a processual event.

Chapter 4 is devoted entirely to the twentieth century and makes the most of the ASS material. Its primary focus is on mobility and money – the twin themes that run through ASS testimonies on the twentieth century. Again, through Adeεbeba

lives, through work and play, birth and death, marriage and divorce, we see the development of the economy, the growing importance of Kumase as a commercial capital and the changing relationship of Adeεbeba with the capital. We learn about women's and men's daily survival strategies and how money and mobility resonated within the more intimate worlds of sexuality and marriage.

*Asante Identitis* benefits from an extraordinary, empirically dense evidentiary base. Not all of us are so lucky. What are the hermeneutical implications for African social history of an uneven evidentiary terrain? McCaskie ends his work by posing some very poignant questions along these lines about the craft of history in the absence of substantial documentary evidence, particularly given what he considers to be an alarming tide of presentist 'moral historiography' that is more concerned with the present and future than with the past. There are no easy answers, as McCaskie readily admits, but the questions themselves will surely spark some heated debate. In the meantime, McCaskie is to be applauded on two scores. Not only has he provided a richly textured 'grounded history' (p. 238) of daily lives in Asante over the course of a century, he has rescued and reassembled a veritable treasure-trove of documentary evidence from the dustbin of history and seen to its safe deposit in the University of Birmingham Library.<sup>1</sup> On both scores he has made invaluable contributions to our field.

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JEAN ALLMAN

### ASANTE WOMEN'S STRUGGLES

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702368294

'*I Will Not Eat Stone*': *A Women's History of Colonial Asante*. By JEAN ALLMAN and VICTORIA TASHJIAN. Oxford: James Currey; Portsmouth NH: Heinemann, 2000. Pp. xvi + 255. £40 (ISBN 0-85255-691-8); £15.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-641-1).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, women, colonial.

This book is a valuable contribution to the history of women in Africa with particular reference to the Asante of Ghana. It has unearthed in great detail the experiences of Asante women in the areas of marriage, mothering and child rearing during the colonial period, set against the background of the economy with its emphasis on cash cropping and monetization, and the social setting with its provision of infrastructure, education and missions. The authors have built upon the historiography of Asante with reference to women from the works of Rattray in the 1910s and 1920s and that of Meyer Fortes in the 1940s, to the work of several authors spanning the 1970s to the 1990s such as Oppong, Aidoo, Roberts, Arhin, Clark, Austin and Manu. There is evidence of extensive research both in Ghana and abroad using archival sources, oral tradition and multi-disciplinary secondary material.

Following the introduction, the body of the book is structured into five sections. Chapter 1 shows how the personal experiences of Asante women born between 1896 and 1901 are so different from the official chronologies of the period. These women saw their lives not as divided between pre-colonial and colonial, but as continuities. Family, social life and economic production was described from their own experiences and that of their mothers and grandmothers. The importance and effects of cash crop production, especially cocoa, is brought up very vividly, as well as women's contribution to its production and marketing.

<sup>1</sup> Edior's note: as of the time of going to press, we understand from Professor McCaskie that the deposit in the University of Birmingham Library is certainly intended but has not yet happened.

Chapter 2 provides an interesting and extensive account of why Asante women married and how the concept and ideas of marriage shifted as a result of the colonial economy. The authors state that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries partners provided mutual assistance in cultivating their farms. With the rapid spread of cocoa cultivation in the early twentieth century, production for the market centred on conjugal labour. Women provided far more labour for their husbands than their mothers or grandmothers.

Chapter 3 deals with child rearing and the changing rights and obligations of mothers and fathers against the background of the expanding cash economy which recast the terrain for parenting. The authors provide thought-provoking accounts of these changes, citing scholarly and personal narrations and court cases. There is evidence of deep cultural transformation as fathers asserted greater rights over their children, and the children (together with their mothers) staked a claim to their fathers' wealth.

Chapter 4 is an intriguing section on Asante women's responses to the growth of the cash economy and the spread of cocoa. So far Asante women had provided unpaid conjugal labour, now some of them sought new opportunities for autonomy and security. The primary conjugal strategies some Asante women used during the inter-war years were divorce, seduction and opting to remain single. The account of some women engaging in prostitution and forming associations like the Baasi Community and the Corner-Side Women is nerve-wracking and yet informative.

Chapter 5 discloses how chiefs and Christian missions in collaboration with the colonial government tried to deal with the issues of marriage, morality and mothering. This is an insightful chapter showing how through policy making by chiefs with the aid of the colonial government women in Asante were forced to marry. The authors contend that indirect rule facilitated the formal colonization of the first colonized generation of Asante women. The discussion on *ayerefa* (adultery) makes interesting reading, and portrays a culture in the process of chaos and transformation. It is my view that specialists on Asante culture will have to provide us with more background information about traditional views with respect to the changes that occurred during this period of Asante history. Personally, as a Ghanaian woman and an Asante, I found that the explanations and the interpretations of *ayerefa* were not too clear.

The conclusion of this chapter forms the title of the book. The authors opine that indirect rule and government/mission welfare initiatives aimed at addressing the gender chaos of the inter-war years resulted in different reactions from the Asante women. Some women exhibited power and autonomy in their decision-making with respect to issues dealing with marriage, mothering and child rearing. The chiefs admitted that in spite of their direct attempts to control women through the Native Court system the women were 'uncontrollable'. Many women were able to circumvent the chiefs' efforts to regulate their productive and reproductive power. 'Asante women, in short refused to eat stone'. This conclusion ties in with the explanation of the title given in the introduction that 'it is intended to capture the resilience and tenacity of this first colonized generation of Asante women, a generation that bore many of the heaviest burdens of colonial rule'. The only criticism I have, which is minor, is about inconsistent spelling of the Asante day names.

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AKOSUA PERBI



## GENDER POLITICS IN COLONIAL LESOTHO

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702378290

*'This Matter of Women is Getting Very Bad': Gender, Development and Politics in Colonial Lesotho.* By MARC EPPRECHT. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2000. Pp. ix + 281. £18.95; \$34.95, paperback (ISBN 0-86980-953-9).

KEY WORDS: Lesotho, gender, colonial.

Marc Epprecht's history of gender relations in Lesotho from c. 1830 to 1965 is based on a feminist commitment to scholarship and gender activism. The book aims to break down the public/private dichotomy prevalent in much historical research in order to arrive at an understanding of gendered social agency. In particular, it focuses on the choices that Basotho women made and acted upon during colonial rule. The author's intention, as he promises his interviewees, is to contribute to 'a more just society, especially one free from discrimination and violence against women and children'. In combining scholarly and transformatory objectives, Epprecht takes on board the aims of several major academic conferences on gender in southern Africa in the last decade. The result is a lively account of gender politics generated by the colonial state, Catholic and Protestant missions and chiefly rule in Lesotho prior to independence in 1966. Epprecht examines the forces that shaped the kind of choices that were available to women, their attempts to live within and push beyond these boundaries. He charts the consequences for gender relations of these actions and brings us the voices and viewpoints of 'Basotho nuns, female politicians, chiefs, prostitutes, runaways and homemakers'. In so doing, Epprecht deconstructs the masculinist models of state, church and politics and gives us a sense of the multi-layered gendering of women's and men's lives. His work takes us further along the road to understanding the complex connections between assertiveness and reticence in Basotho women's actions in the first half of the twentieth century.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part provides a backdrop to the colonial period. It sets out, somewhat schematically, key elements of Sesotho culture and examines the significance of Sesotho for indigenous gender relations prior to and under colonial rule. It also considers the challenges posed by Sesotho culture for the Christian missionaries who arrived in Lesotho in the 1830s. Part 2 maps out the terrain of gendered politics and women's responses to patriarchal controls under the colonial state. It shows how the state attempted to control and improve the condition of Basotho women in order to anchor them in the country. The third part focuses on the developmental initiatives of Catholic, and to a lesser extent, Protestant missions. These chapters provide an account of the Catholic mission's 'social action' interventions, the mission's consequent clashes with the state and commercial traders and the impact of its work on women's lives and livelihoods. Epprecht's critique of the modernizing effects of the mission's social, economic and educational projects recasts missionary interventions as development initiatives. It takes 'development' outside the discursive frame of contemporary development literature to examine its historical antecedents.

The strength of the book lies in the enthusiasm with which the author unravels the intertwined strands of gender and politics. Epprecht tracks between household, church and state with compelling energy. The selection of photographs adds a new dimension to the text and reinforces the narrative. Sadly, the book does not read well: structural complexities and editing weaknesses interfere with the smooth flow. While the thematic arrangement assists the mapping of 'sites' in which gender relations are produced and reproduced, it makes for awkward chronology and poor contextual framing, and leads to repetition. The final conclusion does not seem to tie up the arguments of the book and the footnotes are disappointing.

There are few references to studies on indirect rule, betterment and land reclamation, women and missionaries or gender power relations beyond Lesotho. An absence of footnotes in some instances creates the impression that the author is making assertions without evidence. Finally, the book would be far more readable if the long quotes, ungainly sentences and inaccurate grammar had received more careful editorial attention.

Despite these difficulties, this book is a welcome addition to gendered history writing in southern Africa. It will be a useful source for undergraduate students in a range of areas – history, anthropology, gender and women’s studies, politics and development studies. It will also be of value to gender activists within and outside government in the southern African region.

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ANNE MAGER

### COMPETING COLONIAL DISCOURSES

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702388297

*Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain.* By ALAN LESTER. London and New York: Routledge, 2001. Pp. xii + 257. £55; \$90 (ISBN 0-415-19850-X); £16.99; \$27.95, paperback (ISBN 0-415-25914-2).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, imperialism.

At one level a further contribution to the much-visited field of eastern Cape frontier history, Alan Lester’s book is also an original, well-considered and richly observed essay on the culture of colonialism in the early and mid-nineteenth century, informed by wide reading and a sophisticated grasp of central issues in contemporary scholarship. Lester is particularly concerned with examining multiple and competing discourses of colonialism. He adopts the concept of imperial networks, through which discourses were forged across colonial and metropolitan spaces as a unified field in which metropolitan lower classes and colonial indigenes alike were constructed, imagined and represented by different interests at home and abroad. Lester follows much recent thinking in this field that treats metropolis and periphery as a seamless whole, in which ideas, perceptions, images and identities are forged by constant reference to the whole. In particular, Lester identifies three fields of colonial discourse, governmentality, humanitarianism and settler capitalism, which he investigates through analyses of key texts. He provides a now familiar view of the humanitarian factor as a powerful transformative force, relating it to the growth of a new bourgeois subjectivity, and details the humanitarians’ struggles to impose their universalist evangelical prescriptions on the frontier in opposition to the acquisitive British settlers.

Lester is particularly interesting on the settlers, providing a nuanced analysis of their developing worldview and sense of identity, drawing on new research on the role of settler women and the importance of the domestic realm, for instance. The most valuable part of the book is the discussion of the ways in which the humanitarian discursive ascendancy of the 1830s gave way by the 1850s to a more authoritarian, state-centred, class- and race-conscious appropriation of liberalism for utilitarian ends, driven by a more developed economic engagement with colonized peoples as well as by the growing resistance of colonized peoples to colonial pressures. Ranging widely across metropolitan and colonial spaces and drawing on a wide literature, Lester draws a variety of strands together in delineating the transition to the harsher and more hierarchical imperial realm of the later nineteenth century, in which settler perspectives of racial difference prevailed. He stresses the ways in which humanitarian discourse was adapted and subverted in the process. In particular, he draws out the intersections between

emergent metropolitan discourses of class, ethnic and gender difference, and colonial perspectives on indigenous irreclaimability and idleness.

However, this particular frontier has been well mined, and large parts of this book tread well-worn paths. Like earlier studies, the scope of the book means that Lester is reliant in the main on the research of others. Further, one might ask how novel the approach taken really is. The 'materialists' whom Lester regards as his antagonists might have had a different conceptual apparatus, but they were certainly not unaware of the power and autonomy of culture and ideas, and the interconnectedness of imperial networks of meaning and influence. Indeed, in his determination to differentiate his work from his predecessors, Lester does occasionally caricature their views (such as on pp. 85 and 107), although there is a greater appreciation of the continuities in his introduction than in the text itself. One problem concerns the issue of state authority and the uses to which it is put. Lester asserts the autonomy of 'governmentality' and its discursive practices, and in the process underplays the instrumentality of state power for specific purposes in specific places and times, even while it is being constrained and stymied.

Emphasis on discourse analysis can lead to an uneven theorizing about how the colonial state actually operated in concrete contexts. On distant frontiers, settlers often were the local representatives of the state, and they exercised a direct influence that was not possible in more bureaucratic states. Lester insists that colonial governors were not the tools of settler interests, but obeyed their own official prescriptions based on vague discourses of order and territoriality. This might be true, but it is also true that governors and military commanders, freed from constraining influences by distance from the centres of power, could be sucked into the vortex of settler politics, and in effect turn rogue from the perspective of metropolitan officials, more concerned with the dictates of economy. There was no necessary internal consistency or unity of perception and action among representatives of state power. Indeed, Lester's conception of governmentality as a single site of discursive practice is itself problematical, and is discredited by his own narrative. It can lead to distorted views of the ways in which the imperial state actually operated, in all its inchoate and fractured complexity. Similarly Lester provides a convincing analysis of the role of insecurity and fear in the face of a racial enemy in forging a distinctive British settler identity on the frontier; but again, his distaste for 'materialist' explanations results in an underemphasis on settler economic activities, centred not only on production and trade, but on land as an abundant speculative resource and military expenditure as generator of massive windfall profits. Leading settlers were preoccupied with these things; and this factor in the politics of the frontier comes into greater focus when one looks at other settler frontiers at comparable stages of development.

I do not wish to nitpick, and Lester would probably dispute some of my readings of his book. This study provides a powerful, insightful, imaginative and informed perspective on the world to which nineteenth-century Britons sought to give meaning and shape on the frontiers of empire. Its scope is of greater compass than the eastern Cape zone on which it concentrates, and indeed it advances and enriches our perspectives on the making of the British imperial world at large.

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TIMOTHY KEEGAN

## MEN'S WAR HISTORY

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702398293

*The Boer War : Direction, Experience and Image.* Edited by JOHN GOOCH. London: Frank Cass, 2000. Pp. xxi + 310. £35; \$49.50 (ISBN 0-7146-5101-X).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, gender, military.

Since 1945, runs one statistic, 90 per cent of war's casualties have been civilians. Many earlier wars of colonial conquest, too, were waged primarily against women and children. This was, notoriously, true of the 1899–1902 Boer War. In this, Britain's bloodiest war between 1815 and 1914, the number of white and black civilians who died in concentration camps was about four times the number of men killed in action on both sides. We still know far too little about what the outraged Emily Hobhouse, writing a feminist account a century ago, termed *The Brunt of the War and Where it Fell*. The rash of centennial anniversaries and publications has, tragically, done little to shift the focus towards civilians, let alone investigate how men's wars and women's wars meshed.

This collection of fourteen articles (and a brief introduction), originally presented at a centennial conference at the University of Leeds, cannot be accused of falling outside the malestream. Fourteen of the fifteen historians are men; most have a background in military history; many of the articles either summarize their monographs or are based on prior publications; the politics of gender are largely absent; the 'concentration camps, so called', are marginalized (p. 15); black death rates in them are wildly inaccurate. This is one more collection centred on what was a minor feature of the war: men fighting other men.

It starts with 'Direction': four chapters about *fin de siècle* great British men (the prime minister, the secretary of state for war, the commander-in-chief at the War Office, the first commander-in-chief in South Africa). The authors argue that these men were better warmongers than we have thought. The second section descends from Great Men into tribalism. Six chapters detail the Irish at war, the Scots at war, the Zulus at war, Africans at war, Afrikaners at war, *bittereinder* Boers at war. The third section ('Image') consists of four chapters about British gentlemen of the press. That by Glenn Wilkinson, on advertising, is excellent. In tracing how 'The Soldier' was promoted as the epitome of imperial masculinity, it is one of the few to engage overtly with concerns of gender and profit.

Undoubtedly, a collection published in a series on military history contains much worthy information. Most chapters are earnest and detailed; they tell of such things as

the fighting at Surprise Hill on 11 December 1899, when five companies of the Rifle Brigade, commanded by Captain Johnnie Gough, an Anglo-Irish officer and brother of Hubert Gough, the central figure in the 'Curragh incident' of 1914, raided one of the Boer positions besieging Ladysmith, where the British garrison was commanded by an Ulsterman, General Sir George White VC. (p. 141)

If you want to know which man commanded what man, or how officers were selected, or which British reporter lost a leg, this might be the book for you. The collection does, however, pose certain problems for Africanists. It is, overall, a conservative, Anglocentric collection. The Imperial Light Horse and the Imperial Yeomanry are indexed; imperialism itself is conspicuous by its absence. Prior wars in the region are discussed as 'Kaffir wars' or 'clashes with black tribes', seemingly without the least awareness that this is offensive colonial discourse (pp. 47, 49, 79, 81, 301). According to the editor, the extensive involvement of blacks has been too long ignored. Yet black men's role in the war is a platitude among most serious scholars: the real gap is the role of black women and children.

The editor and the Sandhurst contributor claim that only now can English-speakers attain a full understanding of the Boers, who allegedly possessed an Afrikaans press. This, however, was non-existent. Many Boers, and most of their leaders, spoke English. The emergence of Afrikaans as a fully fledged print language and the appearance of an invigorated Afrikaner nationalism were major legacies of the war: they did not predate it.

This, then, is a collection more likely to excite enthusiasts for the masculine

pleasure-culture of war, than Africanists or feminists or those already acquainted with the broad history of this conflict. Skirmishes in somewhat stagnant backwaters occur, but there is little attempt to rethink the war or to answer large questions. Centennial gatherings consisting overwhelmingly of men commemorating armed men are clearly not the best way of analysing the monstrous toll that military manhood has exacted of non-combatants.

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HELEN BRADFORD

## NUTRITION, SCIENCE AND RACIAL POLITICS

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702408298

*Starving on a Full Stomach: Hunger and the Triumph of Cultural Racism in Modern South Africa.* By DIANA WYLIE. Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia. 2001. Pp. xiv + 317. No price given (ISBN 0 8139-2047-7).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, apartheid, medicine, nutrition.

*Starving on a Full Stomach* is a suitably ironic title for a study which often shows a rich sensitivity to the complexities of the subject matter with which Diana Wylie is dealing. This study extends the analyses of race in South African society from the perspective both of political economy and cultural values. It makes an interesting contribution to agrarian history and a major one to the history of science and medicine in South Africa during the first half of the twentieth century. In trying to explore the history of nutrition and malnutrition amongst black South Africans in modern times, Wylie quickly learnt that getting straightforward answers would prove difficult. Concepts such as malnutrition and starvation are political and social constructs and they shift over time and from one protagonist to another. In reality, the huge shift from a food system based very largely on self-sufficiency, a particular kind of social structure and adaptation to a regional, if not local, physical environment to one based on industrial production and market exigencies has been long and painful everywhere and there are many ways of assessing gains and losses. Objective studies of South African nutritional habits are additionally hampered by the lack of decent statistics, even for the modern period. These considerations are some of Wylie's most important findings.

Her strongest chapters concern the efforts of various, almost entirely white, humanitarians, from the Native Affairs Department of the early Union years, through the world of the medical missionaries to more science – and even social science – driven interventionists to improve black nutrition habits. In the segregation era, this meant operating within the political boundaries of a world that wanted to be modern while policing racial boundaries even where food and health were concerned. It became consequently increasingly easy to accept as common wisdom that the worst problem blacks faced was not starvation wages but bad eating habits. In the Fusion and post-Fusion years, contradictions strained with heightened intensity because of the obviously growing dependence on black industrial labour and wartime interest in effective national planning. This was the time of the short-lived and inconclusive National Nutritional Council. The mines sponsored good studies of the nutrition problem but balked at the costs involved in remedying it among their workers. School feeding schemes were more popular than raising wages. Eventually after 1948, this ambiguous period gave way to a policy of not very benign neglect under the Nationalists, eager to accommodate the need of their rural supporters for cheap labour – surplus food was best shipped overseas for export – and afraid as they were of 'spoonfeeding' the blacks. Agricultural self-sufficiency could be made a virtue under apartheid, allowing some continuity with the earlier discourse of reformers, as witness Betterment

schemes, but minus the belief in a generalized entitlement policy for all South Africans. In fact pragmatic interventions did continue, but it becomes far more difficult and complex to evaluate state action and its relation to actual conditions in the second half of the twentieth century, especially as black food consumption came to depend so heavily on the market.

Given her sensitive and very careful assessment of the likes of Edwin Batson, Ray Phillips, Mabel Palmer, Sidney Kark, Frank Drewe and Halley Stott, who were trying to find the basis for a decent 'urban' – and rural – 'moral economy' and were not indifferent to the concept of poverty, Wylie is overly hasty in moving to the conclusion that apartheid represented in any sense the embrace, let alone the 'flower' of what she labels as 'scientistic ideology' in the area of nutrition (p. 235). The relationship of modernity, science and racial policies in South Africa is far more complex and indirect. In fact, apartheid tried to shrug off most of that ideology, as it was understood at the time internationally with regard to public health and nutrition of black South Africans, by contrast with some other policy areas. Her concluding appeals to, and for, indigenous knowledge are not consistent or forceful enough to be entirely convincing either. Making science an easy target with bouquets thrown at Foucault, especially in our present era when intensive social policies are internationally unfashionable and the market reigns supreme, is not necessarily wise and the conclusion of the study is not as considered as it could be.

Wylie is also not entirely convincing on pre-colonial food consumption. She tells us, following standard anthropological wisdom, that Africans only ate meat at feasts: but how rare were these feasts and how accurate is our knowledge here? As she states, our knowledge about individual entitlements is very sketchy. What about her claims elsewhere that warriors ate lots of meat (p. 48) or that even frequent availability of cuts of the cheapest meats were despised by Pondoland trainee nurses as dog food (p. 185)? I wonder if she does not underestimate the dynamism and food efficacy of the cattle economy. The aridity of much of South Africa was matched by a relative ease of human and stock mobility compared to much of the continent, a reality Africans long ago learnt to exploit. The evidence of population densities suggests a healthy way of life in considerable parts of the present-day republic compared to most other areas of Africa.

A surprising omission in Wylie's reading is Jeff Peires's epic study of feast and famine, *The Dead Will Arise*, on the cattle killing in 1857, a study which would have only strengthened her insights. However, one can only sympathize with her difficulties in coming up with clear facts in this area. In general, although it can and should be tested by other lines of research, this is a memorable book that casts light on important areas of historical interest.

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BILL FREUND

## RESISTANCE AND RESILIENCE IN MATEBELELAND

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702418294

*Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the 'Dark Forests' of Matebeleland.*

By JOCELYN ALEXANDER, JOANN MCGREGOR and TERENCE RANGER. Oxford: James Currey; Portsmouth NH: Heinemann; Cape Town: David Philip; Harare: Weaver Press, 2000. Pp. xiv + 291. £40 (ISBN 0-85255-692-6); £16.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-642-X).

KEY WORDS: Zimbabwe, resistance, migration, post-colonial.

In his June 2000 'History matters' valedictory lecture at the University of Zimbabwe, Terence Ranger recalled his early days at the then University of

Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1959 when members of the History Department were seriously debating whether it was possible to teach courses in African history given the fact that there were no written records of the past, and whether, indeed, there was anything that could be called African history. It was in trying to address these questions that Ranger discovered Zimbabwean history and so fell in love with it that he devoted his entire career to researching and writing on Zimbabwe's past. The vibrancy of historical scholarship in the History and Economic History departments of the University of Zimbabwe that Ranger was celebrating in his valedictory lecture owes much to his pioneering work those many years ago, and to his prolific intellectual production ever since.

Just as Ranger helped pioneer modern Zimbabwean historiography, he and his co-authors, Jocelyn Alexander and JoAnn McGregor, blaze a new trail by writing this sensitive and detailed history of Matebeleland, a region long marginalized in Zimbabwean scholarship. *Violence and Memory* stands out as one of the very few insightful scholarly studies that analyze the history of this usually neglected part of the country, for while numerous publications on Shona history and ZANU/ZANLA's anti-colonial struggle exist, there are very few studies of Ndebele society and history in general and hardly any on ZAPU/ZIPRA's role in the liberation struggle. Moreover, after Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, ZANU the ruling party's official version of the liberation struggle wrote Matebeleland and its people out of the nation's history. Thus, Matebeleland was denied a voice with which to claim its rightful place in history.

Yet, as *Violence and Memory* so cogently shows, not only does Matebeleland have a history which 'matters', but its people's colonial and post-colonial experiences and their coping strategies testify to the resilience of the human spirit under very difficult circumstances, which were characterized by persistent state-perpetrated violence. While the broad themes that the book deals with, namely anti-colonial resistance, nationalism, religion, the guerrilla war and the post-independence dispensation, are common to Zimbabwean historiography, the authors manage with great skill to convey the uniqueness and peculiarity of the Shangani historical experience and to show how the complex interplay of national policies and local realities produced a distinct ethnic identity and nationalism, and shaped the people's collective memory.

*Violence and Memory* is organized in two sections, each containing five chapters. Part I (Chapters 1–5) traces the history of the Shangani-district in northern Matebeleland from the late nineteenth century to 1970. Themes explored include Ndebele migrations into the region from the collapse of the Ndebele polity to the post-First World War influx by Ndebele-speaking Christian evictees from Matebeleland South; the migrants' struggles to adapt to a hostile physical environment; the tensions, conflicts and accommodations that accompanied the newcomers' interactions with the original inhabitants and earlier migrants; and the Shangani people's spirited resistance to increased state meddling in their daily lives during the 'second colonial occupation', after the Second World War. Part I also traces the rise of nationalism and the forces that shaped its character and trajectory up to the eve of the liberation struggle.

Part II (Chapters 6–11) focuses on the liberation war of the 1970s; the fratricidal armed conflict of the 1980s in which the so-called dissidents were pitted against a ruthless state war machine in the form of the Zimbabwe government's Korean-trained Fifth Brigade; post-conflict reconstruction; and the people's efforts, thereafter, to come to terms with their painful past, in a context in which their voices and their community interests continued to be marginalized, the official rhetoric about unity notwithstanding.

*Violence and Memory* is a path-breaking study, which draws on an impressively wide array of oral, archival and secondary sources to unravel the history of

Shangani and analyze important issues hitherto left unstudied, namely rural nationalism in Matebeleland and its interface with the Rhodesian Front administration and the ZIPRA-led liberation struggle, the 1980s Matebeleland conflict and the role of 'religious institutions and peoples of northwestern Zimbabwe'. The book's additional strength lies in the fact that despite its geographically narrow focus on Shangani, it manages to contribute to on-going discourses on questions of ethnicity and identity, warfare and violence, and the nature of the 'African crisis', among other issues.

Both the authors and publishers should be complimented for producing a book which is presented in a style and language that are easily accessible to both the specialist and the lay reader, which is well illustrated, professionally edited and aesthetically packaged and which makes an invaluable contribution to African studies. *Violence and Memory* is highly recommended to Africans and Africanist scholars and anyone interested in understanding the forces that shaped Zimbabwe's historical development and the roots of Zimbabwe's present condition.

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ALOIS S. MLAMBO

### MISSION TO THE WHITES

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702428290

*Northward from Cape Town: The Anglican Church Railway Mission in Southern Africa, 1885-1980.* By JOHN RODEN. Appleton Roebuck, York: Sacram Publishing, 1999. Pp. 349. £13.95 (ISBN 0-9535775-0-3).

KEY WORDS: Southern Africa, Central Africa, colonial, missions.

John Roden, who taught in secondary schools in Zambia before returning to England and becoming an Anglican priest, has clearly reflected much on the meaning of Christianity in Africa. His interest led him to research on the Anglican 'railway mission' in several countries of southern Africa, which was the basis of his doctoral thesis and of this book.

As Roden notes, among missionary enterprises the railway mission was not merely distinct, but unique. Its principal 'targets' were the (white) workers along literally thousands of miles of railway lines in the region. Begun in what became South Africa, the mission followed the expansion of critical rail infrastructure into the countries now known as Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique and Democratic Republic of Congo. It thus had no distinct territorial base or sphere, a departure especially from Anglican tradition; in Roden's view, 'its challenge to immobile parochialism and to diocesan "fences" ... was a major shift from centuries of theological and ecclesiastical stagnation' (p. 51). Ministering to those (not just Anglicans) physically beyond the reach of 'normal' parishes, the railway mission became the 'Church between the churches', the 'Travelling church'. Much of the lore of the mission revolved around the considerable efforts required to reach remote railwaymen and their families, invariably described as 'lonely' and 'isolated'. In the case of the stories 'gangers' – the men charged with maintaining a ten- or twenty-mile stretch of track – the loneliness and isolation were certainly real enough.

Though Roden is impressed by many aspects of the railway mission's work, he is sensitive to, and troubled by, what he perceives as its shortcomings. Throughout its existence, the mission made it perfectly clear that its primary interest was in ministering to white people. Any references to 'African work', Roden observes, were 'the usual afterthought' (p. 63). Some of the more interesting portions of the book concern the periodic defences offered by officials for the concentration on whites. Essentially, the argument was that white railwaymen were 'pioneers of



civilization' who, if not kept elevated by contact with religion, were in danger of succumbing to temptations (drink, miscegenation, etc.), descending to the 'native level', and becoming 'bad examples' for the Africans. Thus one speaker at the mission's 1910 annual general meeting propounded the 'duty to attend to our own people first, if only in the interests of the blacks'; at the following year's gathering, Lord Selborne asserted that 'every white man is a missionary for good or for bad, and, therefore, although this is not a Mission to the heathen, it is a Mission to the white men who will have a permanent influence on the heathen' (p. 222). Bearing the white man's burden, it seems, required the church's nurture.

On related grounds, Roden wonders aloud why so many missionaries remained silent in the face of glaring inequalities and gross injustice. Religious services they conducted were almost always racially segregated. Oddly enough, one of the rare exceptions took place at the Sena sugar estates in Portuguese East Africa (also exceptional in that it was off the line of rail). Here, though, Roden asks how mission priests could accept comfortable hospitality from the management and say nothing about the horrific working conditions at this notorious operation. Overall, his judgment is mild: 'the record must stand – heroic, inspiring, worthy – but with a question mark hanging over it' (p. 204).

Roden's research is admirable. He has scoured a vast amount of railway mission literature (sixty years' worth of the organization's *Blue Quarterly* magazine, for instance), official and private letters from Rhodes House and elsewhere, and has corresponded with or interviewed a number of figures from the mission's later days. Among other strengths, the book includes forty excellent photographs. In his text, Roden is given to quoting from his material at excessive length; several excerpts run well past a full page. At one point he insists on citing a particular first-hand account in the interest of conveying 'the detail and colour, even romance, of the trips undertaken by the missionaries' (p. 194). Many readers, I fear, will find much detail, yielding relatively little colour and romance. The book would be better if it were considerably leaner. Nevertheless, Roden's labours have provided us with a very thorough account of one corner of church – and colonial – history.

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KENNETH P. VICKERY

## FRANCE IN ISLAMIC WEST AFRICA

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702438297

*Paths of Accommodation: Muslim Societies and French Colonial Authorities in Senegal and Mauritania, 1880–1920.* By DAVID ROBINSON. Athens OH: Ohio University Press; Oxford: James Currey, 2000. Pp. 361. \$59.95 (ISBN 0-8214-1377-5); \$24.95, paperback (ISBN 0-8214-1378-3).

KEY WORDS: Senegal, Mauritania, Islam, accommodation to colonialism.

After more than a decade of painstaking research into Muslim societies and French colonial authorities in Senegal and Mauritania in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, David Robinson, a leading historian of Senegambia, has produced an attractive and excellent study that expands and enriches the historiography on the western savanna. The author draws from a wide variety of French, Arabic and oral sources, as well as frameworks adapted from social scientists such as Pierre Bourdieu and Antonio Gramsci.

Robinson's main argument is that between 1880 and 1920 Muslim Sufi orders in the southern areas of Mauritania and the northern and central parts of Senegal developed into major participants in the French colonial economy. Also, the Muslim Sufi leaders pursued strategies of accommodation with the Federation of

French West Africa that led to the preservation of considerable independence in the religious, social and economic spheres, but relinquishing control of the political domain to their non-Muslim rulers. According to the author, this was a 'striking development' since the local Muslims had a strong consciousness of being members of the Dar al-Islam, the 'world of Islam', in which Muslims ruled themselves (p. 2).

After an effective introduction, the eleven chapters of the book are grouped into three parts. The first, 'The framework' outlines the geographical scope of the study: the Senegal–Mauritania zone. Rejecting the conventional definition of the region that focuses on the Senegal River as the geographical and political boundary between Senegal and Mauritania, the author proposes a zone that has far more commercial and cultural cohesion in the period under study. This section provides a useful background for the study by examining the nature and decline of the Muslim societies in the Senegal–Mauritania area before the emergence of a stronger French colonial administration in the late nineteenth century.

In Part 2, 'Bases of accommodation', Robinson develops themes relating to how the French colonized and governed the Senegal–Mauritania zone, including a discussion of French strategies toward the Muslim societies of the area. The author provides a fascinating and detailed account of the rise of the town of Saint-Louis, which became the base for French colonial expansion and subsequently the capital of the colonies of Mauritania and Senegal.

Part 3, 'Patterns of accommodation' examines four paths of accommodation that contrast the Muslim leaders who followed a non-accommodation path with French colonial authorities with those who pursued strategies of accommodation. The former group included the Muslim personalities such as Alfa Hashimi who inherited the resistance tradition of Al-Hajj Umar. The latter group was made up of Saad Buh and the Fadiliyya who were based in south-western Mauritania; Sidiyya Baba and his network in the same area; Malik Sy and his Tijaniyya followers in northern and central Senegal; and Ahmadu Bamba and his Muridiyya disciples in the same area. Robinson brings his biographical accounts of the Muslim leaders to life vividly with the use of photos. In discussing the trajectory of these important Muslim leaders, the author brings out the similarities and differences as they responded to the French colonial presence. In doing so, Robinson provides valuable insights into the relationship between knowledge and power, the transferability of symbolic, economic and social capital, and the concepts of civil society and hegemony in Francophone West Africa.

One small weakness is that Robinson is repetitive in his biographical account of important Muslim figures. The book would also have benefited from less repetition of key events and institutions such as those related to French colonization in the Senegal–Mauritania zone.

The book is not only well researched, clearly illustrated and well written, but it also gives a good example of the interdisciplinary approach to the reconstruction of African history. It represents a significant addition to our knowledge of Islamic West Africa and French colonialism, and deserves the widest possible circulation.

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ALUSINE JALLOH

### COMPARING COLONIALISMS IN TOGO

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702448293

*Du Togo allemand aux Togo et Ghana indépendants : changement social sous régime colonial.* By ULRIKE SCHUERKENS. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001. Pp. 619. No price given (ISBN 2-7475-0248-1).

KEY WORDS: Togo, Ghana, colonial.

L'auteur se propose dans cet ouvrage de mener une réflexion sur la problématique du développement social en Afrique noire en analysant l'impact des différentes administrations coloniales sur les populations autochtones au Togo de 1894 à 1960. Ainsi, l'approche théorique adoptée est celle de l'anthropologie historique. Mais l'originalité de l'œuvre de Ulrike Schurkens est le choix pertinent de l'ancien Togo allemand pour son analyse. Ce qui lui permet de comparer trois modèles de changement social de trois puissances coloniales: l'Allemagne, la France et l'Angleterre.

Dans cet ouvrage, l'auteur dégage les grandes tendances des changements survenus au cours de la colonisation. Le chapitre 1, consacré à l'administration coloniale allemande au Togo (1884–1914) et son impact sur le changement social, met l'accent sur l'idéologie germanique basée sur un développement séparé des races qui tendait à amener le Noir vers une évolution qui en ferait un être capable de vivre selon ses possibilités, à côté du Blanc (Allemand). Les principaux facteurs de changement social de cette période furent la transformation de pouvoirs locaux en une chefferie administrative et le changement des rapports politiques y afférents ainsi que l'introduction de la monnaie dans le circuit économique autochtone.

La gestion de la France de la partie de l'ancien Togo allemand qui lui fut dévolue a été analysée dans les chapitres 2 et 3. La France eut pour idéal de proposer aux populations administrées la civilisation occidentale comme modèle en créant des habitudes, des notions et des institutions semblables à celles qui existaient dans la métropole. L'entre-deux-guerres a été marquée par une politique d'association sous la forte personnalité du gouverneur Bonnecarrère qui entreprit des transformations politiques, économiques et sociales.

L'auteur montre aussi que les années 1940 constituent une étape importante dans le changement social avec la mise en place de nouvelles structures au lendemain de la seconde guerre mondiale qui influencèrent et conduisirent une certaine fraction de la population à une occidentalisation des mœurs de plus en plus importante.

Le chapitre 4 résume la politique de l'administration au Togo sous mandat et tutelle de la Grande-Bretagne (1919–57) et son impact sur le changement social. Il y est question de la spécificité de la méthode anglaise de transformation sociale qui s'appuya sur les structures sociales propres aux autochtones. L'Angleterre proposait des institutions nouvelles, gérées en grande partie par les autochtones eux-mêmes, avec peu de directives de la métropole, surtout dans les domaines de la chefferie et de la justice. La puissance tutrice s'attela à administrer la société autochtone à travers ses propres règles et ses propres institutions.

L'auteur arrive à la conclusion selon laquelle chaque puissance coloniale a eu sa conception du développement pour les colonisés; ce qui a laissé un impact sur chaque pays après les indépendances. Les ex-colonies françaises sont restées accrochées au système français, alors que les ex-colonies britanniques ont réussi, à l'image du Ghana, à concevoir leur modèle de développement.

Cet ouvrage aurait pu être original vu le champ d'étude abordé (comparaison de trois systèmes coloniaux différents) sans les erreurs et manquements qui émaillent le travail et en déparent le fond. C'est ainsi que le texte est truffé de nombreuses coquilles et d'erreurs de style qui en rendent la lecture parfois malaisée. Par ailleurs, les annexes constituent près de la moitié de l'ouvrage (pp. 371–603) dont essentiellement des textes officiels qui n'ont rien d'original. Enfin, l'originalité de l'œuvre est fortement amoindrie par l'usage exclusif (abusif?) de sources archivistiques administratives, en l'occurrence les rapports annuels sur l'administration des deux Togo adressés respectivement à la SDN puis à l'ONU par la France et l'Angleterre. Ces documents ont le mérite de présenter un tableau général et chronologique de la gestion de la puissance coloniale. Cependant certaines informations, notamment les statistiques, sont souvent intéressées et doivent être

par conséquent prises avec beaucoup de réserves. Le recours aux sources d'archives togolaises, françaises ou britanniques ainsi qu'aux sources secondaires (les travaux des chercheurs tant togolais qu'étrangers) sur la question aurait été d'un apport majeur pour la compréhension de cette période.

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N. L. GAYIBOR

## MODES OF POWER IN BORGU

DOI: 10.1017/S002185370245829X

*Im Gewand von Herrschaft: Modalitäten der Macht im Borgou (Nord-Benin), 1900–1995 [Dressed as Ruler: Modes of Power in Borgu (Northern Benin), 1900–1995].* By ERDMUTE ALBER. (Studien zur Kulturkunde 116). Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe, 2000. Pp. 325. DM 78 (ISBN 3-89645-211-8).

KEY WORDS: Benin, chieftaincy, politics/political.

In the 1920s, French colonial administrators in northern Benin recognized that the administrative chiefs they had created had little legitimacy locally. They provided them with 'royal robes', hoping to give them the power they had never had. In Erdmute Alber's history of power in Borgu, this episode provides a metaphor for local forms of power in general: power hardly ever comes in raw form, except as mere direct violence. It is usually 'dressed', i.e. mediated through insignia or symbols, titles or offices. Like a dress, its appearance can be changed: forms of power can be converted into each other. The insignia reveal its holders' real power only on close and historically grounded analysis.

In the first part of her book, Alber looks at the social and political organization in Borgu in the nineteenth century. She disputes Jacques Lombard's classical description of the pre-colonial Borgu as a multi-ethnic 'feudal' society, ruled by a *wasangari* aristocracy. Instead, Alber shows that power relationships in nineteenth century Borgu were highly fluid and violent. Alber describes the *wasangari* primarily as warlords whose income depended on raiding (*razzias*) and enslavement. They operated networks of redistribution in order to convert the gains made from violence into status, especially during the large festivals. All this stands a far cry from the picture of stable power relationships suggested by Lombard – and by many of post-colonial Benin's politicians and office-holders alike.

The second part of the book looks at political power on the regional level during the twentieth century, focusing on the Baatombu of the Borgu. Alber focuses especially on the early colonial period, when the French colonial government prohibited *razzias* and enslavement and thus removed the economic foundations of pre-colonial power centres. Instead, the French established administrative chieftaincies, often in a rather arbitrary manner. Only a few of the colonial chiefs thus created had been powerful men before; their legitimacy was limited. Alber gives much attention to everyday practices of colonial rule. She portrays the French *commandant de cercle* as a despot with rather limited information about the society he ruled. He depended on his intermediaries, some of them translators who gained local fame from their position. In the later colonial period, these chiefs began to lose relevance as against more educated persons, but they formally lost their position only after the socialist revolution of 1972 – which, as Alber notes, was locally perceived as a much more profound rupture with the past than independence in 1960. However, the chiefs who had never entirely disappeared returned with the revival of neo-traditionalism in the 1980s as in other parts of Africa.

In the third part of her book, Alber turns to a local perspective, presenting the case study of a single village, Tebo. Analysing power relationships within the village, she presents the picture of a society with several historical layers of titles and political offices. Some of these offices may have lost the backing of the state and thereby the power provided by it. But, Alber argues, none of them have become mere titles (i.e. named positions without any power). Instead, they all continue to be of (sometimes fluctuating) relevance within local society. Furthermore, they contribute to safeguard a certain sphere of local autonomy (or *Widerständigkeit*, 'a measure of resistance') against the power of the national government.

Alber combines the results of archival research and extensive anthropological fieldwork into a well-written and theoretically grounded history of political power in Borgu since the late nineteenth century. She thus provides an important contribution to the growing body of literature about colonial and post-colonial ('neo-traditional') chieftaincy in Africa. At the same time, the book goes much beyond the aim of proving a theoretical point. It contains numerous 'side-arguments', as comments or textually-separated 'ethnographic notes' that supplement the main line of argument – about the manifestations and transformations of power – by creative analyses of sometimes surprising observations and details. One example is Alber's account of how the European colonizers and their collaborators are remembered today – stories about the repressive and, sometimes, outright violent character of colonial rule are much less common than those about manipulation and tricks played upon the whites. Another example is her analysis of observations about the ways children are trained into accepting the fundamental insecurity that results from arbitrary practices of power: she describes instances of how adults disown a child's property – a 'play' locally understood to contribute to the proper education of a child. Alber tells this story vividly from the experiences of her own little daughter who accompanied her during the fieldwork. The combination of the author's broad view with her sense for the exemplary detail make this book a pleasant experience to read.

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AXEL HARNEIT-SIEVERS

## METHODOLOGICAL INVERSION

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702468296

*Recalling the Belgian Congo: Conversations and Introspection.* By MARIE-BÉNÉDICTA DEMBOUR. (New Directions in Anthropology, 9). Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2000. Pp. xx + 235. £45 (ISBN 1-57181-945-2).

KEY WORDS: Zaïre (Democratic Republic of Congo), colonial, oral narratives, method.

During the 1980s and 1990s many luminaries in social anthropology became obsessed with subjectivity. Dismissing earlier work by participant observers as irretrievably biased, they sought ways to justify the continuation of their investigations in a new and less tainted form. Marie-Bénédicta Dembour is one of the products of this chastened discipline, having moved from a degree in law at the Université Libre de Bruxelles to a D.Phil. at Oxford, and then a faculty position in law at the University of Sussex. As a result of this training, she has produced a monograph which is more about herself than her subject matter, 34 veterans of the Belgian colonial administration.

The eight chapters detail her encounters with these men, more or less alternating between her account of herself as investigator and their reactions to her. She explains her intellectual pilgrimage from an upper-middle-class, French-speaking

Catholic childhood to the decidedly lay Free University, from a consumer of colonial myths to a critic of everything colonial, to a chastened researcher who has gotten to know her subjects but who retains a scholarly aloofness from them. She concludes (pp. 206–7) that anthropologists are at their least arrogant when ‘they attempt to reach out for other voices’, but that ‘the absence of a neat separation between analysis and practice may at times make anthropology paralysing, as I have experienced, but ultimately it makes it extremely exciting, for it may pave a way forward’.

What the reader is left with, therefore, is an account not only of how the author changed in the course of the research but also how former colonial officials were affected by the shock of Congolese independence and the growing condemnation of their work by the Belgian public. As she puts it (p. 122), ‘this book ... focuses on the way colonialism is remembered in Belgium today without attempting to reconstruct how things were in the Belgian Congo’. Her viewpoint changed, her subjects’ viewpoint changed – but where is the reality? The lens has become more important than the object.

This subjectivity would not be so annoying if the author had provided an adequate context. Who are her subjects: ‘lower middle-class students, and a minority of upper middle-class students’ (p. 167, n.)? Young men ‘looking forward to the power the territorials enjoyed’ (p. 151)? Were they Walloons, Flemings or Bruxellois? And what about Belgium itself? How did the European Community, the interminable linguistic wars and the loss of faith in the judiciary affect Belgians’ attitudes toward their former colonial administrators? And how much of the literature regarding colonial rule should an anthropologist read? One citation from Jan Vansina? None from Jean Stengers? One hopes that Dembour’s twelve-year-long dialogue with her sources will bring her to better informed enquiries in future.

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BRUCE FETTER

## WAR AND THE ORIGINS OF STATIST DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702478292

*Empire State-building: War and Welfare in Kenya, 1925–52.* By JOANNA LEWIS.

Oxford: James Currey; Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 2000. Pp. xvii + 393.

£40 (ISBN 0-85255-790-6); £19.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-785-X).

KEY WORDS: Kenya, development, state, colonial.

How did development thought and practice become one of the most enduring legacies of colonial government? Joanna Lewis offers a comprehensive answer to this question in a book which deals with the history of administrative thought and practice in colonial Kenya, told through the ways in which Europeans (mainly English, white, middle class and male) tried to engineer social change in a white settlement colony riven by racial division.

The colonial civil servants and their metropolitan counterparts had always believed that they had strategies and wisdom for creating progress, for bringing improvements in the standards of living and quality of life of their subjects according to the definitions of the day. This was their idea of trusteeship – the belief that they knew what was good for the ‘native’ – and it rested on notions of racial superiority.

But by 1940, little in the way of practical restructuring around the idea of welfare had emerged. The main reason was that the colonial government had been set up

to fulfil tasks other than the delivery of a modern development and welfare programme. The government was exclusionist, particularly of young people, non-elites and women; it lacked legitimacy and access to civil society; and the technical branches of government were subordinated to the 'generalists' – the central secretariat in Nairobi and the provincial and district commissioners, who were primarily in charge of the control function of law and order and only secondarily assumed control of the development function.

Imperial prescriptions for social engineering increased in complexity and ambition during and after the Second World War. This was because the dialectical relationship between war and welfare in metropolitan Britain began a new phase in empire state-building in Africa. True, the impact of the Second World War in relation to colonial Africa has been discussed in various works covering different aspects: the concept of the war acting as midwife to what has been termed a 'second colonial occupation'; the negative impact of war in terms of enforcing systems of economic intervention and social control designed to benefit outsiders; and the way in which the war speeded up African social change – all these aspects have been well covered in recent literature.

What this book sets out to emphasize is the strong connection between war and welfare in the twentieth century, manifested through the extension of the state and the continuity in government practice between the time of war and a state of peace, which the author regards as one of the enduring characteristics of the late colonial state in Africa that has also shaped post-colonial governance, often negatively. The study shows that novel administration and new legislation after the war were flanked by extension of controls of production and people designed for the war effort. The state remained 'at war', stamping out nationalist politics and fighting urban expansion and rural evasions. The war thus encouraged the use of force to achieve social transformation. The use of force during the Mau Mau uprising in the 1950s was merely a continuation of an established tradition of colonial practice which reached back to the Second World War.

Recent work on imperial history has returned to the significance of metropolitan thought and action as the prime mover in the recent colonial and African past. This study argues that wartime Colonial Office officials and politicians were particularly inventive in that they applied more thoroughly to Africa what they knew about the working class in Britain and the experience of social engineering at home. This was based on an inclusive policy that treated colonial peoples as extensions of British society. Their poverty was regarded as being universal and not exceptional, meriting the same kind of help as that given in Britain. Africa's problems could best be solved by adopting metropolitan solutions. Thus empire administrators sought to improve African welfare as metropolitan Britain launched its welfare state.

They attempted to modernize trusteeship without realizing that they enjoyed little in the way of an extensive state structure or easy access to civil society. The colonies had fewer resources, no single moral authority and little in the form of a waged labour force that could afford to contribute to a national social welfare chest. In the case of Kenya, the patterns of welfare provision that followed British models and had Colonial Office approval were further hamstrung by the Colony's racial structure. Not surprisingly, empire state-building was not effective since these metropolitan conditions did not exist in Kenya during the colonial period, nor have they existed in the post-colonial era.

But many aspects of colonial official development practices in Kenya which emerged by 1950s survived throughout, and beyond, the colonial era and became common features of international development initiatives in the remainder of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: the preference for producing or strengthening leadership; the focus on communities in the belief that they function for the good

of everyone within them; the preference for a self-help approach (*harambee*) to improving welfare; the neglect of women as key players in the social and economic spheres, particularly in post-war reconstruction programmes; the subordination of technical expertise, whether local or imported, to the needs of general administration; and the side-lining of basic poverty eradication because of the competing political and economic interests of the state. In this sense, the book is a welcome and relevant study of how contemporary development practice – which has failed – has its roots in the colonial period.

In this highly illuminating work, Lewis concluded, correctly in my view, that the final outcome was in some sense a triumph. The structures that were in place and the ideologies they represented remained largely intact when formal Empire came to an end. The colonial legacy of social engineering merely mutated as local elites wanted it to do. It deferred to metropolitan-type (and now European Union, American and World Bank) solutions. It was (and still is) profoundly state-centric, interventionist, censorial and controlling. It privileged (and still privileges) men over women in terms of the assessment of their contribution to social, economic and political transformation. And its greatest success was in maintaining elite access to power under the cover of a populist programme.

This otherwise excellent book is flawed in one serious aspect. By 1950, there was growing African disaffection and distress throughout Kenya, and especially in the urban areas. The poor existed in all parts of Kenya, and women were neglected everywhere. And yet throughout the book, discussion on social engineering is primarily restricted to the Kikuyu. A history of welfare in Kenya during the colonial and post-colonial period is thus still to be written.

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## NATION AND GENDER

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702488299

*Mau Mau's Daughter: A Life History*. By WAMBUI WAIYAKI OTIENO, edited with an introduction by CORA ANN PRESLEY. Boulder: Lynne Reiner, 1998. Pp. xiii + 254. £39.95; \$52 (ISBN 1-55587-722-2).

KEY WORDS: Kenya, decolonization, gender, military, post-colonial.

'A nation without regard for its history is a dead nation'. This combative declaration has been chosen by Wambui Waiyaki Otieno as one of four epigraphs that set the tone for her autobiography. The personal history she reveals in the pages that follow is certainly deeply felt, but it is also deeply contested. In a short foreword, Atieno Odhiambo suggests that her story is 'best interpreted as a critique of the banalities of the postcolony of Kenya' (p. xiii). Put more bluntly, it betrays the bitter frustration that many Kenyans of Otieno's generation feel at the incapacity of their nation to realize its potential. Otieno's autobiography is a rare and important historical document in its own right, yet it is also a fascinating essay on the ills of Kenya's modern state.

Otieno's place in Kenya's history derives first from her lineage. Her great-grandfather was Waiyaki wa Hinga, 'the Abraham of modern Kenya nationalism' according to Atieno Odhiambo (p. xiii). Waiyaki stands as the iconographic figure of the Kikuyu engagement with colonialism in the later nineteenth century. His memory has been put to many purposes: as a wise counsellor who sought accommodation with the British, but who died while in their custody; as a prophet who foresaw the dangers of giving the white men Kikuyu lands, but whose own family prospered under colonialism as energetic, modernizing Christians; and as



a symbol of Kikuyu ethnic tradition who also acknowledged the Dorobo and Maasai elements of his lineage. In the historical figure of Waiyaki we find all the ambiguities of modern Kenya a century later. And that is precisely Otieno's point. From pre-colonial to post-colonial, Kenya's past is best reflected through its continuities.

The young Otieno was greatly affected by stories she was told of Waiyaki's 'brutal treatment ... at the hands of the colonialists' and she pledged 'to do anything to avenge him' (p. 33). This fighting spirit drew her towards the Mau Mau movement, and in 1952, aged 16, she took the first of several oaths of allegiance to the armed struggle. Students of Mau Mau may be disappointed to find only three chapters here that deal with the Emergency years. The first describes Otieno's early adventures in Nairobi, where she went in 1954, taking up residence in Kibera. The colourful cameos in this chapter suggest that Otieno played a very active role as an urban guerrilla, but there is too little detail to satisfy more informed readers. The next chapter, on party politics in Nairobi towards the end of the Emergency (1958–60), is far stronger, containing much original and interesting data. Among Otieno's many 'comrades' in Nairobi at this time were leading Luo activists, including Tom Mboya. The chapter includes a brief description of the Jim Crow Action Group, headed by J. M. Oyangi, which campaigned against racial segregation in the city, and a longer and absorbing account of the establishment and activities of the Nairobi People's Convention Party, and especially its choir (of which Otieno was an enthusiastic member). The many 'songs of freedom' set down here greatly enliven the text.

Otieno was arrested during 1959, removed from Nairobi and placed under a restriction order because of her political activities. In 1960, after she had returned to the city, she was again arrested, this time for 'consorting' with Mau Mau at her home near the Nairobi river. By then the mother of three children, she was taken with them to the government detention camp on Lamu island. The third chapter dealing with the Emergency is devoted to her experiences as a detainee. Otieno recalls that at Lamu she was in the company of many so-called 'hard-core' Mau Mau, both men and women, some of them very prominent in the leadership of the movement. The camp commanders subjected the detainees to a harsh regime. Shortly after her arrival at the camp, she was taken across to Shella island for interrogation. There she was brutally raped by a European officer. Later that night, back on Lamu island, he raped her again (pp. 80–3). 'That terrible night left a scar on my heart to this day' (p. 84) writes Otieno. It also left her with a daughter – to whom, I suspect, the title of this autobiography represents a poignant dedication and acknowledgement.

The second part of the book deals with Otieno's life after release from Lamu in 1961, principally her marriage to the articulate, and ultimately highly successful, Luo advocate, S. M. Otieno, her involvement with Kenya's political elite (this in a chapter entitled 'Gender and politics') and the story of S. M.'s untimely death and her struggle to take control of the funeral arrangements for her late husband.

The 'SM burial saga' is one of the most memorable and compelling events in Kenya's recent history. Otieno contested the rights in her husband's body with his Luo kin. The battle first saw physical struggles at the city mortuary, then a lengthy legal process through the Kenyan courts. It absorbed the Kenyan public throughout the early part of 1987, featuring as a tabloid newspaper soap opera. For Otieno, as for commentators at the time, the significance of the case lay in its centrality to the contested nature of ethnicity, gender and modernity – themes that are the markers of Kenya's history in the twentieth century, and themes that shape the lives of ordinary Kenyans in myriad ways.

But in Otieno's version, the pain of the perceived 'tribalism' she saw in the unfolding of the saga stands out above all else. She was silenced and finally defeated

in this struggle because of her gender, but the most bitter pill to swallow was the reluctance of Kenya's leaders to rally to her cause. Here is the crucial failure of Kenya's aspirations to modernity, a failure she sees being fostered by President Moi and his government, who hide behind ethnic particularism to build political solidarity. Would not old Waiyaki have seen the value of nation over tribe?

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## GENDER AND DOMESTIC SERVICE

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702498295

*Serving Class: Masculinity and the Feminisation of Domestic Service in Tanzania.*

By JANET BUJRA. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press for the International African Institute, 2000. Pp. x + 222. £14.95; \$22, paperback (ISBN 0-7486-1484-2).

KEY WORDS: Tanzania, gender, labour.

This book explores issues of gender and class among domestic servants in Tanzania. Its strongest chapters are based on the author's observations and interviews in the city of Tanga. The life stories presented in Chapter 2 are particularly valuable. In them, two veterans of domestic service describe their confrontation with the powerlessness, vulnerability and insecurity which so many Tanzanians have faced in recent decades. Chapter 8 shows how domestic workers strategize and negotiate as they deal with their employers. Particularly interesting is its discussion of the language of family relations which workers use in trying to convert employment into a relationship of patronage.

The author, a sociologist, places an interesting question at the centre of her study. How do male domestic workers reconcile their masculinity with the performance of domestic tasks that are usually gendered as women's work? Arguing that the construction of gender is 'situationally defined', she suggests that in the colonial economy masculinity 'became strongly bound up with earning a wage' (pp. 176–7). Historians might take this approach further by asking how the construction of masculinity in the colonial period grew out of pre-colonial constructions of gender. They might also ask whether the masculinization of domestic labour was influenced by African perceptions of non-African employers. Perhaps domestic service in European and Indian households became primarily a man's occupation because interaction with such employers was thought to require qualities that pre-colonial cultures had coded as male attributes. These purportedly male qualities might have included *ujanja* (verbal quickness and cunning) and the courage and brazenness needed to venture into the houses of *mumiani* (vampires).

The author concentrates on domestic service in a stratum of upper-middle-class households which belonged mostly to Europeans and Indians. Because she discusses this specialized focus only near the end of the book, the hasty reader who is unfamiliar with Tanzania might well conclude that most Tanzanian domestic servants are employed in affluent, non-African households. Nothing could be further from the truth. Only in the appendix (p. 182) does the author point out that servants are found in virtually every household, including those of domestic workers themselves. Indeed, only a very small proportion of domestic servants are employed for the reason that the author stresses, as a form of conspicuous consumption signifying class privilege. The vast majority of domestic workers are hired because their employers – mostly women – could not go about their daily business without having someone at home to look after the children, go to market, cook, launder, clean house, fetch water, deter thieves, and do the thousand other

things that keep even a one-room household running. This leads to a larger point about method. If the study of domestic workers is to be what the author wishes to make it – a way of illuminating the general nature of class in a society such as Tanzania – it must surely take into account the ubiquity of domestic service throughout the whole society.

Historians will profit by beginning with the appendix and Chapter 8. This approach will allow them to see the specialized focus of the book quickly and to appreciate the temporal context of the sections on Tanga. Historians may feel that much of the book is not clearly located in time. This is true in particular of the chapter on ‘colonial discourses’, which does not take account of change during the colonial period. Other sections which are presented as discussions of current Tanzania have the flavour – some might find it stale, although I find it evocative – of another time, the distinctive period of the early and mid-1980s when the author did her research in Tanga.

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### THE ESCALATION OF CATTLE RAIDING

DOI: 10.1017/S002185370250829X

*Kuria Cattle Raiders: Violence and Vigilantism on the Tanzania/Kenya Frontier.*

By MICHAEL L. FLEISHER. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000. Pp. xv + 198. \$59.50 (ISBN 0-472-11152-3); \$19.95, paperback (ISBN 0-472-08698-7).  
KEY WORDS: Eastern Africa, animal husbandry, violence, colonial, post-colonial.

Cattle raiding has a long history throughout East Africa, but it also has a vibrant and increasingly violent presence in certain contemporary areas of the region. As in colonial times, reports of raids make headline news, but now seem to occur on a larger scale, and in a more systematic and – thanks to the prevalence of guns – violent manner. In this compelling scholarly account, Michael L. Fleisher seeks to document and explain these historical transformations through a focused, ethnohistorical analysis of the changes that have occurred in cattle raiding as practiced by agropastoralist Kuria people in Tanzania. According to Fleisher, over the past century Kuria cattle raiding has changed in motivation, means and meaning: from the ‘reciprocal raiding’ of other ethnic groups and Kuria clans for prestige and bridewealth cattle to what he terms ‘cash-market-oriented cattle raiding’, carried out in a highly organized manner by heavily armed multiclan and multiethnic gangs who, in contrast with the past, often raid their own families, clans and villages. These days, stolen cattle are generally not used to expand or replenish family herds, but are sold to buyers, mainly butchers, in Tanzania or across the border in Kenya.

To account for these changes, Fleisher argues that certain economic and political factors have restructured the opportunities and constraints available to individuals seeking to live their lives in economically secure, culturally meaningful terms. Based on field research carried out from August 1994 to March 1996 in a Kuria village near the Kenya border, documentary and archival research, and careful comparison with other accounts, he analyzes in convincing detail how the expansion of livestock markets and integration of Kuria into a cash economy in the colonial period contributed to the commoditization of cattle. With their newfound need and desire for money, and the paucity of viable, alternative economic opportunities (primarily small-scale cultivation and gold mining), Kuria took advantage of straddling the Kenya/Tanzania border to institute and profit from the illicit transnational trade in cattle created by an increasing demand for cattle in

Kenya and the innumerable bureaucratic hurdles (fees, quarantines, closed markets, inept administrators and a corrupt police force) that had choked off, and continue to restrict, most 'legal' livestock trade in Tanzania. 'Market forces,' he argues, 'are sucking Kuria cattle out of Tanzania and into Kenya' (p. 165).

Furthermore, by suppressing 'reciprocal cattle-raiding' (among Kuria clans, and between Kuri and other ethnic groups), colonial administrators blocked customary methods of what Fleisher terms 'self-help', thereby modifying both the methods and consequences of raiding. Cattle raiding was transformed 'from an undertaking in which the entire community had both a stake and an interest into an activity carried out by, and mainly for the benefit of, small groups of accomplices acting independently of the communities from which they came' (p. 53). In addition, although customary sanctions against raiders were no longer permitted, formal state-based sanctions were ineffective, thus doing little to curtail raiding.

In addition to the fracturing of communities and failure of sanctions, Fleisher attributes the increasingly violent, even deadly nature of cattle raiding to several causes: the easy availability of weapons in the aftermath of Tanzania's participation in the Ugandan war (1978–9), the increasingly desperate struggles between cattle thieves and cattle owners over the most highly valued commodity in the region, and the creation of neighbourhood 'vigilante' groups, *sungusungu*, to pursue and punish cattle thieves (and alleged cattle thieves) in the face of indifference (and at times, even collusion) by formal state authorities such as the police.

In seeking to understand not only how but why Kuria cattle raiding has changed, Fleisher also makes an intriguing (if problematic) argument about the predisposition of 'sister-poor' men to become cattle raiders. According to Fleisher, 73 per cent of the natal households of the 62 cattle raiders in his sample (some came from the same households) had more brothers than sisters, thus 'predisposing' these men to raid cattle in order, in part, to acquire bridewealth cattle for their marriages since they lacked a sufficient number of uterine sisters to provide the brothers with enough bridewealth cattle to enable them all to marry. The increasing economic impoverishment of Kuria in the area has exacerbated this situation by limiting the ability of other family and clan members (particularly the father from his 'back' herd) to contribute cattle to these men's marriages. As Fleisher himself acknowledges, this argument does *not* explain why men from 'sister-rich' families raid, or why other men from 'sister-poor' families do not raid. In their interviews with Fleisher, cattle raiders themselves listed a range of motivations for raiding in addition to acquiring bridewealth cattle: to purchase clothing and other household necessities, to spend money on beer and women and to build their own herds – summarized by them as *kufanya starehe*, to lead the good life.

This is a complex, fascinating account of a remarkably resilient institution that nicely interweaves anthropological and historical evidence and arguments. Although it is useful reading for those interested in East Africa, pastoralism and social transformation, it is perhaps most valuable as a study of the causes and consequences of violence.

## RELIGION AND PARTY POLITICS

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702518296

*The Time of Politics (Zamanin Siyasa): Islam and the Politics of Legitimacy in Northern Nigeria, 1950–1966.* By JONATHAN T. REYNOLDS. Lanham and New York: University Press of America, 1999. Pp. iii + 229. No price given, paperback (ISBN 0-7618-1946-0).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, decolonization, Islam, politics.

Far reaching changes resulting from the imposition of British colonialism in northern Nigeria remained from 1903 to 1945 concealed behind the façade of ‘indirect rule’. As decolonization began after the Second World War, the implications of these changes unfolded during *zamanin siyasa*, a distinct era defined by the introduction of electoral politics in 1950, independence in 1960, the collapse of Nigeria’s First Republic in 1966 and civil war from 1966 to 1970. In revisiting this eventful period, which has been studied by numerous scholars, Reynolds presents his volume as ‘a reevaluation of the role of Islam in the politics of Nigeria’s transition to civilian rule and First Republic’.

His sources include interviews with politicians of the era, declassified government documents, newspaper articles, and political poems and songs. Reynolds offers ‘a direct and detailed view into the workings of the British and NPC [Northern Peoples Congress] governments of the time’, while at the same time recovering ‘a number of voices and perspectives ... to piece together a more comprehensive understanding of the era’ (p. 9). Reynolds successfully accomplishes his declared goals in this concise volume.

The narrative centres around ‘the conflict between two ideologically antagonistic constituencies, the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) and the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU)’. He identifies NPC as a conservative political party made up of individuals seeking to preserve the position of ‘traditional ruling class who had held power ... since Usman dan Fodio’s jihad led to the foundation of the Sokoto Caliphate in the early nineteenth century’. He characterizes NEPU as a ‘radical party led largely by a young educated cadre who drew upon both Western and Islamic political vocabulary’ to articulate its goal of overthrowing the traditional ruling class that dominated the conservative NPC. Northern Nigeria specialists will find these characterizations familiar.

Reynolds’s ‘central goal’ is to ‘show that each party recognized the interrelated nature of religious and political legitimacy in Northern Nigeria’. This observation will also be familiar, especially in light of all the clamour for the application of ‘full sharia’ in contemporary northern Nigeria. Yet, with few notable exceptions, the older literature does not always pay sufficient attention to the ‘interrelated nature of religious and political legitimacy’. Reynolds’s most valuable contribution is the sustained analysis of that interrelationship as manifested in diverse political arenas, including reconstructions of history and its relevance to contemporary politics (Chapter 1), judicial administration of different legal systems and application of Islamic law (Chapters 2 and 3), invoking Islam to justify different stands on women’s rights and participation in politics (Chapter 4), and utilizing Sufi orders to control political constituencies (Chapters 5 and 6).

In each of these chapters, Reynolds presents convincing illustrations of his argument that, despite their different political goals, NPC and NEPU drew upon the same Islamic sources (religious texts, historical references and religious institutions) but interpreted them differently to legitimize opposite political stands and goals, while at the same time each party challenged its opponent’s dedication to Islam. Reynolds contends that, as the ruling party, the NPC utilized its control of religious institutions to defend its hold on power, used its command of resources

to offer religious services to its supporters and emphasized its leadership's descent from Usman dan Fodio. In contrast, NEPU as opposition party lacked institutional power, resorted to emphasizing Islamic piety and scholarship as the most important aspects of Usman dan Fodio's Islamic legacy and disputed the legitimacy of NPC's partisan utilization of Islamic institutions.

British authorities arbitrated the struggle for power between NPC and NEPU. The British imposed a political structure requiring western-style separation of religion and politics, and this helped in the 1950s to submerge the 'inherent tendency of the two parties to combine religion and politics'. But after independence in 1960, the tendency became increasingly overt, 'blurring the division between the secular and religious which the British had sought to establish' (p. 4). The fact that neither British officers nor the political structure they imposed could prevent the political utilization of Islam supports Reynolds's contention about the interrelated nature of religion and political legitimacy in northern Nigeria.

A theoretical probing into the underlying dynamics of Muslims' encounter with colonialism could have significantly enhanced the contribution of this volume to our understanding of similar cases of Muslims' encounters with colonialism in Africa. Of course, the author did not set himself to write a theoretical treatise; criticism of the omission must not be taken too seriously since any volume can only cover a limited number of issues. There are, however, some problems, particularly the poor proof-reading of Chapter 6, where *Qadariyya* (the ancient Islamic theological sect that embraced *al-Qadar*, predestination) and *Qadiriyya* (the Sufi order named after al-Shaykh Abd al-Qadir) are used as if they were interchangeable (pp. 161 and 163; see also pp. 168 and 174 for *sadalu/sabalu*). Shaykh Ibrahim Niass of Koalack could not have 'renewed the *silsila* of Kano Emir Abbas in 1937' (p. 176) since Emir Abbas (r. 1902–19) died in 1919. On the other hand, Emir of Kano Abdullahi Bayero (r. 1926–53) did in fact renew his *silsila* with Shaykh Ibrahim Niass. Quibbling over these little errors should not prevent appreciation of a very readable volume that adds to our understanding of Islamic factors in the politics of northern Nigeria.

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## WHO MURDERED LUMUMBA ?

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702528292

*The Assassination of Lumumba*. By LUDO DE WITTE. Translated by ANN WRIGHT and RENÉE FENBY. London: Verso, 2001. Pp. xxxii + 224. £19 (ISBN 1-85984-618-1).

KEY WORDS: Democratic Republic of Congo, nationalism, decolonization.

Patrice Lumumba is an iconic figure in the struggle for liberation, not only in what had been the Belgian Congo but in the whole of Africa. His brief term as prime minister of the Congo from independence on 30 June 1960 until his death on 17 January 1961 has been the subject of a shelf-full of monographs which include: Madeleine Kalb, *The Congo Cables: The Cold War in Africa* (New York, 1982); Jacques Brassine and Jean Kestergat, *Qui a tué Patrice Lumumba?* (Paris, 1991); and Ludo de Witte's own *Crisis in Kongo: De rol van de Verenigde Naties, de regering-Eyskens en het koninkhuis in de omverwerping van Lumumba en de opkomst van Mobutu* (Louvain, 1996). The Flemish edition of the volume under review, *De moord op Lumumba* (Leuven, 1999) caused such a stir that the Belgian parliament set up a Commission of Inquiry, whose report was intended for autumn

2001, to examine the extent of the then Belgian government's responsibility for Lumumba's assassination (p. xix).

Each iteration of the historiography of the Lumumba assassination brings to light new evidence, and de Witte's is the most comprehensive to date. It includes materials from the Belgian Foreign Ministry and the major Belgian repositories covering the period, the United Nations and the private papers of Ralph Bunche. Should not increasing documentation make each volume superior to its predecessor? Historians, alas, must proceed to the question of just what the author is trying to prove and what kind of reading he gives to his sources.

De Witte justifies his second volume on Lumumba because the latter's 'assassination encapsulates the essence of the Congo crisis' (p. xxii). His argument is 'that Brussels [wanted] to eliminate Lumumba physically' (p. xvii) and that 'Brussels and the other Western powers, operating under cover of the United Nations, were determined to overthrow Lumumba's nationalist government and to install a neo-colonial regime, thereby putting the country at the mercy of the trusts and holding companies which had controlled it for decades' (p. xxi). The author is therefore acting as prosecutor against the Belgian government, the western powers and the United Nations, which he considers parties to a grand conspiracy to kill Congolese independence at birth.

To be sure, de Witte proves part of his case. His evidence shows that the Eyskens government in Belgium was party to Lumumba's assassination and that, as Madeleine Kalb showed, the CIA also wanted Lumumba dead. Nevertheless, these proofs do not constitute a conspiracy of the western powers, the United Nations and monopoly capitalism. Indeed, de Witte's accusations against the UN has elicited a strong refutation from Ralph Bunche's former chief assistant, Brian Urquhart, in the *New York Review of Books*, 4 October 2001, pp. 4–7. Urquhart argues that the UN's role in the Congo was to reconcile the various parties and that Lumumba displayed a lack of 'the capacity and temperament to govern'. Similarly, de Witte dismisses Brassine's suggestion that local enemies might have played a determining role in Lumumba's demise. One must ask how much agency de Witte's position leaves to Congolese players.

The principal problem with this monograph, for this writer, is an outmoded Marxist framework conceived in terms of 'bourgeois ambitions' (p. 176), 'Congolese masses' (p. 178) and a 'proletariat [which] gradually grew in self-confidence and experience of the struggle' (p. 177). A little later de Witte is obliged to admit that 'Lumumba took power without a well-organised national movement at his disposal' (p. 180). De Witte thus applies a sectarian reading to his sources which does not really fit the circumstances. Other books on Lumumba's life and struggle will undoubtedly appear on the heels of current inquiry. One hopes that their interpretative frameworks will provide a more inclusive explanation of Lumumba and his times.

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#### CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: STILL NEGLECTED IN ANGLOPHONE ACADEME

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702538299

*Political Transformations of the Congo*. By MBOW M. AMPHAS. Edinburgh: Pentland Press, 2000. Pp. xv + 135. £13.50 (ISBN 1-5821-070-4).

KEY WORDS: Republic of Congo, politics/political, post-colonial.

Congo-Brazzaville, along with the Central African Republic and Chad, is certainly among the least-studied African states, at least in the anglophone world.

Indeed, the last full-length study to appear on Congo in English, melding the translation of an earlier French study with an update by the translators, was published in 1973.<sup>1</sup> Yet the country has just experienced a fascinating, if failed and depressing, experiment with multi-party politics during the 1990s. Accordingly, any reasonably sound new work in English on the country would be welcome among Africanists who follow developments in the former French Equatorial Africa.

Alas, the current work is so haphazard in its organization, and slipshod in its meagre analysis, that it cannot entirely be embraced. The volume appears to be mainly a compendium of notes initially gathered for some earlier publication that never came to fruition. The description of the book in the preface, dated '1989', apparently describes the volume as originally planned, a study covering only Congo's post-independence political history to that date. The author's 'postface' however entails some light analysis of the transition from mono-partyism that took place in Congo in 1991, and is dated 'January 1992'. Confusingly the volume also contains a seven-page chapter on the political traumas of the 1990s, including the 1997 civil war. Following this chapter is a 'conclusion' about the Marxist state in Congo, treating the latter as though it were still extant. So the volume is truly a hodgepodge of fragments of historical summary and contemporaneous political analysis, thrown together without regard to thematic logic or chronology.

Worse still, the author has neither conducted systematic research into the events he has analyzed, nor produced convincing arguments about the important questions of Congo's recent history. The bibliography does not include one single entry on the politics of Congo in the 1990s, despite the sizable volume of materials available in French. Meanwhile, most of the author's assertions are either utterly bland or misleading. An example of the former is his valid, but uninformative, claim that 'both Lissouba and Sassou Nguesso embraced a civil war [in 1997] in order to stay in power or to gain power. They both care more about power than they do about the people' (p. 104). Among the surprising and controversial assertions is one that 'all political changes which occurred in the Congo [after 1963] are the expression of the Congolese will – they cannot be attributed to French or Soviet influence' (p. 28). Finally, the author's intended points are often obscured by poor writing, as when he seems to label the tendency of Congolese politicians to rely on military solutions a 'misconception' (p. 107). Regrettably, then, the English-only speaker interested in Congo is better advised to rely on the few existing sources whether for basic politico-historical narrative or for analysis of the country's recent political traumas.

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## DANGER, DISSIMULATION AND FEMALE SOCIALITY

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702548295

*The Underneath of Things: Violence, History and the Everyday in Sierra Leone.* By MARIANE C. FERME. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. Pp. xii + 287. \$60 (ISBN 0-520-22542-2); \$24.95, paperback (ISBN 0-520-22543-0). KEY WORDS: Sierra Leone, culture, memory, women.

Ritual secrecy and cultural creolization are signature themes in the ethnography of the Upper Guinea Coast, and scholars have long suggested that these

<sup>1</sup> René Gauze, *The Politics of Congo-Brazzaville*, transl., revised and updated by Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff (Stanford, 1973). An essay on Congo also occupied approximately one third of Chris Allen *et al.* (eds.), *Benin, the Congo, Burkina Faso* (London, 1989).



phenomena are linked to the region's early and protracted involvement in both trans-Saharan and transatlantic networks. It is indeed easy to imagine how secrecy and dissimulation might have been vital ingredients in both the construction and protection of local communities in a context of recurrent encounters between strangers. Yet, adding substance to this scenario has always proven difficult. Mariane Ferme's book offers to break new ground on this issue. It opens with a promise 'to explore the links between a violent historical and political legacy and a cultural order of dissimulation in the Upper Guinea Coast of West Africa'. The basic argument, as outlined in the introduction, is that this 'history of instability and danger', a product of the Atlantic slave trade and concurrent local struggles for control over natural resources and trade routes, remains culturally imprinted upon the modern Mende-speakers of south-eastern Sierra Leone as an 'hermeneutic of suspicion': a repertoire of cultural skills aimed at uncovering hidden meanings and intentions underneath the visible surface of objects and social performance. In this cultural milieu, interpretation is always an overtly political act that carries its own germs of denial and dissolution. But history always intrudes upon the present because past practices leave irreducibly material traces (settlement sites, buildings, farm bush, graves, tools, clothes, hairstyles, etc. that serve, metonymically, as prompts for a range of activities (imaginative and aesthetic as well as material and practical) that recreate Mende sociality. Old techniques for coping with a social environment of distrust were recently put to effective use during the Revolutionary United Front insurgency.

Here we have all the ingredients of a landmark study. The book proves worthy of such acclaim, although it often seems incomplete – especially in its treatment of history and over political practice. The problem here is partly a matter of style. The book's narrative structure is made to converge with Ferme's theory of Mende sociality. We are presented with a series of historical and ethnographic details (some presented as interludes between chapters), and these are taken as prompts for discussions that often range freely into theory and cross-cultural comparison. This narrative style works brilliantly at times, but it also sees Ferme writing of objects and substances as if they had independent agency and thus capacity to 'dissemble'. Actual conversations between Mende people, and contests over interpretation, only tend to intrude into the narrative as isolated details.

The core of the book is a sensitively researched account of the everyday activities that serve to create and re-create female sociality in a rural Mende village. In the pre-colonial past, Mende women featured prominently as emissaries. The 'big houses' occupied by the wives and female kin of high-status men were also serviced by slave labour and served themselves as milieux for the social re-incorporation of these slaves. Female mediation is visible today in ritual: the *mabole*, a woman initiated as a 'man', leads male neophytes out of seclusion and women noisily occupy 'male' spaces during their own initiations. It is also visible in the constant movement of adult women between households. Ferme carries this theme of mediation forward to her discussion of the words, substances, exchanges and ritual performances that seem to emphasize distinctions between surface appearances and inner realities yet offer no more than clues to the nature of that relationship. She detects an almost wilful denial of stability and closure in Mende interpretative and classificatory practice, and suggests that this has emerged out of long historical experience that placed a premium on the ability to cope with uncertainty. The only problem with this argument is that it tends to overlook Mende practices – initiation and the ritual separation of the sexes comes readily to mind – that constitute attempts to impose cultural order on unruly phenomena whatever the odds. One finds hints throughout Ferme's account that such ordering is a particular concern of men. They are the dominant group in formal politics and control land allocations for farming and housing. As such, they are deeply interested in

historical precedent and like to measure their statuses by the proximity of their dwellings to the village shrine and the graves of prominent ancestors. Young male 'strangers' seeking residence in their villages are perennially viewed with suspicion even when their labour is indispensable. But we are never really told how the other half lives, and this lack adds to the general impression of incompleteness.

In the final analysis, however, the fact that one can trace issues that Ferme does not explicitly mention, and are left wanting more, is a testament to the quality and originality of her research. This book sets a new standard for Upper Guinea Coast scholarship, and should become essential reading for anthropologists and historians alike.

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RICHARD FANTHORPE

### PATHS OF RICE IMPROVEMENT

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702558291

*Wide Crossing: The West Africa Rice Development Association in Transition, 1985–2000.* By JOHN R. WALSH. (SOAS Studies in Development Geography).

Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001. Pp. x + 152. £37.50 (ISBN 0-7546-1770-X).

KEY WORDS: Sierra Leone, Western Africa, agriculture, technology.

This intriguing little volume is institutional hagiography, not history. Good hagiography tells no lies. It misinforms by concentration on the object of veneration. A shining aura is established by focusing on the saint and ignoring the larger picture altogether. This is the basis on which the present volume proceeds. It tells the story of how a small and failing international research institution, the West African Rice Development Association (WARDA), now based in Bouake in Côte d'Ivoire, reinvented itself, and achieved favour with the donors, through the project of combining the best features of the African and Asian species of rice (*Oryza glaberrima*, *O. sativa*).

Cross-breeding had been attempted before but always ran into the problem that the progeny were sterile. By persistence, judicious use of biotechnology and a decision systematically to favour (through back-crossing) the Asian parent, WARDA scientists succeeded in producing a range of new inter-specific hybrid rices that combine some of the weed-competitiveness, disease resistance and earliness of African rice with high yield characteristics of Asian rice. WARDA expects these new so-called 'nerica' rices (new rices for Africa) to prove a boon to African peasant farmers working poorer soils.

The book itself is a reliable (if non-technical) guide to the WARDA work, but provides historians of science and technology with little beyond what might be gleaned from WARDA annual reports and publicity brochures. There are two reasons to attempt some demystification. First, there is the question of whether the saint has borrowed some of his aura from sinners in the vicinity. In particular, it raises the vexed issue of whether in development practice successes are achieved at the expense of other valuable activities, which then suffer from neglect. Second, there is the question of whether the WARDA research strategy (introgressing African rice characteristics into basically Asian rice stock) is the best use of the undoubted genetic potential of African rice.

The WARDA programme for inter-specific breeding was launched (this book tells us) in late 1991. There is no mention of a multidisciplinary Sierra Leone-based project for the systematic collection and characterization of African rice launched in the late 1980s<sup>1</sup> nor that a funding proposal arising from this other

<sup>1</sup> M. S. Jusu and S. S. Monde, 'Panicle and grain characteristics of some *O. glaberrima* cultivars in Sierra Leone', *IRRI Newsletter*, 15 (1990).

activity was drawn to the attention of WARDA scientists by two of its authors from the Rokupr Rice Research Station in Sierra Leone at about the time WARDA launched its programme.<sup>2</sup> There is no surprise the Sierra Leonean scientists in question were keen to cooperate with WARDA on research in African rice. The WARDA mangrove rice research programme had long been based at Rokupr, and over the years made systematic use of materials and results from the national institution. The main breeder on the WARDA inter-specific programme is a Sierra Leonean, and a former Rokupr scientist. What is surprising is that the present book makes no mention of the Rokupr connection, that an interest in improving African rice is traceable in Rokupr records as far back as 1950, or that work was under way to secure *O. glaberrima* germplasm that might be of especial significance for low-resource farmers on marginal land. Rokupr makes it into the index of the current volume only in connection with the background of the main breeder on the WARDA inter-specific programme.

In turning down a 1992 request to cover the collection and characterization work just mentioned (a request of which I was a signatory), a potential research donor's rejection slip included the extremely up-to-the-minute comment of one anonymous assessor that the proposed research was unnecessary since it was already being undertaken by WARDA. This was not strictly true, since the focus of the Rokupr-based study was on the wider potential of African rice. The work attracted other donors, and flourishes. The reason it ought to have been mentioned in Walsh's volume is that it represents an alternative approach to the genetic potential of African rice to that deployed in the WARDA wide-crossing programme.

Jusu and others argue that first we have to understand the dynamics of the use West African farmers make of African rice.<sup>3</sup> Two possibilities pursued by this other programme are that there may already be inter-specific rice crosses achieved under farmer management, and that these could provide important clues to whether or not new crosses are needed.<sup>4</sup> Second, study of what farmers do with existing planting materials shows that they combine African and Asian rices, in field mixtures, or through niche planting strategies.<sup>5</sup> It is not at all clear that combining the characteristics of two species (or varieties) already grown successfully in mixtures into a single plant makes particular sense. It might be better to breed both African and Asian rices for complementary usage. To use an old Marxist phrase, WARDA appears to have fallen victim to the 'fetishization of the commodity', in this case, the Green Revolution preoccupation with the publicity-

<sup>2</sup> S. S. Monde and P. Richards, 'Rice biodiversity conservation and plant improvement in Sierra Leone', in A. Putter (ed.), *Safeguarding the Genetic Basis of Africa's Traditional Crops: Proceedings of the CTA/IBPGR/KARI/UNEP Seminar, Nairobi, October 1992* (Wageningen and Rome, 1992), 83–100.

<sup>3</sup> M. S. Jusu, 'Management of genetic variability in rice (*Oryza sativa* and *O. glaberrima*) by breeders, and by Temne, Susu and Limba farmers, in Sierra Leone' (Ph.D. thesis, Wageningen Agricultural University, 1999); K. Longley, 'The social life of seeds' (Ph.D. thesis, University College London, 1998); K. Langley and P. Richards, 'Farmer innovation and local knowledge in Sierra Leone', in K. Amanor, W. de Boef, A. Bebbington and K. Wellard (eds.), *Cultivating Knowledge* (London, 1993); Monde and Richards, 'Rice biodiversity'; P. Richards, *Coping with Hunger: Hazard and Experiment in a West African Rice Farming System* (London, 1986); P. Richards, 'Agrarian creolization: the ethnobiology, history, culture and politics of West African rice', in R. Ellen and K. Fukui (eds.), *Redefining Nature: Ecology, Culture and Domestication* (Oxford, 1996); P. Richards, 'Towards an African green revolution? An anthropology of rice research in Sierra Leone', in E. Nyerges (ed.), *The Ecology of Practice: Studies of Food Crop Production in Sub-Saharan West Africa* (Newark, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Jusu, 'Management'

<sup>5</sup> Richards, *Coping*; Jusu, 'Management'; Longley, 'Social life of seeds'.

garnering properties of ‘miracle’ seed. But debating the basic aims of crop improvement research are questions the present book, stripped of all context, simply cannot address.

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PAUL RICHARDS

## DEALING WITH HISTORY

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702568298

*A Country Unmasked: Inside South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.* By ALEX BORAINÉ. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Pp. xv + 466. £20 (ISBN 0-19-57-1805-4).

*The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Legitimizing the Post-Apartheid State.* By RICHARD A. WILSON. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pp. xxi + 271. £45; \$64.95 (ISBN 0-521-80219-9); £15.95; \$22.95, paperback (ISBN 0-521-00194-3).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, apartheid, memory, politics.

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has attracted gushing praise and vicious censure in equal measure. *A Country Unmasked* is Alex Borainé's lengthy and detailed memoir of his time as the commission's deputy chairman. This important book covers the discussions leading to the TRC's conception, the first Victims' Hearings, the amnesty process and the political and legal battles precipitated by the commission's final report. Borainé also offers us a defence of amnesty and valuable accounts of the internal political and racial fissures which the TRC confronted. The commission's encounters with Winnie Mandela, P. W. Botha and F. W. de Klerk receive some engaging and largely dispassionate coverage. Borainé rounds his work off with chapters focusing on what he takes to be the meaning of reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa and the value of the South African experience to other truth-seeking exercises around the world.

Much of the book is careful and judicious, advancing well-supported practical arguments for South Africa's response to apartheid-era abuses. Borainé's discussion of the reasons for preferring conditional amnesty to prosecution is thoughtful, if not entirely persuasive. Scores are settled, however. Borainé propounds his belief that some fellow commissioners subordinated the TRC's integrity to their short-term political interests at critical moments. His account of the furore surrounding the TRC's findings on the African National Congress's conduct during the liberation struggle makes clear his view that the ‘party loyalty’ of some commissioners led them to favour preferential treatment of the ANC by the commission (p. 307).

Worthy though it is, *A Country Unmasked* is sometimes frustratingly repetitive, too often making the same point by simply quoting a different source. Nowhere is this more evident than in the opening pages of Chapter 10, ‘What price reconciliation?’. Here, Borainé cites in superfluous detail a series of newspaper articles and polemics which all make essentially the same observation: that the TRC did a lot for the truth, a little for reconciliation and almost nothing for justice. His response to this assessment is just as fuzzy as the manner in which he formulates it. Borainé recounts a string of anecdotes, illustrating a number of instances in which, he says, individual forgiveness and reconciliation took place. He also falls into the trap of espousing in vague terms ‘the spirit of Ubuntu’ (on pp. 360–2) and quotes Filipino and South African poetry at length. Nowhere, however, does he ask himself the really difficult questions. How can one tell if someone really has forgiven? Did the values in terms of which the TRC expressed

itself make victims feel as though they *had* to forgive? Is it possible to measure reconciliation?

It would, of course, be too much to expect Boraine to be more than mildly interrogatory towards an institution and process he largely masterminded. In fact, an admirable quality of *A Country Unmasked* is that it sets out in far greater detail than other Truth Commissioners' memoirs many legitimate criticisms of the TRC process. In responding to them, Boraine is sometimes wildly unconvincing, but his book covers most of the debates sensibly and contains a lot of useful material. The biographical detail that only a TRC insider could produce makes Boraine's work well worth the patience it sometimes demands of the reader.

Richard Wilson's treatise on the TRC, *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa*, draws on extensive socio-anthropological fieldwork in order to make far-reaching and powerful criticisms of the commission's amnesty process. Wilson claims that in order to manufacture legitimacy for the post-apartheid political order, the new South African elite embarked on a publicity campaign that equated 'human rights with reconciliation and amnesty' (p. 228). The commission set itself up as a focus of ritual remembrance and catharsis, at which human rights abusers confessed to their crimes and were forgiven and reconciled with the new nation. This would conveniently gloss over the immunity they enjoyed and the dissatisfaction of individual victims who demanded the right to prosecute. Out of this ritual, there emerged an official history of apartheid and the bones of a new South African national identity on the one hand, but very little satisfaction for individual victims and a compromised popular understanding of human rights on the other.

It is impossible in this space to do justice to Wilson's subtle, complex and largely convincing book. Just about the best thing written on the TRC so far, it is deeply analytical yet broad in scope. Wilson offers us engaging chapters on the TRC's political life, the way in which it gathered information, and popular understandings of vengeance and retribution in urban African communities around Johannesburg. Although Wilson never fully explains just *how* the TRC managed to equate human rights talk with amnesty and reconciliation, his research demonstrates that this is how human rights and the TRC were understood at a local level. Using carefully selected case studies, Wilson shows how poor urban Africans – who had lived at the sharp end of the struggle – responded to the commission's rhetoric, and makes a solid case for believing that popular responses to the TRC process were at best ambiguous.

This is a remarkable book. It should be read by anyone wishing to cut through much of the flotsam which has come to characterize talk of forgiveness and reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa. It will be of use to historians as a trenchant contemporary evaluation of the TRC's work.

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STUART WILSON

## AFRICAN WRITING IN AND FROM PARIS

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702578294

*Black Paris: The African Writers' Landscape.* By BENNETTA JULES-ROSETTE.

Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000. Pp. xviii + 350. \$17.95, paperback (ISBN 0-252-02066-9).

KEY WORDS: Diaspora, intellectual.

This book could well have been entitled *The Legacy of Présence Africaine*. Bennetta Jules-Rosette has rightly placed at the centre of her excellent study the determining role played by the venerable journal founded by Alioune Diop and the

Society of African Culture, the organization later associated with the journal, in the literary, intellectual and cultural movements of the francophone African elite. For although French-speaking Africans and West Indians living in Paris had been active in the years between the two world wars in articulating a black racial consciousness derived from a new awareness of the cultural heritage of Africa, it was not until the appearance of *Présence Africaine* in 1947 that their efforts acquired an organizing principle, and even a sense of direction.

In the first part of her book, Jules-Rosette provides an exhaustive review of the early numbers of the journal, highlighting the contributions of eminent French writers and scholars whose collaboration lent the journal the intellectual legitimation needed for its survival. Her analysis of the subsequent numbers focuses on the debates around the concept of Négritude and issues of national culture and decolonization with which francophone black intellectuals were preoccupied throughout the 1950s and well into the post-independence period. By the mid-1950s, the journal had expanded into a publishing house, rapidly establishing itself at the forefront of black expression in French. Jules-Rosette cites the publication of Placide Tempels's *Bantu Philosophy* as an indication of the affirmative intent that motivated this expansion, but even more significant was the decision to bring out Cheik Anta Diop's monumental and controversial work, *Nations nègres et culture*, with its bold thesis of the African origin of western civilization.

Jules-Rosette dwells at length on the connection between the French school of anthropology and the formation of francophone African thought, but does not in my view take sufficient account of the way in which the Africans appropriated the theories of French scholars in their reconstruction of the African image, as for example in the deliberate inversion by Senghor of Lévy-Bruhl's concept of 'primitive thought' in his own formulation of Négritude. On the other hand, the critical distance she maintains between the cultural nationalism of francophone African intellectuals, with its essentialist emphasis, ensures a more balanced appraisal of their efforts and their achievement than is to be found in previous studies.

Of particular interest is the account she provides of the tireless organizational effort deployed by Alioune Diop, culminating in the two congresses of black intellectuals held at Paris in 1956 and at Rome in 1959, manifestations that were followed later by the Black Arts Festival held at Dakar in 1966. Jules-Rosette places these marking events in the context of the continuous intellectual and cultural activity undertaken by *Présence Africaine* during what may be termed its heroic years, from its inception up to the death of Alioune Diop in 1980. The difficulties that the *Présence Africaine* organization began to experience from this time have as much to do with the emergence of new publishers oriented towards African specializations as with the crisis of post-colonial Africa, a situation that deprived the organization of the official patronage it enjoyed from many African states, and therefore of its commanding position in African intellectual life. Although *Présence Africaine* has survived, the new generation of writers that have come into prominence in the last twenty years have a much less defined connection with the organization than their predecessors.

The latter part of Jules-Rosette's book is devoted to the new phase of the literary and intellectual expression of 'Black Paris' represented by the work of these younger writers permanently established in Paris, such as Simon Njami, Paul Dakeyo and Calixthe Beyala. This part of her book provides, in a mixture of direct presentation and personal interviews, a broad canvas of their publications and ideas and is especially valuable for its introduction to a wider public of new developments in francophone African literature. These developments are related to the emergence in France, and especially in Paris and its environs, of an immigrant African community with its own distinctive life styles. The tensions

arising from the troubled relation of this community to the French people, grown hostile to the 'foreign' elements in their midst (a collective sentiment well reflected in the Pasqua laws) and which were dramatized by the revolt of the *sans papiers* at the church of St Ambroise a few years ago, have been vividly depicted in the novel entitled *La Polyandre* by the Congolese writer Bolya.

Jules-Rosette's discussion of the literature produced by the younger writers demonstrates how it explores their experience of alienation while striving at the same time to create and sustain an imaginative ideal of Africa. In this respect, the concept of 'parisianism' that she proposes as a generic term for their work seems to me problematic. Beyond its reference to a location, the term seems to designate a point of view (she singles out 'individualism' and the quest for the universal' as recurrent themes) as well as a mode of writing, in Barthes's sense of *écriture*. But these cannot be said to be traits specific to these writers. Indeed, the example she provides on p. 190 of the use of argot in the jazz-inflected style of one of the writers reminds one of nothing so much as Ferdinand Céline.

What seems to distinguish these writers, then, is their experience of an ambiguity inherent in their double cultural relation to France and to Africa. It is this same ambiguity that the writers and intellectuals associated with *Présence Africaine* had to confront. The comprehensive view of francophone expression presented by Jules-Rosette under the rubric of 'Black Paris' indicates that, despite the differences in contexts and modes of response, the younger writers are as much beholden to the legacy of Alioune Diop as their elders.

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## HISTORY OF AFRICAN POLITICAL IDEAS

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702588290

*Political Discourses in African Thought: 1860 to the Present.* By PIETER BOELE VAN HENS BROEK. Westport: Praeger, 1999. Pp. ix + 238. £47.95 (ISBN 0-275-96494-9).

KEY WORDS: Intellectual, nationalist, political.

This book is an act of cross-cultural generosity: it wants to fill a gap that exists in histories of political ideas of Africa. It argues that 'The history of political ideas is a neglected field of study ... when it comes to Africa where African thought has been studied, expositions of metaphysical systems abound, whereas discussions of critical or theoretical thought belonging to individual Africans are quite rare. Within Africanist scholarship the African intellectual remains an anomaly' (p. 1). The author therefore works in the spirit of promoting Africa's political intellectuals. The goal is to 'further "normalize" ... the academic treatment of Africa'. But this is also a careful, cautious, book. The author is acutely aware of his status as a non-African: 'The outsider has to strike a delicate balance between uncommitted and overcommitted attitudes' (pp. 4-5). 'My role', the author concluded, 'can be compared to that of a parliamentary journalist: well informed and incisive while interviewing, but not attempting to take the seat of the parliamentarian' (p. 6).

Of the book's eight chapters, the first explains the choice of subject matter, especially why a history of modern African political thought has to begin with the colonial period *and* in anglophone West Africa. The second chapter is a self-contained philosophical treatise on the problem of 'interpretation' of political discourses, drawing particularly from the works of Quentin Skinner, Thomas Kuhn and Lolita Nauta. The third chapter, 'Confronting the European challenge', provides – by way of 'hermeneutics' – biographical sketches of some nineteenth-

century West African political thinkers: Africanus Horton, Edward Wilmot Blyden and Casely Hayford. Chapters 4–5 explicate the political ideas of these individuals, plus the social theories of two anti-colonial politicians: Nnamdi Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah. While Chapter 6, on the basis of the preceding two chapters, provides a ‘Grammar of modern African political thought’, Chapter 7 updates the reader on the mutations of earlier West African political ideas into the ‘Discourse of democracy’ of the 1990s. Finally, Chapter 8 assesses the discourse of democracy.

The book argues that African political discourses in the past 150 years have operated on three models: ‘modernist liberal democracy’, ‘culturalist neotraditionalist’ and ‘radical’. For the first, ‘the problem of political order in modern societies is universal ... The issue of democracy in Africa, consequently, is seen basically as a question of implementation’. This modernist discourse was advanced, naturally, by the ‘modernizers’: Africanu Horton and Nnamdi Azikiwe (p. 196). The culturalist neotraditionalists, on the other hand, advocated ‘a political logic of segregation’ (p. 179). ‘Culturalism’, for example, ‘hypostatizes the idea of cultures, races, or identities, it ossifies differences between cultures, creates “aliens” and suggests, for instance, that purity of the groups and conformity within groups are the normal cases’ (p. 197). Finally, the ‘radical’ wing in African political discourses promotes a ‘liberation model’ of politics. They believe that there exists an ‘all-pervading opposition between oppressor and oppressed’ and subsume ‘the issue of democracy under that of social struggle’. This wing in African political thought is more interested in ‘Who hold power ... rather than how power can be handled’ (p. 198). Kwame Nkrumah is considered representative of this view of African politics.

Van Hensbroek concludes that, ‘Despite their differences, the three models of thought in different ways share the characteristic of a bipolar structure ... For each, “we” and “they” or Africa and the West become the major compartment of this world’ (p. 200). This polarity, the author warns, has a troubling consequence: ‘it radically simplifies our thinking’. He recommends that we start an intellectual ‘depolarization’ process (p. 204), where one can cultivate genuine pluralism in political thought for modern Africa, so that ‘a multitude of differences and resemblances, problems and options, could be conceived’. This, without doubt, is a proposal deserving of serious attention.

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E. C. EZE

## SHORTER NOTICES

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702598297

*Maps of Africa to 1900: A Checklist of Maps in Atlases and Geographical Journals in the Collections of the University of Illinois, Urbana–Champaign.* By THOMAS J. BASSETT and YVETTE SCHEVEN. Urbana–Champaign: University of Illinois Library. 2000. Pp. xiii + 317. \$35 (ISBN 0-87845-118-8).

KEY WORDS: Cartography, pre-colonial.

This checklist provides valuable information on no less than 2,416 maps published between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. Since a large proportion of these appeared in nineteenth-century journals that circulated widely, historians of Africa will not need to visit Illinois in order to make use of such a reference work. The book is divided into five regions (readers are warned about the need to check more than one), and within each region the maps are listed chronologically, making it possible to follow the development of Africanist cartography through the period. The checklist’s value is enhanced by three excellent indexes.



The eight-page introduction includes some remarks on new insights offered by postmodernism (readers of this journal will recall Bassett's amusing article on the ever-shifting Mountains of Kong in 1991) and four figures depicting quantitative aspects of the collection. The most interesting of these illustrates the 'national [sic] origins' of the atlas maps in the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, indicating the predominance of Italian and Belgian maps (and the total absence of British or Dutch ones) in the sixteenth century, as well as a remarkable decline in the number of British maps after 1800. However, I cannot agree that an analysis of the maps published in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, the *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie de Paris* and *Petermanns Geographische Mittheilungen* between 1850 and 1899 shows 'a clear relationship between the regional focus of journal maps and the colonial interests of the country in which the journal was published'. On the contrary, Figure 4, which divides the continent into 'North', 'East', 'South', 'Central', 'West' and 'Islands', shows that *Petermanns Mittheilungen* had the most maps of North Africa (a sphere of German interest?) and that the Société de Géographie produced more maps of East Africa (a French sphere?) than of West Africa.

It is slightly disturbing that in a work of reference the 25 'references' at the end of the introduction should contain four misprints. Scholarly bibliographic work and postmodernist 'vigour' make strange bedfellows. Still, the checklist itself is well worth having.

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ADAM JONES

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702608291

*Ancestors, Power and History in Madagascar*. Edited by KAREN MIDDLETON. (Studies of Religion in Africa: Supplements to the *Journal of Religion*). Leiden, Boston and Cologne: Brill, 1999. Pp. xi + 360. \$94.50 (ISBN 90-04-11289-8).

KEY WORDS: Madagascar, anthropology, memory, religion.

Though the title seems to promise something for all, including historians, the scope of this collection is far more restricted. In fact, it excludes major voices and perspectives in the scholarly quest for an understanding of how ancestors have been represented over time in Madagascar and does not address wider issues that have been raised in recent literature, whether within the confines of Malagasy studies or in the broader fields hinted at in the title. For historians of Africa, the result is particularly disappointing. In the various contributions one would be hard pressed to learn of the existence of the *Journal of African History*, of African history or even of the discipline of history.

The editor's introduction confines discussion primarily to the work of one scholar and fails to capture the breadth and depth of recent scholarship. This narrowness extends to theory. The collection conceives of religion primarily as ritual but fails to distinguish it from, and relate it to, other analytical categories such as ideology. The result is both parochial and superficial.

Though it used to be common among historians to complain that ethnographers did little to take historical change into account, ethnographers today often practice history as well as talk about it. In this respect the absence of the voice of Gillian Feeley-Harnik, who has done more than any other ethnographer of Madagascar to give history its due, is a major gap. The bypassing of history is especially egregious as there are so many possibilities nowadays for fertile collaboration among historians and anthropologists. The questions raised in the collection about the role of memory in the present could have led to consideration of the vast corpus of literature inspired over the past twenty years by Nora and Le Goff on 'sites of

memory'. Yet in an age when fruitful debates about history and memory are raging, the collection omits the fine textures of historical dynamic and introduces history only as a representation active among the living. One would think that ancestors did not exist in the past as well.

These generalizations do not apply to all contributions in the collection. Several essays do stand out from the rest for their recognition of a historical reality apart from the present; these include Pier Larson's study of the Merina royal bath and Katrina Hested Skeie's portrait of Norwegian missionaries. Despite these exceptions, the collection harkens back to an earlier age of disciplinary insularity when the history of African peoples served merely as a charter for the ethnographic present and did not, in and of itself, merit deep engagement with the relevant historical sources.

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GERALD M. BERG

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702618298

*Rorke's Drift 1879: Anatomy of an Epic Zulu War Siege.* By EDMUND YORKE.

Stroud, UK and Charleston SC: Tempus Publishing, 2000. Pp. 176. £15.99;

\$26.99, paperback (ISBN 0-7524-1978-1).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, military.

Over the last twenty years, the history of the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 has been subjected to considerable scholarly attention. Much of it has been revisionist dealing with themes ranging from Lt.-Gen. Lord Chelmsford's problems of transport and supply to the role of the Natal Native Contingent in the campaign. However, the most significant thrust of recent research has been to rescue the Zulu from being the faceless 'other' of traditional military historiography, and to present them as protagonists with their own properly formulated military plans and objectives. This enterprise has required not only the analysis of the Zulu military system, but an understanding of the functioning of the Zulu state and society, and the many challenges threatening the kingdom's existence during the 1870s.

Edmund Yorke's new account of the Isandlwana campaign – of which the battle of Rorke's Drift was an element – singularly fails to engage with our greatly enhanced understanding of the part the Zulu army played, and this despite his claim in the preface to have made 'full use' of African sources. It is true that most of the more relevant published works (though not the essential manuscript sources in South African archival repositories) are cited in the bibliography, so the reason for the author's disconcertingly retrograde approach must be found elsewhere than in unfamiliarity with recent scholarship. Perhaps it lies with a preference for writing within a tradition of conventional battle history; or perhaps it reflects a desire to cater to a popular readership whose interest is primarily in imperial British soldiers, and not in their 'savage' foes.

Either way, the result is a study which adds nothing to our understanding of the battle of Rorke's Drift, yet which, by its disregard or misunderstanding of the Zulu dimension, seriously misconstrues its significance. Most crucially, by taking the self-serving statements of contemporary soldiers and officials at face value, the author falls into the time-honoured trap of arguing that the successful defence of Rorke's Drift saved Natal from a major Zulu invasion. This is to ignore King Cetshwayo's known preference for a defensive strategy, to misunderstand the customarily limited nature of Zulu large-scale raids into enemy territory, and to discount the insuperable problems of terrain, supply and distance which all militated against a strike deep into Natal.

There are other, better balanced books on the battle of Rorke's Drift already available with (it might be added) fewer typographical errors and mis-captioned illustrations.

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JOHN LABAND

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702628294

*The Boer War: Historiography and Annotated Bibliography*. By FRED R. VAN HARTESVELDT. Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 2000. Pp. 255. £66.95 (ISBN 0-313-30627-3).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, bibliography, imperialism, military.

The centenary of the South African or Boer War of 1899–1902 saw renewed interest in the war from both the public and academic spheres, and a subsequent proliferation of new and previously published material on the topic. However, as van Hartesveldt points out, such a flurry of research comes at the end of almost a century of work done in various quarters on the war – work which, in many cases, remains invisible to prospective readers owing to the absence of a single reference listing all significant publications up to the present. It is this lack of a central source to guide reading and research which van Hartesveldt addresses in *The Boer War*.

This excellent and authoritative work provides a useful guide to such efforts, with an annotated listing of 1,378 personal accounts, bibliographies and historical analyses concerned with the war. Taken together, these works comprise practically the sum of literature published before 2000 on Boer War military history and biography. The works thus referenced can be accessed in two ways: first, through footnotes to an historical overview of the events and personalities associated with the war years, which takes a standard chronological form and stretches from the 1830s to the granting of self-government to the former Transvaal republics in 1906. To illustrate: when this overview reaches the siege of Ladysmith, eleven references are provided to guide further reading; the works indicated range in concern from assessments of the tactical intricacies of the situation to those expressing fears of native uprisings contingent on a British withdrawal. In this way, a reader wishing to read more broadly around a particular event during the war need only find the appropriate paragraph and follow the references provided in order to access a multitude of appropriate works. The second method of using this book is through the well-stocked index. Here, for example, no less than 25 references to works containing information on the actions of Canadian troops during the war can be found. Similarly, British troops are listed by unit and regiment, so that further reading on the wartime actions of single units is made possible. The indexed works themselves are sorted by author, with full details (title, publisher, year) and a brief outline of their primary focus and stance. In most cases this outline is only a sentence or two long, although it extends to short paragraphs in some instances.

Van Hartesveldt's book is an indispensable guide to works on the war, particularly with respect of those – such as the writings of many Afrikaans authors – which exist outside the international main stream.

*University of Cape Town*

DYLAN CRAIG

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702638290

*Grandmother's Footsteps: Oral Tradition and South-east Angolan Narratives on the Colonial Encounter*. Edited by INGE BRINKMAN and AXEL FLEISCH. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe, 1999. Pp. 255. DM 34.77 (ISBN 3-89645-056-5).

KEY WORDS: Angola, oral narratives, women.

Oral history, and indeed a more formalized oral tradition, does not change while the auditor is listening, but as soon as her back is turned history and tradition can be radically metamorphosed to suit whatever new circumstance has arisen; hence the title – borrowed from Horton – of *Grandmother's Footsteps*.

Inge Brinkman and her friends, assistants and interpreters spent two seasons sitting in refugee huts on the Namibian border of Angola listening in to the colonial – and post-colonial – experience. The ‘whiteman’ arrived, epitomised by Diogo Cão, the first Portuguese explorer whom Angolan children encountered in the colonial – and post-colonial – school textbooks, bringing trade and religion and work and expropriation and punishment. And then the politicians arrived: Neto, the man whom Moscow trusted, and Savimbi, the man who spoke all the languages of the world. History and politics are seen largely through the eyes of women, and they philosophically watch the years roll by, sheltering as best they can from the violence of men.

Axel Fleisch is concerned with the language that the women use. The all-too-short narratives that have been transcribed to make up the great bulk of the book are given both in their vernacular and their English versions. Fleisch has prefaced the transcripts with a 25-page essay on the languages of south-eastern Angola for the benefit of linguistic scholars.

University of Kent

DAVID BIRMINGHAM

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702648297

*Agency and Action in Colonial Africa: Essays for John E. Flint*. Edited by CHRIS YOUNG and TIM STAPLETON. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001. Pp. x + 219. £42.50; \$60 (ISBN 0-333-77885-5).

KEY WORDS: Colonial, historiography, general.

John Flint's scholarly reputation was founded upon studies of leading figures in the history of Britain's African empire, but he was too steeped in the Africanist historiography of the 1950s to emphasize the role of colonial heroes. It was Oxford University Press, not the author, who chose the misleading title of his first book, *Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria* (so Goldie could be included in a select group of white men who had ‘set the course’ of West African history). Later, in his biography of Cecil Rhodes, Flint ignored the intention of his series editor (J. H. Plumb) ‘to explain the greatness of men who ... change the course of history and stain it with their own ambitions’, suggesting rather that, despite the magnitude of the changes in South Africa for which he was responsible, Rhodes himself was ‘a rather mediocre person’. In these and other important studies of the periods of partition and decolonization, John Flint saw individuals as agents of change, acting within broader African and imperial contexts. So the editors of this festschrift have chosen the theme of agency, inviting contributors to suggest how the work of individuals may be related to ‘the abstract forces and impersonal structures of history’.

As Professor of History at Dalhousie, John Flint expanded his broad grasp of African history, most notably editing Volume v of the *Cambridge History of Africa* while developing his interest in the structures of colonialism. The range of his interests is reflected in the work of his students, including the editors of, and other

contributors to, this tribute. As a whole, the book is more remarkable for the interesting diversity of its contents than for any clear illumination of the general theme of agency and action. Possibly Joey Power exemplifies this best in relation to 'Hastings Banda and Cold War politics in Malawi': she uses original material to show how a man sometimes regarded as an agent of neo-colonialism succeeded in exercising considerable initiative. An interesting essay by Myron Echenberg reveals the defective understanding of the renowned bacteriologist Robert Koch when applied to veterinary problems in southern Africa. Papers by Martin Klein and Anne McDougall respectively illustrate the very different approaches to slavery in colonial Senegambia taken by French colonial officers and by Mauritanian sorcerers. Timothy Stapleton and Ackson Kanduza illustrate reactions to different colonial pressures by two South African rulers, and Catherine Higgs usefully summarizes her research on D. D. T. Jabavu. Apollos Nwauwa, author of a good study of African university development, sees Arthur Creech Jones as an agent of this development, if sometimes a rather bewildered one. Inputs by Nigerian chiefs and intellectuals into some of the debates of the later colonial period are discussed by Allister Hinds and by Philip S. Zachermuk, and Chris Youé joins the debate about the apparent 'quiescence' of Rhodesian Africans during the 1950s. John Flint must feel very gratified to have inspired such varied and wide-ranging tributes.

*Aberdeen University*

JOHN D. HARGREAVES

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702658293

*The Conservative Government and the End of Empire, 1957–1964*. Edited by RONALD HYAM and W. M. ROGER LOUIS. (British Documents on the End of Empire, Series A. Volume IV, Parts 1 and 2). Norwich: The Stationery Office, 2000. Part 1, pp. cix + 825. No price given (ISBN 0-11-290578-1). Part 2, pp. xxxvii + 811. No price given (ISBN 0-11-290579).

KEY WORD: Decolonization.

Those of us involved with previous volumes in this series have come to appreciate the scale of the task involved in collecting the required documents. This is especially true for the general volumes which are focused on the empire as a whole rather than on individual countries. The first reaction of any reviewer must be admiration for the research itself. There must then also be appreciation that scholars have been saved an enormous archival task by Ronald Hyam and Roger Louis.

These particular volumes cover the crucial years of colonial independence, but there are no revelations of any strategic plans for the end of the colonial empire. This seemed to happen without anything other than a long-held assumption that colonies should eventually get independence once they had been adequately prepared, which in the end seemed to amount to when it was the best way out of a number of difficulties. Over and above this, the issue was always when and to whom power would be transferred. One striking thing revealed by these volumes is the extent to which the timing of independence was always seen to be further in the future than it turned out to be.

One of the organizational qualities here is breadth of coverage, with sections on the European Economic Community and other international matters. The organization and selection of material has been crucial in terms of the emphasis given to particular aspects of empire. In part this has reflected the views of editors and project committee members on the meaning of empire. Here the emphasis is not on the end of the British Empire as a world system reflecting and projecting economic and military power but as a collection of disparate territories.

Africanists may be happy that there are 29 documents covering 76 pages devoted to defence and strategy, but 55 to southern Africa covering 159 pages. For those who see the retreat from East of Suez as crucial to the end of the British empire this is particularly disappointing as the arguments about the imperial versus the European role were well in evidence in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These issues of a world role were related to resources, prestige and force deployment and the lack of a detailed and continuous coverage of this is to be regretted. Nevertheless these documents are a must for scholars concerned with the end of Britain's African empire and with the general influences on the transfer of power.

*London School of Economics*

JOHN KENT

DOI: 10.1017/S002185370266829X

*Regionalism and Public Policy in Northern Ghana*. Edited by YAKUBU SAABA. New York: Peter Lang, 2001. Pp. xi + 242. \$32.95 (ISBN 0-8204-51452).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, decentralized societies, poverty, regional.

This book provides a stimulating and in some respects refreshing attempt to scrutinize northern Ghana's poverty trap in historical perspective. It spans the pre-colonial period up to the most recent times, though only one of the ten Ghanaian contributors is a full-time historian: an indication of the historiographic vacuum – rightly stressed by Yakubu Saaka – which surrounds the former Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. Eleven chapters address a broad range of issues encompassing administrative and political history, social change observed in indigenous matrimonial regimes, the penetration of western education pioneered by Christian missions, the resilience of common tenure practices despite population pressure, the emerging participation of rural populations in development projects (especially community-based water supply) and the failure of the economic recovery programme launched in 1983 to put an end to the continuing underdevelopment of the northern savanna.

The common thread of this broad-brush substantive content is an attempt to gain a better understanding of which factors perpetuate the political, economic and social disenfranchisement of the savanna districts. The underlying aim is to show that the regional identity of northern populations, as perceived by themselves and their southern compatriots, is rooted in this disenfranchisement. In the current debate on why Africa in general and some sub-Saharan rural areas in particular remain poor, this study dismisses geographical or cultural factors to support a policy-based explanation. This argument permeates most contributions and is crisply expressed by Jacob Songsore in his analysis of environmental decay: 'the degradation of rural livelihood systems is attributable more to ongoing cumulative decapitalization of rural producers rather than a failure of any particular resource management regime' (p. 154). The reason for claiming that public policies have nurtured such a regional poverty trap cuts across the colonial–postcolonial divide: it lies in a well-entrenched misreading of northern societies and their history by policy-makers and external observers, including western social scientists. The well-documented piece by Benedict Der on the enduring misrepresentation of pre-colonial northernmost areas as occupied by 'stateless' societies, and his subsequent critique of Carola Lentz's anthropological work on upper-western political institutions in the early colonial period, epitomizes the revaluation of northern Ghana's history which is inspired by this book.

Historians have a formidable task ahead if the high standard of Der's documentary evidence, for instance in his investigation of the role played by the White Fathers in promoting western education in the northern savanna, is to be matched in studying long-term historical change in demography, environment, farming

practices and living standards. This need for historical detail upon local actors' livelihoods is a critical step toward an effective contextualization of corrective public action in northern Ghana. This wide-ranging study makes a bold move in this direction.

*London School of Economics*

JÉRÔME DESTOMBES

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702678296

*Sierra Leone at the End of the Twentieth Century: History, Politics and Society.* By EARL CONTEH-MORGAN and MAC DIXON-FYLE. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1999. Pp. xvi + 75. £17 (ISBN 0-8204-4172-4).

KEY WORDS: Sierra Leone, chieftaincy, post-colonial.

The self-deprecating people of Sierra Leone have a story that God created the country so rich in minerals, fertile land and rich fishing grounds that people in the surrounding territories protested about what they saw as divine inequalities. The response was caution: 'wait and see the people who will lead the country'. From being 'the Athens of West Africa' in the heyday of colonial rule, Sierra Leone slumped in the 1990s to the poorest of the poor, only to assume notoriety as the land of child combatants and amputees. The search for the causes of the national demise impelled these two eminent academics to take stock of what was at one time the bastion of the British project of modernity in tropical Africa. As the authors assert: 'To appreciate fully how the nation came to this unfortunate crossroads, the pre-colonial and the colonial inheritance have to be reviewed closely for herein lie the shaky foundations and the towering contradictions on which future policies were erected' (p. 2). The authors warned against the 'tautological trap' of theorizing corruption, avarice and ethnicity – yet these are the same categories they go on to use themselves. However, they find the problems of this unfortunate land in the colonial imposition and a skewed resource-based economy, based initially on sylvan culture and later on mining.

There are three major themes in this illuminating text. The first is continuity between the colonial and the post-colonial: 'In structural terms the authoritarian tendencies of Sierra Leone's post-colonial regimes are ... a reflection of the colonial state' (p. 75). The second is the failure of political leadership, particularly the unwillingness of Siaka Stevens and his successors to eliminate illicit diamond mining and smuggling. The third is the 'triumph of politics over bureaucratic efficiency': the failure of the governing classes to administer a viable rational-legal bureaucracy based on a certain degree of accountability, impartiality and transparency without it being overwhelmed by the informal economy with its reliance on primordial imperatives.

The book proceeds in historical sequence, through the pre-colonial formation, the colonial experience, decolonization and the creation of the post-colonial state, to the politics of decline and economic stagnation. The penultimate chapter examines economic reforms and the causes of the civil war. While pointing to the role of external forces, in particular the Liberian warlord Charles Taylor, they argue that by the mid-1980s internal conditions already favoured an organized challenge to the government. What remains puzzling about the civil war is the extreme level of violence unleashed by the rebels upon the civilian population.

Particularly useful is Chapter 5, which sets the scene for a much-needed debate on the role of traditional chiefs in the post-colonial period. The authors point to how these interlocutors 'exploited accommodation with the colonial power as an avenue of private accumulation' (p. 96). Their role in local governance has dogged post-colonial leaders, and was a major factor in the first military intervention in 1967. Recently donors concerned with 'good governance' have revisited the role of

the chiefs in post-civil-war Sierra Leone. While democracy has to be embedded into the fabric of local governance, it is doubtful if chieftaincy can be modernized. Unfortunately, the book is silent on 'what is to be done'. That aside, this well-written book gives invaluable insight into the political economy of socio-economic involution in this badly governed country.

*University of Central Lancashire*

ALFRED B. ZACK-WILLIAMS

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702688292

*Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Cameroon*. Third edition. By MARK W. DELANCEY and MARK DIKE DELANCEY. Lanham MD and London: Scarecrow Press, 2000. Pp. xxxvii + 359. \$75 (ISBN 0-8108-3775-7).

KEY WORDS: Cameroon, dictionaries.

This latest edition of the *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Cameroon* covers the progress and difficulties Cameroon and its peoples have experienced economically, socially and politically from the beginning of their history. Although the volume does not include everything essential, there is no doubt that it is a timely update given that the first two editions were published in 1974 and 1990 respectively.

The volume is divided into three major sections: introduction, dictionary and bibliography. The preliminaries include a chronology from the fourth century BC, when Hannon the Carthaginian sailed to the Cameroon coast, to 10 April 1999, when the statesman John Ngu Foncha died. But there are some obvious omissions, including Zintgraff's visits to the Western Grassfields, the German-Bafut/Mankon war of 1891, the Nso-German war of 1906, the Milner-Simon agreement of 1919 and the separation of British Cameroons from Nigeria on 1 October 1960. The date of Ahidjo's resignation from the chairmanship of the Cameroon National Union (CNU) is given, confusingly, as 17 August and then as 27 August.

The introduction gives a beautiful summary of Cameroon history from pre-colonial times to 1999. The only correction required here is the claim that the CNU party (p. 6) was Ahidjo's party; his was *Union Camerounaise* (UC).

The dictionary entries, as expected, are much richer than those in the earlier editions. But greater attention is given to events and people from the early 1980s. Issues such as the Anglophone problem, the Ahidjo-Biya rupture, constitutional developments since reunification and the economic and political crises of the late 1980s and 1990s, are well highlighted and elaborated under various entries. Yet there are some notable omissions and factual errors. Major omissions include former minister Augustin Kontchou Komeni, the outspoken government spokesman of the 1990s; Nso', the largest single grouping in the two Anglophone provinces; and Amity Bank, founded in the early 1990s by Anglophones. Many factual errors occur, for example, in the entry on Solomon Tandeng Muna (p. 183). Also, the NCNC did not collapse in 1953 (p. 190): what collapsed was the Eastern Nigeria regional government; and the SDF was launched at Ntarikon Park, not Palace (p. 242). But, in general, the dictionary entries are very good.

The bibliography contains some important old and new publications on Cameroon, but many recent publications that should have been included are left out. However, this edition is the most current work available; it is, therefore, one which no scholar of Cameroon affairs can afford to miss.

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VERKIJKA FANSO