

## REVIEWS

### TOGO AND BEYOND

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*Histoire des Togolais, Volume I: Des origines à 1884*. Edited by N. L. GAYIBOR.  
Lomé: Presses de l'Université du Bénin, 1997. Pp. 443. No price given,  
paperback (ISBN 2-909886-26-3).

KEY WORDS: Togo, general.

As the editor of this volume begins by acknowledging, there is something manifestly anachronistic about writing the pre-colonial history of a colonial creation. Moreover, while the deployment of history in the service of contemporary nation-building may be politically justifiable, it generally makes for bad history. Fortunately, this volume avoids most of the pitfalls surrounding the writing of 'national' history, precisely because it refuses to be constrained by national boundaries. In its discussion of population migration, trade routes and the struggle for political hegemony, the analysis ranges from as far west as modern Côte d'Ivoire in the west to Nigeria in the east and Burkina Faso in the north. In this respect, the volume bears some similarities to Boubacar Barry's attempt to write an integrated regional history encompassing the whole of the Senegambia. However, the end-product is far more digestible – which is no small accomplishment given that it is based on the labours of no fewer than sixteen contributors.

The coherence of the volume is due, in no small measure, to the overall direction provided by its editor. The book also manages to avoid writing a history of discrete 'tribes', demonstrating instead the extent to which all of the peoples who make up contemporary Togo represent an amalgam of sorts. The oral traditions of many groups reveal a layering of peoples, in which each sub-section often claims a distinct history of settlement. The authors strip away these layers, without ever imagining that they will get to an unproblematic core. The book makes few allusions to wider theoretical debates, but the *modus operandi* of the authors is in harmony with most of the current literature on African identities.

The book opens with a brief discussion of the people and terrain, and then turns to an overview of the current state of archaeological knowledge about Togo. The latter, not surprisingly, underlines the antiquity of human settlement in this region. The authors then examine the history of various peoples who claim prior settlement in the mountain range that runs diagonally across Togo. Although they are cautious in their approach to claims to autochthony, they (like many of their predecessors) regard the mountain fastness as having helped to preserve older languages, cultures and modes of existence (including ironworking) in the face of successive waves of in-migration. As far as possible, the authors seek to capture the current state of knowledge about each of the notionally autochthonous peoples in central and northern Togo. The next section deals in detail with an ensemble of peoples comprising what the contributors call an '*ajatado* complex': that is the Ewe, Fon, the Guin and other related peoples. Much of the text is given over to seeking to reconstruct the history of the kingdoms of Tado and Notsie, to which most of these peoples claim a link. This part of the book is especially informative, although it is a pity that it was apparently put together before Robin Law's work on the Slave Coast appeared in print. The section that follows examines the impact of Gourma migrations on the north from the fifteenth century. The emphasis here is on the founding of a series of new chiefdoms in the sub-region.

The next part of the book deals with the impact of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the expansion of the caravan trade upon the societies of this corner of West Africa. The instability occasioned by the former is treated with some reason as a major factor in driving new groups of refugees and migrants into this geographical space – including various Adangbe groups who either forged new polities or merged with the existing populations. The expansion of the caravan trade in the nineteenth century is regarded as having similar catalytic effects on the north, as would-be regional hegemony sought to direct profitable commerce. Particular attention is paid to the settlement of the Anoufo and their assertion of control over the trade routes centred on Sansanné–Mango. The book concludes with a brief overview of the rise of European influence on the coast, culminating in the declaration of a German protectorate over the coast in 1884. It would appear that a companion volume on the colonial period is envisaged.

All things considered, this book provides something of a model of how to produce a synthesis that is usable as a reference work as well as readable as a whole. The inclusion of a large number of excellent maps certainly helps. Because of its expansive coverage, it deserves to be read by historians of the wider sub-region, and not just those with a specific interest in Togo. It is to be hoped that the publishers will find some way of optimising its distribution, in the way that the Karthala connection has enabled many other recent works on Togo to find a readership beyond its shores.

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## SUDANESE CHRISTIANITY

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*Day of Devastation, Day of Contentment: The History of the Sudanese Church across 2000 Years.* By ROLAND WERNER, WILLIAM ANDERSON and ANDREW WHEELER.

Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2000. Pp. 688. \$15 (ISBN 9966-21-529-8).  
KEY WORDS: Sudan, Christianity.

Conceived as an enterprise to provide Sudanese Christians with a historical basis for their identity, the significance of this book transcends its restricted initial objective. Earlier volumes in the 'Faith in Sudan' series have already given valuable insights into contemporary developments. Here the general editors of the series, the Reverends William Anderson and Andrew Wheeler, have produced a work which uniquely illuminates the recent far-reaching transformation of the country's religious geography.

Dr Werner, who has published on Nubian languages and culture, presents in the first part a rounded picture of Christianity in the Nilotic Sudan from its earliest days to the fall of Soba in the sixteenth century. The decision to devote one hundred pages to this remote story is fully justified. Many Sudanese may find a relevance today in this early indigenous development, with its impressive cultural achievements and its tolerant *modus vivendi* with Islam. The tolerance extended also to the primal vision and the basic concerns of peasant men and, noticeably, women. In his glowing foreword, Dr Francis Deng convincingly suggests that traces of these Nubian Christian influences may well have been deeply assimilated into Nilotic cultures far to the south of Soba.

The second part (pp. 123–207) is concerned with the re-introduction of Christianity. It begins by reminding its readers that it was the Copts who began

this process during the Funj sultanate, and who after Muhammad Ali's conquest formed the first Christian community in the modern Sudan. The story of the founding and difficulties of the Catholic mission is told vivaciously. Part three (pp. 211–382) follows the expansion of the mission churches during the condominium and up to the expulsion of foreign missionaries from the south in 1964. The outlines of this story are fairly well-known, but they are here notably brought together and firmly synthesized with a deep, fresh, ecumenical understanding, which is warmly welcomed by Archbishop Zubeir Wako in his sensitive foreword.

It is, however, the detailed investigation in part four of developments since 1964 (pp. 385–667), that breaks radically new ground and makes this book an essential volume for any Africanist's library. The foreign missionaries, and increasingly their Sudanese colleagues and assistants, had laid the foundations, but none of these actors expected the extraordinary sequel that this book recounts, for until the expulsion of the missionaries, the churches had made very little overall impact. The civil wars have now transformed religious allegiances, altering a basic feature of the Sudan. The brunt at first, until 1972, was felt by the peoples of Equatoria, many of whom began to find in the churches a major part of their identities. The second conflict, from 1983 onwards, is deeply affecting the whole country. It has traumatized much of the south, including most of the powerful Dinka and Nuer, who were previously fiercely self-confident in their pastoral way of life, with the impressive religious foundations described by Evans-Pritchard and Godfrey Lienhardt. In the midst of terrible devastation, indigenous Christian song, symbols and commitments are now becoming an integral part of southern culture, led by local female and male evangelists.

The situation in the northern Sudan has also been changed, perhaps decisively. The massive flight northwards of many people has drastically altered the ethnic composition of northern towns, with at least one million displaced around the capital. Probably relatively few of the refugees arrived in the north as Christians, but in the appalling conditions of the desert shanty towns, in a frighteningly alien cultural environment, many have found fellowship and the means of survival in Christian communities and clubs despite, or perhaps often as a result of, government oppression. Consequently there are now substantial groups of Sudanese Christians in most northern urban areas, to challenge a stereotyped description of 'the Muslim north'.

As the authors would be the first to admit, this long final section of the book is very much a pioneer exercise in contemporary history. It shows many signs of haste and incompleteness. It is, however, undergirded by a collection of some unique oral evidence and by the analyses of the few scholars who have recently been able to work in southern areas (notably Sharon Hutchinson and the late Marc Nikkel, taken away at the height of his powers). The long-term social and political consequences of the religious changes here described have yet to be seen, but by indicating the depth and extent of Christian expansion in both north and south this book makes a most valuable contribution to an understanding of a situation whose relevance extends far beyond even the vast area of the Sudan.

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## SLAVERY IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES

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*Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study*. Edited by MIURA TORU and JOHN EDWARD PHILIPS. London: Kegan Paul International, 2000. Pp. xii + 248. £65 (ISBN 0-710-30660-1).

KEY WORDS: West Africa, slavery, Islam.

The objective of these essays, the first of a projected six volumes, was to 'elucidate the transregionality and commonality of the slave elite system in West Africa and the Middle East and by paying attention to their similarities and differences'. It was a wide brief and has been well covered by the contributors. Slavery in Islamic cultures, though endemic, has not received the same attention that slavery in the New World has. By focusing on slave elites, a phenomenon distinctive of Islamic states, these essays begin to create a framework for further study.

In his introduction, Sato Tsugitaka first describes slavery in the Muslim context and then presents us with a thumbnail sketch of perhaps the best-known slave elite, the Mamluks. By examining their effective participation in political, economic and social affairs, he hopes to overturn stereotypic opinions on slavery in Islam.

'Origins' begins with a Muslim slave elite in ninth century Iraq. From his work on Samarra, Matthew Gordon focuses narrowly on the acquisition of land by Turkish slaves and the rise of a new form of land tenure. Its development sheds light on the sometimes uneasy relationship of the caliphal authority and Turkish slave army. Sato Kentaro reviews another slave elite, the *Saqaliba* of tenth-century Spain. Rather than the generally held view that *Saqaliba* constituted the majority of slave soldiers, Sato argues that there are no specific textual references to *Saqaliba* as slave soldiers but rather as eunuchs, and that the word came to be almost synonymous with eunuch. This clarification is characteristic of these essays as new and revisionistic. The third essay by Jan Hogendorn is literally on the origins of eunuchs in the Middle East. His central point is that castration was undertaken neither at the point of supply nor at the final point of destination. A fine economic balance evolved whereby the procedure was performed en route at 'castration centres' in non-tropical locations which afforded greater safety for the practitioners and higher survival rates.

Dror Ze'evi begins the second section on 'Power and networks' and hits the theme squarely: the slave's integration into the master's household. A fictive kinship softened the slave-master relationship and in many cases the slave son completed a metamorphosis from slave to lord. The kinship element in the slave-master relationship was further boosted by the Mongol migrations, which introduced adoption for military purposes blurring the terms between the family and military.

We return to the Mamluks of Egypt with Nasser Rabbat's erudite contribution. Rich in references and detail, Rabbat draws out the argument that in Egypt, the Mamluks created a self-perpetuating system of government. Two principal elements identified the group: their foreignness and shared experience of slavery. In the second half of the thirteenth century, a new system developed when a Mamluk slave was not subjugated to his master but instead was freed and then conscripted into the army where he might reach high rank. In such a case, he would be expected to purchase, train and fee his own Mamluks, so renewing the cycle. Remaining with the Mamluks, Carl Petry gives us a lucid account on the means whereby government-owned assets were gradually absorbed into charitable trusts. Life as a slave elite had its ups and downs. So charitable trusts, or *waqf*, were like

a medieval off-shore bank account for securing at least a part of one's assets in a period when government confiscation was the norm.

'Power and networks' is precisely illustrated by Sean Stillwell's study of the value of knowledge in nineteenth century Kano where knowledge was 'cultural capital', the possession of which ensured position and power. Extensive use of interviews brings his subject alive and throws light on the slave networks of kinship from which they could draw corporate support.

The third and final section 'Transition' begins with Ehud Toledano's essay which first focuses on definitions and then moves on to specifics of slavery under the Ottomans in conjunction with his earlier discussion of definitions. Though brief, Toledano's summary highlights the complexity of the institution – a complexity that militates against global comparisons. Cultural concepts of slavery are often as not non-transferable so a more differentiated approach is required. In the Ottoman case he proposes a continuum of various degrees of bondage to avoid rigid categorization. Toledano's suggestion that models based on far flung comparisons can be limiting or even misleading is aptly demonstrated in Fatima Harrak's discussion of the term *Jaysh al-'Abid*. A literal translation as 'Army of slaves' would obscure the nuances of its historical context. Harrak brings a fresh eye and new interpretation to her subject of eighteenth-century military organization in Morocco.

Ahmed Alawad Sikainga also reinterprets his subject as reflected in his title 'Comrades in arms or captives in bondage', referring to the Sudanese slave soldiers of the Turco–Egyptian army. In a riveting account of an uprising, he argues that though they were slaves, the acquisition of weapons and the skill to use them was ultimately empowering. John Edward Philips' contribution is on slave soldiers and officials in the Sokoto caliphate. He begins with a robustly critical survey of Islamic specialists like Patricia Crone and Daniel Pipes, and Africanists like Claude Meillassoux, who have written about slave soldiers in the Islamic context and finds their generalizations inadequate or even contradictory to the historical experience.

A number of the papers refer to conferences and contacts with colleagues, which have clearly stimulated the development of thought in this hitherto undeveloped area of Islamic history. These essays balance focused studies with those of a more comparative nature. Clearly the framework for discussion is still fluid and benefits from conferences such as the one which generated this volume.

*St Margaret's*

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## EARLY HISTORY OF COCOA

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*Cocoa and Chocolate, 1765–1914*. By WILLIAM GERVASE CLARENCE-SMITH.

London: Routledge, 2000. Pp. xiv + 319. £55.00 (ISBN 0-415-21576-5).

KEY WORDS: economic, agriculture, trade.

For many writers of the 1960s and 1970s, agricultural commodity production was seen as an economic dead-end. The dominating influence of western firms in the market meant that few benefits accrued to tropical producers and that primary production not only failed to generate 'take-off' but inevitably encouraged the development of underdevelopment. More recent work has challenged the pessimism inherent in this view and W. G. Clarence-Smith's analysis of the history of cocoa is a further and important contribution to this debate.

Clarence-Smith achieves this by examining the cocoa commodity chain, looking

at the various stages between the consumption of chocolate by the consumer and the production of cocoa in the tropical world, and analyzing along the way the place in this network of factors such as government policy, credit, access to land, modes of cultivation and labour. His period is what he terms the 'chronological black hole' in the historiography of cocoa, namely the years between the end of the Seven Years War and the start of the First World War, which, in contrast to the wealth of material that has been written on cocoa in the twentieth century, has had very little attention paid to it: Clarence-Smith traces how this 'liberal era' saw the progressive dismantling of the mercantilist system, the establishment of liberal trading policies and the opening up of the cocoa market. Several themes are drawn out during this survey, both geographic, with the shift in production from Central to South America, to the Caribbean and eventually to Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and analytical, with the move from estate to smallholder production and the change, by no means a smooth or uninterrupted one, from coerced to free labour.

The book focuses on Latin America and the Caribbean, the major cocoa producers of this period. As the major era of African primacy in cocoa production occurred after 1914, readers of this journal will find only little reference to Africa in these pages, though São Tomé and Príncipe, Fernando Póo, the Cameroons, the Gold Coast and southern Nigeria receive due attention. However, Clarence-Smith's conclusions, largely derived from Latin America and the Caribbean as they may be, are of wide importance. He argues that the liberal era has important lessons for commodity producers and policy-makers today. Far from being a dead-end, cocoa production in these years did lead to rising incomes per head. The critical factor was competition: the more competition there was in the market, the more primary producers benefited. He shows how the attempt at cartelization by planters on São Tomé in the 1890s and 1900s had unhappy consequences for all involved. The broader implication, he suggests, pointing forwards to 1940s cocoa production in Africa, is that 'the unhappy marketing-board page in the history of commercialisation needs to be turned, once and for all'. This has further consequences. The lesson of this period of history, says Clarence-Smith, is that large estates were not efficient for cocoa production: indeed in a truly competitive market such estates never flourished in the face of small-holder competition, as seen not least in West Africa after 1900. Equally, the history of this period has much to teach us in terms of cocoa's impact on the tropical rain forest, as seen in the massive deforestation that occurred on São Tomé and elsewhere as cocoa pioneer fronts pushed deep into new lands. The contrasting use of land for cocoa production in pre-conquest Mesoamerica unquestionably has important lessons in this respect.

Clarence-Smith is astonishingly well read on the theory and substance of cocoa production and chocolate consumption over several centuries and several continents. It is indeed hard to imagine any more authoritative survey of cocoa as a global phenomenon in these years ever being produced. While at times the array of detail on Latin America may be wearing for African specialists, the material is generally well controlled; the story is told with a clear view of both the wood and the cocoa trees. Above all, it is a story that is absorbing in its concern with the interests of primary producers. It is a brave historian who is ready to draw lessons from the past overtly to inform current policy debates and Clarence-Smith is one. By and large, he succeeds in this aim. This is an impressive book, realistically optimistic in its vision and profoundly humane in its conclusions.

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## ISLAMIC RESISTANCE IN ALGERIA

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*Islam and the Politics of Resistance in Algeria, 1783–1992*. By RICARDO RENÉ  
LAREMONT. Trenton, NJ and Asmara: Africa World Press, 2000. Pp. xiv + 291.  
£14.99/\$21.95, paperback (ISBN 0-86543-753-x).

KEY WORDS: Algeria, Islam, resistance.

The goal of the author of this book is to show how Islam has inspired movements of political resistance to social inequity in Algeria over two centuries, from the late Ottoman period until 1992 when an Islamic rebellion challenged the military elites who had annulled the first round of parliamentary elections, which the *Front Islamique du Salut* had won.

Chapter 1 provides a theoretical overview in which Laremont contrasts an Islamic view of law, which normally prioritizes equitable outcomes, with that of the western view which focuses more on legal process. He then presents a brief overview of the tense relationship over the centuries between Islamic thinkers and reigning political elites, and the major ideological and intellectual paradigms within which Islamic thinkers in modern times have sought to cast their resistance. Finally, he identifies six different sociopolitical arenas in which combatants of political Islam found themselves engaged in the twentieth century.

In the second chapter, the author gives a very brief overview of sufi resistance to the Ottomans during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and to the French conquest which began in 1830 and was largely completed by 1871. The resistance led by the celebrated Amir ‘Abd al Qadir of the Qadiriyya *tariqa* receives several pages of discussion, while those of the Rahmaniyya, the Darqawiyya and the Tijaniyya are dealt with very succinctly. Chapter 3 contains a brief overview of aspects of the system of institutionalized inequality set in place by the colonial government between 1871 and the First World War, a period in which the author maintains that political Islam was in a state of ‘hibernation’. Between the wars, political resistance to the colonial system reappeared in four separate forms described in Chapter 4. These included that of the liberal bourgeoisie, the *Fédération des élus musulmans*, whose best-known leader was Ferhat Abbas; that of the socialist and nationalist *Etoile nord-africaine* founded in France by Messali Hadj; that of the European dominated communist party; and that of the Association of ‘Ulama founded by Shaykh Abdelhamid Ben Badis and led by him until his death in 1939. Laremont argues that this latter movement, by helping to re-establish Islam and the Arabic language as the cultural bases of Algerian nationalism, was the most important political development of the first half of the twentieth century.

In chapter 5, the study revisits the ideological battles that tore at the heart of the FLN between its birth in 1954 and the coup of Houari Boumédiène in 1965. The bottom line here is that while liberals and communists clearly lost out, a major struggle ensued between a cohort that Laremont labels as secular socialists and another, led by Ahmed Ben Bella, that he calls Islamic socialists. The latter, as demonstrated by clauses in the 1964 Algiers charter, finally won out. The author claims in the next chapter that one of the main reasons Colonel Boumédiène and his supporters overthrew Ben Bella was that his brand of socialism was not sufficiently Islamic or Algerian. Soon afterward, however, in order to protect his own power base, Boumédiène moved toward greater centralization of power and the establishment of a system dominated by technocratic and bureaucratic classes very little in touch with Islamic themes or with the successors of the Association of ‘Ulama. This shift, plus changing sociological and demographic realities, led to

the re-appearance and reformulation of political Islamic resistance led by such Muslim intellectuals as Abellatif Soltani and Mahfoud Nahnah.

The final chapter, covering the years from 1979 to 1992, explores how the demographic and economic cleavages that intensified in the 1980s, inspired by the success of Islamists in Iran, Egypt, Jordan and the Sudan, led to the emergence of increasingly well organized and militant Islamic resistance movements, the 1992 crackdown by the military and the subsequent armed rebellion.

Throughout history, religious discourse in the Islamic world has been used to counteract injustice and the perceived excesses of the political elites. Modern Algerian historiography in particular is replete with studies of religiously based resistance in different regions and periods, even though no overarching work in a western language adopts Islamic resistance as its central theme. If the author had in a coherent, well documented way, studied this process over a two-century period, demonstrating the different ways in which resistance was organized, the evolution of ideologies and strategies, and the regional, tribal and socio-economic contexts within which they functioned, this work would be a truly significant contribution. As it is, the book begins by laying out certain theoretical assumptions which lead the reader to believe he is embarking on an intellectual or philosophical journey.

The journey turns out, however, to be a rather disconnected walk through various types and periods of Islamic resistance in which the intellectual and philosophical are only rarely visible. It deals primarily with the impact of individuals, movements and organizations which, until chapters 6 and 7, are not seriously connected to the socio-economic and cultural contexts within which they exist and function. Both chapters 4 and 5 covering obvious contradictions amongst inter-war Algerian political movements and the feuds within the FLN, deal with subjects gone over systematically by three generations of scholars. It is difficult to see that this author has added much to their conclusions. His prioritizing of the Islamic and its conflict with the liberal or Marxist views is not new. At the same time his claim that the urban '*ulama* of the Algerian reform movement are the most important factor in the Islamizing of Algerian resistance is highly problematic. He ignores the fact that Islam in various forms was fundamental to the identity of the overwhelming majority of Algerians and that, in a colonial system which legally subordinated the majority qualified as Muslims to the non-Muslim minority, any individual or movement that sought to mobilize the disadvantaged would absolutely have to appeal to that Muslim identity. Shaykh Ben Badis was a small part of a much larger process and one whose impact upon the Algerian masses was minimal at best.

Finally, there are more historical errors in this book than it would be possible to mention in a review of this length. Among them is the notion that the colonial authorities attempted to force Algerians into French schools (pp. 50–1): very few Algerian Muslims, no matter how hard they struggled, would be granted admission to French schools. Another is the assertion that *hubus* or *waqf* were not nationalized until the late nineteenth century (p. 47); in fact they became a part of the public domain in 1839. The statement that the *code de l'indigénat* was enacted in 1865 is bizarre; this 'code' was in fact made up of a long series of laws and decrees put in force over a period of 35 years.

At another level, the omission of fundamental components of the historical narrative can seriously mislead readers. In chapter 2, for instance, the author never mentions the many different kinds of Algerian resistance encountered both by the Ottomans and the French. These included major tribal resistances, regional resistances and resistances of provincial elites. There were also major inter-tribal conflicts, as some group – *makhzan* tribes – allied with the government to contain subject or *rayat* tribes. Resistance to Turks and French was not universal, nor was it even primarily religious.



*Islam and the Politics of Resistance in Algeria* contains some interesting ideas that should be looked at by Algeria specialists. Due to errors and distortions, however, I would hesitate to recommend it to the non-specialist.

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## ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS

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*Credit, Currencies and Culture: African Financial Institutions in Historical Perspective*. Edited by ENDRE STIANSEN and JANE I. GUYER. Stockholm: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1999. Pp. vi + 174. SEK200, paperback (ISBN 91-7106-442-7).

KEY WORDS: Western, economic.

In 1996 Endre Stiansen and Jane Guyer organized a seminar series to examine why international development agencies ignore institutional bases that have supported financial activity in Africa for centuries. In *Credit, Currencies and Culture*, the 'institutional bases' themselves become the focus of attention. Few of the contributors, all but one of whom are West Africanists, would claim the combination of geographical expertise and disciplinary sensitivity promised by the ambitious title. But each is a recognized specialist who fully exploited the venue to float insightful and provocative ideas.

Robin Law excerpts information on suppliers of credit (European and African) and on financial record-keeping from otherwise well-worked European sources on Dahomey. An intriguing discussion of 'pawnship as financial institution' (based on his earlier work) assumes rather too much weight, but his hypothesis regarding the inverse relation between the rise of private cooperative financial institutions and the successful exercise of state power deserves further attention. James Webb's 'Currency and credit in the Western Sahel' highlights the significance of intersecting currency zones, specifically the Atlantic, Sahelian and Saharan. In arguing that no state seems to have attempted to control the kinds of currencies employed in the region and that this mercantile freedom helped shape elaborate patterns of trade evolving prior to 1700, he posits an intriguing idea. It resonates with Law's findings and might well be applied in comparable frontier regions. It is a bit disappointing however, that the analysis unfolds almost solely in the context of the Atlantic/sahel, especially given Webb's expertise in Saharan economics. Moreover, the key currency he discusses, *guinée* cloth, reached the interior sahel via Saharan networks until the 1880s.

John Hunwick's expertise in Islam is brought to bear in a chapter introducing the engaging notion of a 'moral economy of salvation' (regrettably undeveloped), and exploring relevant business terms in the *Qur'an*. The chapter may seem 'unadventurous and inconclusive', Hunwick writes, because of the 'absence of sustained empirical studies of the financial institutions of Muslim polities in Africa, or any detailed examination of the structures of trans-Saharan trade' (p. 93). He draws attention to the research potential here, using a sample of translated Timbuktu documents to make this last point forcefully and convincingly. Some might quibble with his quantitative assessment of research, however, even in the context of West Africa. If true of the Timbuktu, northern Nigeria and Sudan regions emphasized here, the same cannot be said of the Mauritanian Sahara and Malian desert-edge. It enjoys a modest research activity on the 'economics of Islam' such as Hunwick urges: studies of *nawazil* and *fatwi* (actual cases and their

interpretations), *dya* (blood money), *jihad*, *aqwaf* and *hubus* (properties), and Saharan political economy, among others. An excellent example of Islamic principles in historical practice in fact follows with Stiansen's chapter, 'Islamic banking in the Sudan', which traces the northern Sudanese debate around *riba* (interest). The discussion is fully integrated in the volatile political climate shaping contemporary Sudan. Stiansen suggests that a 'pragmatic' school of thought, fully entrenched in Islamic tradition, is gaining voice.

The only chapter situated firmly in colonial history is Mann and Guyer's study of the *sociétés de prévoyance*. It chronicles the ways in which the French *sociétés* at once reflected changing domestic social ideologies and policies, and were undermined by their local administrators. Ultimately a lack of trust by Africans and a corresponding inability to deal with post-war economic needs brought about their 'metamorphosis' and absorption into new development schemes. In the light of Hunwick's chapter, it would have been interesting to have discussed as well the impact of the region's entrenched Islamic beliefs on the effectiveness of the *sociétés*.

Two very different chapters deal specifically with 'money'. Jan Hogendorn postulates a case of 'slaves as money' in pre-colonial northern Nigeria, an analysis based primarily on economic theory and intended as an invitation to historians to 'fill in the historical record' (p. 69). Its potential importance lies in the argument that the recognition of this use of slaves would force reconsideration of pre-colonial economies and explain in part the difficulty of eradicating slavery in colonial times. Akanmu Adebayo's chapter on changing Yoruba conceptions of money is also somewhat preliminary, but employs Yoruba proverbs and interviews to move beyond the traditional sources and interpretations. This is the only chapter to deal with the 'culture' of the book's title in any meaningful way. In noting that the acceptance of western, Christian values meant digesting new monetary measurements of status, Adebayo also suggests how 'money' fundamentally challenged Yoruba identity.

A reader could be forgiven for wishing either that the authors had re-worked their pieces to 'speak to each other', or that the introduction had done more to accomplish this on their behalf. Questions focused on sources and methodology, theories of state and economic development, and 'religion as culture', for example, could have integrated the papers more effectively. But for those who did not attend the seminars, this publication is nonetheless worthwhile.

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## MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

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*Diving up the Human Past: Perspectives of Maritime Archaeology with Specific Reference to Developments in South Africa until 1996*. By BRUNO E. J. S. WERZ. (BAR International Series 749). Oxford: Archaeopress, 1999. Pp. xvi + 214. £40, paperback (ISBN 0-86054-98366).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, archaeology.

This book is the second publication of Werz's doctoral thesis for the University of Groningen in the Netherlands; it was previously published by Werz himself and appeared mostly in South Africa (ISBN 90 367 068 58). The work is divided into three main parts: a general overview of maritime archaeology and two sections on South Africa, 'Maritime archaeology in South Africa: a practical perspective' and 'The Maritime Archaeological Project of Table Bay'.

In the first section Werz discusses the various definitions linked to maritime archaeology and the relations of people with the sea. He then offers a theoretical framework for the classification of underwater archaeological sites. He looks briefly at the environmental and practical difficulties of working underwater, then considers the value of historical research in maritime archaeology using two case studies, 'The sinking of the *Vliegende Hert*' and the wreck of the *Amsterdam*. The section on the development of maritime archaeology in South Africa gives an extensive description of the coastline. Werz then applies his classification of archaeological sites to South Africa in looking at the 'potential for maritime archaeology' before discussing cultural resource management in the country. The last section includes a basic analysis of the shipwreck potential of Table Bay and discusses three projects that Werz was involved in: the search for the survivor camp of the *Haerlem*, the location of shipwrecks around Robben Island and the excavation of the wreck of the *Oosterland*.

The best aspect of this publication is that it is the first major publication on maritime archaeology to come from South Africa. Werz illustrates some of the difficulties in the development of the subject in the country. Although he describes the legislation relating to shipwrecks in detail, he neglects to give a comprehensive background to the development of the legislation. The environmental data and population figures are interesting, but Werz does not use this information to its full potential. He also glosses over South Africa's political situation which is vital in understanding why maritime archaeology and the protection of shipwrecks was the way it was in 1996.

Werz mentions some of the many efforts by archaeologists and other academics on shipwrecks and related sites prior to 1989 without stressing how important these projects were to the development of maritime archaeology. The vital role museums and the South African Museums Association played in getting better protection for shipwrecks is neglected. He also does not mention the introduction of Nautical Archaeology Society courses in 1993. This positive development is still creating a public awareness among divers of the important shipwreck resource in South Africa.

For his analysis of the potential for the subject, Werz uses the very much-outdated list of shipwrecks published in the *South African Shipping News and Fishing Industry Review*. He mentions the database of shipwrecks at the National Monuments Council but indicates that it was not fully accessible for this study. Yet before 1996, as a member of the Save Our Shipwrecks Trust, Werz himself had access to the more up-to-date figures of the database, which currently lists shipwrecks of 38 different nationalities as opposed to 27, and a total of 2,200 shipwrecks as opposed to 1506. This is a significant flaw.

Technically, one would expect to see a better site-plan of the *Oosterland* than the one that is published; certainly for the setting of standards that would have been a basic condition. Another technical comment pertains to the discussion on the restrictions to underwater archaeology in the first chapter, where Werz ignores the groundbreaking work of A. A. Bühlmann on decompression and decompression sickness.<sup>1</sup>

In general the book would have been better as three separate publications as the three sections do not blend well together. The promising theoretical slant in the first chapter is never developed properly in what follows. For a BAR publication one feels that Werz could have made an effort to include at least a postscript on the current situation of maritime archaeology in South Africa. This looks considerably better than in 1996, with several projects on the horizon. All in all Werz's view of

<sup>1</sup> A. A. Bühlmann, *Decompression-Decompression Sickness*. New York, 1984.

South African maritime archaeology is too negative with many criticisms and few constructive and practical solutions.

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## POVERTY AND EXPLOITATION ON THE FRONTIER

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*Masters and Servants on the Cape Eastern Frontier, 1760–1803*. By SUSAN NEWTON-KING. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Pp. xii + 335. £45.00/\$69.95 (ISBN 0-521-48153-8).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, imperialism.

In those societies born of European conquest, the heirs of both coloniser and colonised return again and again to the trauma which accompanied the birth of their nation. For the colonised this is the overwhelming trauma of usurpation, which has made them strangers in the land of their birth. For the colonisers it is more a question of nagging self-doubt; an awareness perhaps that their own sense of entitlement is sustained by the repression of other voices, other histories, whose claims may prove difficult to bear (p. 3).

It is seldom that one picks up a book written with as much honesty and feeling for a topic as devastating and horrifying as this. To read the book is to find oneself literally blinking back tears of sorrow and anger; yet, thankfully, at other stages one cannot but smile and chuckle at the use of language; and finally, when one puts the book down, one finds that one's mind keeps returning to its arguments and statements. This is, quite simply, an excellent book combining evidence from all manner of fields to write good history. The underlying theme of the book is actually quite straightforward:

Why should a relatively weak and thinly spread European population whose settlement in a strange and inhospitable land depended at least initially on the co-operation of the indigenous people, treat these people with what can only be described as unrelenting and provocative harshness (p. 43)?

In seeking answers, Newton-King takes her readers on an extremely detailed tour of society and economy in the Cape colony of the late eighteenth century, the period in which South Africa's particular form of social discrimination came to be formed.

She introduces us to the masters, a community of frontiersmen (and women) known as *veeboeren* (stock farmers). Contrary to much of what has been written before, they were extremely dependent for their existence on mercantile relations with Cape Town. As Newton-King shows clearly, they were not hearty and free individuals living independently of the Cape. Instead, through a detailed analysis of the estates of a statistical sample of these *veeboeren*, she indicates that for the most part they were poor, dependent on a wide variety of goods from Cape Town and often heavily indebted. Theirs was not the life of freedom on the range, but a life of penury in which *veeboeren* sought by all manner of means to reduce their overhead costs. This meant that lands were taken, rents were not paid for farms occupied, wildlife was shot to extinction, wages were not paid to nominally free labour and surviving captives from punitive expeditions were enslaved.

Newton-King introduces us to the original inhabitants of the land; pastoralists, pastro-foragers and hunter-gatherers lumped together as Khoisan, the survivors of whom by 1799 found themselves robbed of their lands and stock, and trapped in

a system resembling slave labour. The author prefers the term 'mountain people' for the groups who lived immediately beyond the fringes of *veeboer* settlement. Citing evidence from anthropological and archaeological sources she reconstructs a social history of these mountain people. It is a history that makes the arrival of the *veeboeren* all the more destructive. For when the *veeboeren* moved into and settled the eastern districts their ideas regarding land were wedded to a system of private land tenure, whereas for the 'mountain people', 'the trespass of Europeans on their hunting grounds and the decimation of their game was more than a threat to their livelihood; it was an attack upon their spirit, a desecration of their world' (p. 104).

In the years that followed, *veeboeren* took the land, stock and labour of the original inhabitants. Being too poor to pay wages, the *veeboeren* sought to entrap the original inhabitants in a system akin to slavery. Yet, in contrast to slaves alienated from the land of their birth, these people were still the original inhabitants of the land, attached to an alternative universe in which they were part and parcel of the land; 'in such a situation it was the master, not the slave, who was the intruder' (p. 124). In addition, the continued existence of free communities beyond *veeboer* settlement, made a master's hold over his servants tenuous at best. These factors, Newton-King argues, go a long way 'towards explaining the peculiar violence which punctuated relations between a master and his *volk*' (p. 127).

The social discrimination and racial stratification of this society developed out of poverty, and the life of *veeboeren* was inextricably linked to the commercial policies of the Dutch East India Company. It came to be legitimated by a 'heretical understanding of covenant theology according to which Christian status came to be seen as hereditary rather than acquired' (p. 7). Thankfully, in the end, it was from within a more inclusive understanding of Christian theology that the structuring of society in this manner came to be forever challenged in the Eastern Cape. However, it is saddening to recognize that in the end it is the theology of a Dutch Reformed minister that truly threatens *veeboer* society (p. 228). This book dispels romantic notions about white settlement in South Africa. Frontier farmers were not living in relative comfort and independently of the Cape. They were part and parcel of the mercantile world system. In seeking to make a living these settlers destroyed for countless generations the lives of the original inhabitants. It is indeed one of the more troubling aspects of this book that one comes to realize that, though we have detailed records of the *veeboeren*, we know terribly little about the 'mountain people'. Newton-King has provided us with an excellent book: let us hope that more will come to be known and written about them.

Gaborone

JAN-BART GEWALD

## SLAVERY AND AFTER IN THE SEYCHELLES

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*Seychelles since 1770: History of a Slave and Post-Slavery Society*. By DERYCK SCARR. London: C. Hurst, 2000. Pp. xiv + 232. £16.50, paperback (ISBN 1-85065-364-X).

KEY WORDS: Seychelles, slavery, general.

In this work, Deryck Scarr revisits the western Indian Ocean, a part of the world that first elicited his attention in *Slaving and Slavery in the Indian Ocean* (1998), in which he sought to reconstruct the history of servile labour in the Mascarene islands of Mauritius and Réunion. This time Scarr sets out to deepen our

understanding of slavery and its social, economic and political legacy in the Seychelles, a Mauritian dependency from 1770 to 1903, and then a separate British Crown colony until the advent of independence in 1976. The Seychelles have figured only occasionally in Mascarene and Indian Ocean historiography, and even less frequently in histories of Africa and the African diaspora. Scarr intends to correct these and other historiographical over-sights, including what he characterizes as the failure of previous histories of these islands to do anything more than undertake superficial inquiries into their past (p. v).

The first of the six chapters focuses on the period between the Seychelles' permanent settlement in 1770 by French colonists from Mauritius and Réunion and the inauguration of British rule early in 1811. The years 1811–40, during which the islands figured prominently in the illegal slave trade to the Mascarenes and witnessed the abolition of slavery and the demise of the post-emancipation 'apprenticeship' system, are discussed in chapter 2. Socio-economic and political developments during 1840–1920, 1920–39 and 1939–60 are the subjects of chapters 3, 4 and 5, respectively. The last years of British rule, independence in 1976, the 1977 coup and subsequent establishment of a one-party state, and the re-establishment of multi-party democracy during the early 1990s are the subject of the concluding chapter.

Scarr draws upon an impressive array of archival sources in France, Great Britain, Mauritius, Réunion and the Seychelles, and the detailed narrative vignettes that characterize much of this book attest to the richness of the historical record at his disposal. Regrettably, this abundance of detail is also one of the few redeeming features of a work that founders on the same conceptual and presentational shoals that engulfed his 1998 monograph on the Mascarenes. Foremost among these obstacles is the absence of a clearly stated and fully developed thesis. A brief comment about the locally propagated idea that the islands never had a colour problem (p. 4) is the closest Scarr comes to articulating a premise around which some of his subsequent comments and discussion seem to be focused. He likewise makes no attempt to follow through on occasional observations that aspects of Seychellois history paralleled that of other British colonies, especially those in the Caribbean. This unwillingness to examine the islands' history in a broader comparative context is particularly disappointing since others (Nigel Bolland's work on Belize springs immediately to mind) have demonstrated that careful analysis of developments on the margins of empire can yield important insights into the nature and dynamics of change in colonial systems.

Other problems both large and small abound. The author's tendency to discuss events and the activities of various individuals out of any meaningful context can easily leave even those who are conversant with the islands' history wondering exactly what he is talking about. A reluctance to explore certain topics, such as the magnitude of the illegal slave trade to the islands, is another source of concern, as is a failure to provide coherent overviews of crucial social, economic and political developments. A surprisingly small and dated bibliography raises additional questions about the quality of the scholarship. Scarr makes no mention, for example, of relevant works by J-F. Dupon, J-M. Filliot, Moses D. E. Nwulia and Marcus Franda, and largely ignores the many recently published books and articles on Mascarene social and economic history that bear on various aspects of the Seychellois experience. His reference to Claude Wanquet's unpublished manuscript on the peopling of the islands is perhaps the most telling example of this failure to keep abreast of relevant scholarship; the manuscript in question was published in 1979.

A torrent of florid and frequently awkward prose reinforces the aura of parochial antiquarianism that permeates so much of this work. These stylistic excesses, together with the problems outlined above and a certain sloppiness in the notes

(e.g. the citation of works not listed in the bibliography) underscore the apparent lack of peer review and careful editorial oversight that are an unfortunate hallmark of this book. The people and history of the Seychelles deserve better.

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## NINETEENTH-CENTURY ORAL NARRATIVE FROM MALI

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*La Geste de Nankoman: Textes sur la fondation de Naréna (Mali)*. Edited by SEYDOU CAMARA and JAN JANSEN. Leiden: CNWS, 1999. Pp. 135. DFL 35/\$18, paperback (ISBN 90-5789-023-2).

KEY WORDS: Mali, oral narrative.

Scholarly attention to oral tradition from the West African Mande culture zone often tends to focus on epic texts reflecting local perceptions of early empires such as Mali and Segu. However, within the overall corpus of Mande oral sources there exist less conspicuous narratives that have gone largely unnoticed. Much less grand in scale than now-familiar epics like that of the charismatic hero Sunjata, the more modest narratives address local themes and lesser-known heroes. In *La geste de Nankoman*, six short texts transcribed in both French and Bamana describe nineteenth-century people and events associated with the town of Naréna (known in pre-colonial times as Mènèmbugu) which lies a few kilometres west of the Niger River in the Mande heartland and the general vicinity of the historically important towns of Niagassola, Sibi and Kangaba.

The narrative's hero is Nankoman Keita, also known as Nankomanjan, Waranban Koman, and Koman of Kong. The basic story line involves circumstances leading to the hero's exile in the kingdom of Kong (in present-day northern Côte d'Ivoire), loss of Nankoman's share of a paternal legacy, his military conquests and death before returning home and his sons' subsequent efforts to claim their birthright. These events frame a tradition that effectively demonstrates the kinds of family rivalries, local community dynamics and broader political relationships locally perceived to have existed in the nineteenth century between far-flung regions of the Mande culture zone. In this case the action ranges from Niagassola in the heartland eastward into the Sikasso region and onward to Kong. (The book is badly in need of a map.)

The four communities dealt with in the texts were significant players in regional political events of the nineteenth century, so locating archival sources to affirm or deny the validity of potentially historical elements within the oral narrative is less problematic than is the case with traditions addressing eras preceding the European invasion. Nevertheless, recent research on the epic of Almami Samori Touré and other major narratives deriving from the nineteenth century demonstrates the presence of massive degrees of distortion in texts from that era. The narratives presented here are all quite short (the longest is seventeen pages), but collectively they provide ample opportunity for useful comparative discussion and analysis. The editors have accomplished a valuable service in bringing this tradition to light and making it available in print, which has doubtless happened much sooner than would have been possible had they attempted an exhaustive study of the material (most of the texts were recorded in 1996–7). What they have done is to provide a series of introductions that combine to efficiently locate this discourse within the overall corpus of Mande oral tradition.

One introductory essay placing the Naréna narratives within the relevant social,

literary and historical contexts is provided by Stephen Belcher. Belcher's contributions include the highlighting of some themes and motifs that appear to have been borrowed from episodes of the Sunjata and Bamana Segu epics (pp. 12–13). Given the Sunjata epic's function as a kind of Mande cultural paradigm, it could be said that within the traditional value system such references serve to validate the deeds of Nankoman and other characters in this narrative, and to paint them into the broader canvas of local perceptions of the past. There is in fact a good deal of evidence indicating that in the early thirteenth century part of the territory in question (apparently long before the founding of Naréna) was within the pre-Sunjata kingdom of a powerful ruling branch of the Kamara clan recalled as being led by Wana Faran Kamara (a.k.a. Kamanjan), and repeated references to that time, place and person appear in this book.

Jan Jansen's essay is supported by some obscure archival sources he discovered himself (one of which is included in an appendix). His essay on the founding of Naréna involves a historiographical exploration of some colonial references to the subject. He exposes several misconceptions and demonstrates that, contrary to what Charles Monteil concluded, there are no sources supporting a historical relationship between Naréna and Sunjata's father (pp. 16–18). Having spent a good deal of time on the ground in the towns in question, Jansen is able to offer additional useful insights into the social dynamics that account for narrative elements promoting specious claims such as the one that Naréna was once the capital of an empire (p. 22). There is in fact a large body of epic tradition collected in north-eastern Guinea during the past decade that supports Jansen's conclusion in this regard.

The book's other editor, Seydou Camara, introduces one of the tradition's most substantive variants with an analysis of the overall tradition focusing on the classic themes of departure and exile. Camara combines his knowledge of esoteric power strategies with his view through an insider's lens to contribute details and explanations about circumstances involving Nankoman's exile in Kong and his sons' reconquest of their homeland that would not be readily accessible to a non-local researcher. The Nankoman variant introduced by Camara is an excerpt from a longer narrative that he recorded in 1993, and one assumes that it would be worthwhile eventually to make that available in its entirety.

Several other scholars contribute to this volume, including Nambala Kanté who draws on his own knowledge of a particular variant to elaborate on Nankoman Keita's identity. Daouda Nambala Keita co-edits a variant with Jan Jansen, while Ouna Faran Camara and Muntaga Jarra contribute two variants each that they collected and translated. Clemens Zobel introduces a brief text about a son of Nankoman Keita that he collected in 1997, and the volume concludes in an appropriately traditional vein with a short praise song about a Keita woman of Naréna. All told, this tidy, carefully translated collection contains a wealth of investigative leads, and in future it will doubtless be incorporated into comparative studies and the ongoing search for historical elements in Mande oral tradition.

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## PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION AND TRAVEL ACCOUNTS

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*Out of Our Minds: Reason and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa*. By JOHANNES FABIAN. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. Pp. xvi + 320. \$50.00, hardback (ISBN 0-520-22122-2); \$19.95, paperback (ISBN 0-520-22123-0).

KEY WORDS: Central, exploration/travel, method.

This work dealing with the epistemology of ethnographic knowledge is primarily written for anthropologists. The author uses a number of travel accounts and published letters by explorers, some future anthropologists among them, to examine how their knowledge about African societies and cultures was produced. As their data were later accepted as scientific findings by anthropologists, this endeavour is significant for them. Now Fabian discovers that they were mainly gathered by procedures that violate the canons of objectivity and detachment that are supposed to govern the acquisition of scientific data.

The first six chapters discuss the conditions under which observations were made. After presenting his choice of travellers, Fabian discusses the logistics of organizing caravans, issues of health, nourishment and comradeship, emotional states, the use of exotic European objects to impress, the impact on travellers of African music and public displays understood as spectacles, other issues of communication across cultures from language to the exercise of authority and the use of violence. All this leads to a climax, a chapter in which he presents the confrontation of German travellers with a polity in central Kasai, based on an ideal of friendship undergirded by the communal use of cannabis. It becomes clear that these travellers gained much of their insights by going 'out of their minds' i.e. by abandoning the pursuit of objective and detached observation in favour of direct and intense involvement with the communities they met. The last three chapters analyze the results. 'Making knowledge' details the ideal activities to be pursued: observing, measuring, collecting, mapping and questioning. 'Making sense' then sets forth a matrix of pre-existing motives, ideas, theories and attitudes that the explorers brought with them and used to make 'recognition' of their observations and experiences possible. The last chapter deals with the literary and iconic presentation of their findings for a public at home. The epilogue draws a main lesson for anthropology today: the gulf between 'we' and 'other' cannot be bridged by scientific methods but perhaps, and then not completely, it can be by getting out of one's mind.

To understand this work the reader must realize that its author began academic life as a staunch Parsonian, a believer in a sociology which was about to discover universal laws based on controlled observation. In the field he discovered that it was not so and converted to postmodernism and the new critical anthropology. Hence he does exaggerate the issue he discusses here. Still, among his findings historians will be pleased to learn that 'all ethnography is inevitably contingent, historically and autobiographically situated' (p. 280).

Certainly this is a valuable book for anthropological theorists, but a less impressive one for historians who may well balk at his omission of explorers who could throw a different light on the issue (e.g. Soyaux in Angola, and Henrique de Carvalho or Silva Porto). Indeed the use of more Portuguese accounts, or accounts about areas that were already colonial, would noticeably alter some of his conclusions. Moreover, he should not have lumped early explorers together with the next generation of anthropologists (Torday, Frobenius) or administrators

(Coquilhat), nor relied on translation to evaluate Capelo and Ivens. And yes, he somewhat overplays the card of 'ecstasy' in Central Kasai.

As it happens the historian can turn to Beatrix Heintze's study of German travellers to Angola which is thoroughly documented and raises the issues discussed in the first six chapters of this book. While her findings parallel those of Fabian to a large extent, she does not find as sharp a distinction as he does between the various modes of acquiring knowledge.

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## POWER IN ANGOLA

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*Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present*. By LINDA HEYWOOD. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2000. Pp. xviii + 305. £40.00/\$79.95 (ISBN 1-58046-063-1).

KEY WORDS: Angola, political, ethnicity.

In this sweeping account, Linda Heywood discusses one and half centuries of political history in the Angolan Highlands. It is a helpful volume: sound regional studies on Angola are rare and the text offers many well-founded insights. Heywood explores the relations between the state, various Ovimbundu elites and less powerful segments of Ovimbundu society from the end of the pre-colonial period until the turn of the twentieth century.

In her interpretation of the late pre-colonial period Heywood argues that a commercial revolution took place that seriously curbed the powers of the royal families in the Ovimbundu kingdoms. In order to turn the tide, these royal families sought to use the Portuguese as allies and were subsequently unable to mount strong resistance against Portuguese conquest. The colonial period was marked by extreme abuse and economic exploitation, but also by a growing pan-Ovimbundu ethnic consciousness, notably among those who became Protestant in the region. The latter often found themselves in opposition to the state, while Catholic Ovimbundu were regarded as less of a threat by the colonial regime. The Protestant Ovimbundu came to form the core leadership of UNITA, one of the Angolan nationalist movements. From the start many regarded the movement as 'an Ovimbundu nationalist organization' (p. 174). After decolonization the search for a balance between regional/ethnic tendencies and increasingly centralized state politics took on extremely violent proportions. During the 1992 election, the 'divide between the Ovimbundu population and the state was the narrowest it had ever been under all the various regimes that had exercised authority over the population from the 1840s' (p. xiv). Yet it widened again as the parties failed to resolve their differences after the elections. By the end of 1999 'the aspirations of the Ovimbundu and rural populations to live in peace under a state that would represent their interests were a long way from being realized' (p. 234).

It is only natural with a book covering such an extensive period that not all issues are spelt out in detail. The broad perspective taken up in the book is, however, no excuse for its interpretative weaknesses. Heywood's main thesis stresses the growth of what she calls a 'pan-Ovimbundu ethnic identity'. It remains unclear, however, how this ethnic consciousness came about and what it meant for those involved. Ethnic identity is presented as a binding factor; only limited attention is paid to internal contest. At times Ovimbundu consciousness is firmly linked to Protestantism; in other instances the term Ovimbundu seems to stand for all rural people in southern Angola. The relations between the various Ovimbundu elites

and wider Ovimbundu constituencies do not form part of the analysis, as the author focuses on the state, resistance and compromise. Furthermore the interpretation of UNITA as an Ovimbundu movement from the start is made by ignoring evidence on the connections within the nationalist elite network of Angola as a whole. This leads to internal contradictions in the book. Thus Heywood maintains that during the period under discussion 'local and regional identities gave way to Angolan nationalism' (p. xiii), yet the evidence presented shows a very different direction toward increasingly ethnicized politics.

The book is modelled around a clear-cut opposition between resistance, compromise and the state, whereby the Catholic church is associated with the state and Protestantism is linked to resistance. Much of the evidence hardly fits this opposition. Thus the anti-state protest of some Ovimbundu Catholics (p. 144) is difficult to understand. The author mentions 'state-sponsored studies' that showed the disastrous effects of the counter-insurgency measures during the anti-colonial war, but fails to note that the researchers involved were opponents of the Portuguese state (p. 149). The critical conditions that stemmed from Portuguese counter-insurgency are used to explain an increasing political consciousness among the Ovimbundu. Yet it is also stated that many Ovimbundu did not join the nationalist movements because of a country-wide economic boom (p. 176). Both the colonial state and Ovimbundu resistance and accommodation seem much less monolithic than Heywood argues.

A final analytical problem concerns the author's notion of 'traditional'. In the interpretation of the late pre-colonial period, social change is a key concept. Yet, when it comes to the colonial period, all matters that are not Christian or western are placed in the category of 'pre-colonial Ovimbundu culture' (pp. 119–20), as if this concerns an unchanging whole and as if none of the practices referred to have altered ever since colonial conquest took place. The author's emphasis on Ovimbundu traditions at times leads to purist remarks. Thus women who went into urban prostitution after having been left by the Portuguese settlers whose concubines they were, are said to belong to 'the growing number of demoralized and de-aculturated Ovimbundu who lived on the margins of both the African and European worlds' (p. 121). I would be more interested to learn about the motivations and aspirations of these women.

*Contested Power in Angola* should stand as a landmark in the historiography of Angolan politics, but like so many landmarks it needs revision and extension.

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INGE BRINKMAN

## AFRICAN METROPOLIS

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*Historical Dictionary of Greater Johannesburg*. By NAOMI MUSIKER and REUBEN MUSIKER. (Historical Dictionaries of Cities of the World). Folkestone: Scarecrow Press, 1999. Pp. viii + 480. £88.65 (ISBN 0-8108-3520-7).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, urban, dictionary.

Johannesburg is the first African metropolis to be featured in this series published by Scarecrow, which thus far consists of eight volumes, including such cities as Tokyo, Paris and Guangzhou (Canton). The series is edited by Jon Woronoff, whose foreword unfortunately reveals little of the intentions behind the project. It is left to the Musikers, in their preface, to tell us that one of the aims is to 'focus on more recent history'. They proceed to outline some of the criteria they adopted in selecting and compiling entries: cultural history is included alongside

commercial, social and political history, while biographies are only of those who have 'made a decisive contribution to the city' and are limited to 'their Johannesburg content'.

There is much to applaud about the Musikers' considerable efforts. Topics and personalities chosen are wide ranging, from the first entries on 'African churches' and 'African jazz' to the concluding short history of the suburb of 'Yeoville' and subsequent biographical sketch of 'Zoutendayk, A. N.', head of immunohaematology at the South African Institute of Medical Research and a pioneer of work on rhesus blood disease. If the predictable likes of the Oppenheims or Mandelas are included, then there are also entries for photographer Peter Magubane, singer Miriam Makeba, squatters' leader James Mpanza or architect Frank Fleming. Brief histories of water or electricity provision co-exist with explanations of the *stokvel* system – saving clubs first formed by township women in the 1920s – or the contemporary experiences of city hawkers.

This breadth of coverage owes a great deal to the marrying of the concerns of more traditional urban history with the revisionist, Rand-centric scholarship – much acknowledged in the useful, thematically organized bibliography – that emanated from the sequence of Witwatersrand University history workshops which began in the late 1970s, after the Soweto uprising of 1976. The result is that we can learn not only about the establishment of the first municipal authority, or the laying-out of parks or suburbs, but also about the more significant strikes, or developments in the arts. Different, or sometimes the same, entries thus give us a combination of history 'in-the-city' with history 'of-the-city', to use Paul Maylam's mid-1990s division of urban historiography. The result is a highly useful reference book both for academic researchers as well as the general reader.

There are, of course, some weaknesses. Between the preface and the dictionary proper, the Musikers have provided maps/plans and a chronology, in itself a good idea. But the former – five in number ranging from 1886 to 1996 – will most probably be somewhat opaque to a non-South Africanist. They would have benefited greatly both from explanations beyond the briefly worded captions and from a clearer sense of how they related to one another. In contrast, the chronology is arguably rather too full and eclectic – an overly verdant jungle of firsts (car, tramway, gas lamps etc.) alongside dramatic events and unexplained processes (1907: 'Economic depression occurs') – albeit with the odd frustratingly brief description of events: for instance an entry for January 1950 simply reads 'Racial riots'. In part as a result of the dictionary format, one sometimes struggles to get a clear sense not only of why things might have happened – the entries are generally short on analysis as opposed to 'facts' – but also of the exact timing and extent of processes such as racial segregation, particularly of the 'Jim Crow' rather than residential form. One might have also hoped for fuller economic and demographic statistics than are on offer.

The Musikers were well aware of the difficulties involved in a project such as this. In their preface they stated modestly that they were wishing to convey to those wishing to learn 'something about Johannesburg', the 'essence of the City, its landmarks and its history'. In many respects they have succeeded, and this obvious labour of love is most welcome.

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VIVIAN BICKFORD-SMITH

## BIOGRAPHY OF A HERERO CHIEF

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*Manasse Tjiseseta: Chief of Omaruru, 1884–1898, Namibia*. By JORIS DE VRIES.  
(History, Cultural Traditions and Innovations in Southern Africa, 6). Cologne:  
Rüdiger Köppe, 1999. Pp. 146. DEM38, paperback (ISBN 3-89645-055-7).

KEY WORDS: Namibia, biography.

Biographies of Namibian leaders of the nineteenth century are rare. We have in-depth studies of Hendrik Witbooi, Samuel Maharero and Kahimemua for that period, but few comprehensive analyses of other leading figures. This book, a biography of the Herero chief Manasse Tjiseseta, who reigned in central-western Namibia between 1884 until his death in 1898, is thus to be welcomed. Its importance is enhanced by the fact that the editors of the series have added fourteen documents, including letters written by Tjiseseta himself, reproduced here in facsimile, and providing the reader with a personal glimpse of the chief.

Joris de Vries reconstructs the life of one of the first Herero chiefs deeply embedded in a Christian context. He was a schoolteacher for the Rhenish Mission before succeeding his uncle, Tjaherani. He was also one of the first chiefs who had to act in a political environment increasingly influenced by German colonialism. He had to do so much earlier than the later paramount chief Samuel Maharero, whose biography partly resembles that of Tjiseseta. The structural confines of Christianity and colonialism, and the political and economic possibilities these entailed for a chief, became important for all central Namibian Herero polities from the late 1880s onwards. De Vries' study provides an insight into the skilful means by which a fairly young chief (some 34 years of age at the beginning of his reign) used these contexts to carve autonomous spaces for himself and his people.

The author shows convincingly how the particular economic possibilities of the Omaruru region provided an essential power base for the chief. Omaruru was an important commercial centre along several major trade routes connecting western, central and northern Namibia, and Tjiseseta set up a coherent taxation system. In addition, the area provided for regular agricultural activity which, next to the pastoral economy, provided an important source of income. In the case of the Damara community at Okombahe, relations of dependency, including the control of labourers, added to the power base of Tjiseseta and that of several other Herero petty chiefs. As de Vries shows, Tjiseseta played out these economic possibilities and social differences while maintaining political autonomy, not only *vis-à-vis* the encroaching German military, but also *vis-à-vis* the dominant Maharero polity. To characterize Tjiseseta as a 'tycoon' (pp. 77ff.) with respect to his economic ventures and wealth might, however, be an overstatement, not least as he did not act solely by himself but in accordance with a council. This raises the question of the distribution of wealth, and relations with other enterprising Herero families, analyses of which are missing.

The analysis of the transformations faced by Tjiseseta in the 1890s (chapter 5) remains superficial. While the general lines of conflict with the German administration are well outlined, resulting in the chief losing more and more control, the complexities of the dynamics within the polity are not addressed coherently. A case in point are the transformations of the chief's relations with the Damara community in Okombahe. De Vries omits an important manoeuvre by Tjiseseta in 1894 through which he transformed the tribute payments of the Okombahe agriculturalists into a lucrative annual revenue granted by the German administration without himself and his petty chiefs losing *de facto* control of Damara labour, while the Damara chief in turn had to enter into agreement with the

German administration for the provision of labour (de Vries only mentions the latter). The case is important as it raises questions about the changing relations between Tjiseseta, his petty chiefs and the Damara population, as well as issues relating to the manipulation of pre-colonial relations of dependence by the Herero elite during the initial phase of German administration. In-depth analyses of these issues are missing.

De Vries' study is a slightly revised version of his MA thesis submitted at the Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden in 1997. This explains the limited source basis on which the book is based. The omission of the rich correspondence of the Rhenish missionaries of Omaruru, Okombahe and Omburu limits de Vries' understanding of the internal dynamics of the Herero polity and results in a rather sketchy picture of Tjiseseta's (extended) family. Although the author acknowledges some of the shortcomings (in chapter 4 and the conclusion), one wonders for example why such important political bodies as the chief's council and the church council are not analyzed in their own right?

Despite these limitations, the book is a welcome contribution to the biographical and regional studies of central Namibian history. This reviewer hopes that the publisher (who has failed to provide an index) has made it available to the Namibian readership at an affordable price, as it is biographies that often lend themselves much better to discussions of history in its broader contexts than any other so-called history books.

*Basler Afrika Bibliographien*

DAG HENRICH SEN

### THE LIMITS OF A LIBERAL IMPERIALIST

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*A Liberal Life: Sydney, Earl Buxton, 1853–1934*. By DANIEL WALEY. Hassocks, Sussex: Newtimber Publications, 1999. Pp. 376. £20 (ISBN 0-9536998-0-3).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, imperialism, biography.

Daniel Waley's biography of Sydney, Earl Buxton – the progressive if cautious centrist in the reforming Liberal governments in Britain before World War I, then Governor General of South Africa during the formative years following union – is a meticulously researched analysis of family life, personality, political contexts and public policies. Using a wide range of manuscript collections and supplementary biographical sources, the author develops Buxton's private and public life around a central theme: his zeal for public service. Descended from a long line of entrepreneurs – clothiers, oil merchants and brewers who intermarried with Quakers – Buxton's ancestors included Thomas Fowell, 'the liberator', renowned in the early nineteenth century as a prison reformer, for his opposition to the death penalty and cooperation with Wilberforce in ending the slave trade. 'The assumption that public work was a responsibility which went with comfortable means' was to be foundational in Buxton's life (p. 16).

Buxton's career is traced from his political apprenticeship as a fiscal conservative at the London School Board (1876–82), through his election as MP for Peterborough (1883), his failure to be re-elected (1885) and his return to parliament from the working class constituency of Poplar (1889). He was made Colonial Under-Secretary with special responsibility for Southern Africa (1892–5), a position that left him frustrated with the uncontrollable manoeuvres of Cecil John Rhodes and the British South Africa Company. Although a ready supporter of empire, he was uncomfortable with the intrigues of imperial expansion. Fortunately for Buxton and the Liberals, the Jameson Raid occurred after the

Conservatives were returned to power in 1895. Although Buxton subsequently sat on the Commission of Inquiry, Waley recognizes that Liberals, like Conservatives, 'failed to make the inquiry a genuine one' (p. 145). Liberals, too, were part of the empire's governing establishment. As Buxton put it: 'I am not myself very much in favour of government by Chartered Companies, but if it had not been for their existence this country would have lost that large part of Africa, which is a place of the future' (p. 120).

The latter half of the book turns to Buxton's accomplishments and limitations during nine years 'at the centre of Britain's Liberal revolution' (p. 9), as Post Master General (1905–10), and President of the Board of Trade (1910–14). He was subsequently rewarded with a peerage and appointed Governor General of South Africa (1914–20).

William Beveridge, who worked under Buxton at the Board of Trade, described him as 'a gentleman and a Radical' (p. 209). Buxton is revealed as a courteous, kindly, persuasive and diplomatic person; but he was no radical on matters of populist politics in Britain or African rights in South Africa. Supportive of trade unions in collective bargaining and open (at least in principle) to the franchise for women, he nevertheless feared the emergence of Labour as a working class party and was appalled by what he saw as the excesses of the suffragette movement. Fuelled by a fear of cultural pollution, there was also an element of racism, seen most overtly in his anti-semitic approach to immigration. Although Waley carefully records these fears and prejudices when dealing with Buxton's years in British politics, he does not pursue such shortcomings with comparable vigour when presenting the Governor General's 'six years at the heart of power in the nascent Union of South Africa' (p. 9).

The biography breaks new ground in detailing Buxton's irenic role when easing Prime Minister Louis Botha into the practices of responsible government. As a particularly close and trusting friendship developed, Buxton found himself blurring the lines of 'self-effacement' that Berriedale Keith had advised as essential for a Governor General. Arriving in South Africa at the outbreak of the First World War, Buxton was soon offering advice to the South African cabinet on the invasion of German South West Africa, the rebellion of General Beyers, issues of amnesty, the deportation of trade union leaders and the Union's representation at Versailles. It was not unusual for Buxton to meet with Botha prior to cabinet meetings; at times the composition of the cabinet was discussed. There were also occasions when the Governor General spoke publicly on sensitive issues, as in 1919 when he explained to a German audience in Windhoek that the 'mandate' was simply a euphemism for 'union' (p. 337). It is understood by all that the South African cabinet wielded power; but the close relationship with Botha allowed Buxton a surprising, and perhaps constitutionally unwise, level of informal influence.

Although Waley does full justice to Buxton's primary role in setting out to heal the breach between South Africa's two white populations, he is less perceptive when analyzing the Governor General's approach to the black majority. Buxton appears not to have expressed opinions on Britain's failure to extend the Cape tradition and its common voters roll. The delegations Africans sent to Britain, protesting the parliamentary colour-bar in the draft South Africa Act (1909) and the grotesque injustices of the Native Land Act (1913), apparently went unnoticed by him. If Buxton consistently helped to postpone the anticipated incorporation of Swaziland, Basutoland and Bechuanaland into the union, he showed scant interest in the issue of African rights in South Africa itself, before, during and after his term as Governor General. That he avoided this explosive subject in public, or in his dealings with the Botha/Smuts governments, is not surprising. His role as Governor General and the political exigencies of the moment precluded this.

However, his limited moral imagination and innate caution also played a part. As Waley points out, Buxton believed that natives 'should be fitted as happily as possible into the interstices of a basically white and Europeanized structure' (p. 291), a common attitude within the Liberal Party. (Keir Hardy and Labour launched the only serious attack on the colour-bar clause in draft constitution as it moved through parliament.) After leaving South Africa, Buxton was President of the Africa Society from 1922 to his death in 1934, during which time he again failed to focus on the issue of African rights in an increasingly segregated South Africa.

All this suggests a more critical assessment of Buxton's role in South African affairs would have been appropriate. In an otherwise judicious biography, it is not good enough for Waley to write that having 'plunged into the political events of South Africa (Buxton) had no occasion or time to record his thoughts about the future of Africans' (p. 11).

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PETER WALSH

### ALFRED XUMA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ANC

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*Alfred B. Xuma: African, American, South African*. By STEVEN D. GISH. London: Macmillan Press, 2000. Pp. xvi + 305. £45 (ISBN 0-333-67073-6).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, nationalism, biography.

Steven Gish has done history and South Africa an important service by recording and appraising the life of Alfred B. Xuma, thereby rescuing from near obscurity one of the major founders of the post-apartheid order. The new South Africa owes a large debt to the political traditions of the African National Congress, and the ANC owes much to Xuma's strong leadership in the decade just prior to its emergence as a mass movement. Gish argues that without Xuma's success in resuscitating, unifying and financing the venerable but fragile association he inherited in 1940, the ANC might well have collapsed permanently. Instead, under Xuma it attracted a vigorous new generation of young turks who took it over in 1949, dispatching movement elders, including Xuma himself, into reluctant retirement.

Gish skilfully traces Xuma's rise to national leadership, his performance as ANC president and the twelve years of his life that followed his defeat for re-election. The focus throughout is on the values and attitudes that Xuma internalized in his thirteen years as a student in the United States, then doggedly applied and adapted throughout his later life. Born the seventh of eight children of Methodist converts in the rural Transkei in 1893, Xuma attended mission schools through the ninth grade, taught briefly, then at age twenty used his savings as a teacher to go to America where he enrolled at Tuskegee Institute in 1913. The philosophy of Tuskegee's Booker T. Washington powerfully reinforced the ethos of sobriety, hard work and achievement already stressed in Xuma's mission education. To these values it added a strong belief in self-reliance and the responsibility of blacks to uplift themselves, both as individuals and as a race. After completing high school at Tuskegee, Xuma over the next decade earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota and a medical degree from Northwestern University in Chicago, making ends meet by working long hours at menial jobs. Through church and university connections he also befriended a number of white patrons who helped finance his studies and supported him through a year of specialized training in Europe before his return to South Africa in 1927.



Home again where he quickly joined the tiny elite of professional Africans in Johannesburg, Xuma built a medical practice and a career in public life that enabled him to straddle the racial divide just as he had in his fourteen years abroad. Neither radical nor conservative politically, he believed deeply in African self-reliance while also holding to a faith that whites could be won over through rational dialogue and the earnest efforts of blacks to act responsibly and respectably. Gish shows, however, that unlike Washington, Xuma did not combine these beliefs with an accommodationist style of politics based on acceptance of the separate-but-equal principle. He consistently condemned segregation, inferior treatment and training for Africans, and the lack of African political rights. While working to persuade liberal whites to support African advancement, he remained an Africanist at heart in the sense of believing that Africans had to speak with their own voice and not become dependent on whites to speak or act on their behalf.

Like most politically aware Africans at the time, Xuma reacted strongly to the passage of the 1936 Hertzog bills which removed Africans to a separate voters' roll. His confidence in white liberals declined, and after spending a year in Britain on a public health course, his rhetoric began to incorporate some of the harsher language of anti-colonial nationalism heard outside South Africa. With the strong encouragement of James Calata, the ANC's secretary general, he agreed in December 1940 to accept nomination for the presidency of the ANC, and was elected, defeating Z. R. Mahabane by one vote. Xuma's achievements in organization of the ANC have been recognized by other authors, along with his refusal to accept the radical tactics of mass action proposed by the Mandela-Tambo generation of Youth League leaders after 1948. Xuma's temperament, Gish argues, put him out of tune with the rapidly shifting mood of black politics that increasingly reflected youthful impatience and the energies of an emerging working class. Nor did Xuma's experience equip him with a repertoire of new tactics suited to the changing times.

Gish has combed a vast amount of archival material in preparing this solid biography and has incorporated sufficient historical background to contextualize his subject's remarkable life. It is regrettable that so little of private persona emerges – his family life, attachments to his place of birth, and the ups and downs that must have accompanied developments in his public career. Nevertheless, this balanced and insightful study adds significantly to our knowledge of an under-appreciated figure in South Africa's modern history.

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GAIL M. GERHART

## IMPERIAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

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*Managing the Business of Empire: Essays in Honour of David Fieldhouse*. Edited by PETER BURROUGHS and A. J. STOCKWELL. London: Frank Cass, 1998. Pp. 262. £32 (ISBN 0-7146-4826-4).

KEY WORDS: imperialism, historiography.

The diverse and wide-ranging essays written in honour of the Cambridge University imperial historian David Fieldhouse make a notable contribution to the field of imperial historiography. They also have a unifying feature. They reflect the strengths and weaknesses of Fieldhouse's own *corpus* of books and articles. On the positive side, they are solidly grounded in primary source material, mostly drawn from archives, and they subject the large theoretical constructs that abound in the literature of imperialism to meticulous and sceptical scrutiny. On the more suspect

side, the sources are overwhelmingly imperial, mostly located in the metropole, and they are often employed uncritically. Since all the scholars are themselves British or at least British-trained, their findings may tend to provoke criticism, especially from scholars working in colonial regions, who have often regarded the work of British imperial historians like Fieldhouse as exercises in exculpating Britain from its colonial record.

The individual essays are of a high standard in research and presentation. They follow Fieldhouse in ranging right across the British colonial experience, starting from the eighteenth century and ending with decolonization after the Second World War. There are some useful arguments in the individual pieces. C. A. Bayly, for instance, makes a spirited claim for Britain's territorial aggrandizement in South Asia as the critical moment in Britain's expansionism, setting that country on the road to its later partition of Africa. Equally effective are articles on the latter stages of colonial rule and the transition to formal political independence, one of Fieldhouse's own scholarly preoccupations. S. E. Stockwell's article on the creation of a central bank in Ghana, A. J. Stockwell's discussion of the transfer of power in Malaysia and Ronald Hyam's investigation of South Africa's departure from the Commonwealth disabuse scholars of any notion that Britain was able to dominate the handing-over of power, that decolonizing projects followed a British-prepared script or that the new Asian and African regimes were beholden to their former rulers. The geographical expanse is impressive. India, Southeast Asia, Africa, Australia and even the Pacific are covered; Colin Newbury's article on the place of business history in a distant part of the British empire – the Pacific – is an unusual and welcome addition to a field so closely associated with Fieldhouse's own specialization in empire.

But the central preoccupation of numerous authors in this book is the contribution of David Fieldhouse to imperial historiography. Like Fieldhouse's own work, the careful, even meticulous, use of documentary source material is a reminder that high-blown theories of imperialism must be subjected to testing in archival collections. Yet, while the citations to imperial archives, especially those housed at the Public Record Office in London, are comprehensive, there are no references to works in non-European languages and little use of foreign primary sources, such as the press and memoirs. It is ironical in essays that often argue for the importance of non-European factors in the imperial experience that none of the scholars has made use of the archives located in the former colonial territories. These neglects are surprising because several of the authors, notably C. A. Bayly and Colin Newbury, are well known scholars of India and Africa respectively. The irony here should also be obvious. Fieldhouse and others stress what they call an 'exocentric' or non-European theory of imperial history. But how can one claim that the periphery is important, even in many cases the source of imperialist motivations, without systematically reading non-European sources, both primary and secondary?

Perhaps not surprisingly, approaches rooted in the imperial and diplomatic archives argue for the primacy of political and strategic motivations over economic factors. This was a key and exciting finding some forty years ago when Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher published *Africa and the Victorians*. Today the stress on politics seems less persuasive, more the result of the limitations of the sources being used and of those being ignored, and based on a narrow, often unproblematic, reading of those documents. If, as seems the case, the preferred discourse in diplomatic despatches privileged political explanations over economic ones, then explanations based on these materials are likely also to stress the political.

The mention of the word discourse brings one to the last two essays in the volume. Here, Stephen Howe and Phillip Darby struggle mightily to bring

Fieldhouse's archivally-based and economically-focused studies of imperialism into alignment with the disciplines of literary theory, deconstruction and subaltern studies, which have recently become so important in studies of imperialism. This is no easy task. It can result in some stretching of credulity, such as linking Fieldhouse with Basil Davidson and Marshall Hodgson as a promoter of 'a non-European-centric global history'. The difficulty is that these disciplines approach historical documents differently. While recognizing the mediated and biased nature of their sources, imperial historians use them *faute de mieux*. After all, what else exists? The sources themselves stop the literary theorists and deconstructionists dead in their tracks, deemed to be too misleading and biased to be usable. At present the gap seems unbridgeable.

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### IMPERIALISM IN AFRICA AND BEYOND

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*The World and the West: The European Challenge and the Overseas Response in the Age of Empire*. By PHILLIP D. CURTIN. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Pp. xiv + 294. \$27.50/£19.95 (ISBN 0-521-77135-8).

KEY WORDS: imperialism, resistance, nationalism.

The Age of Empire of the title of the book is the 'second imperialism' of the post Industrial Revolution period, but Philip Curtin is not adverse to taking occasional excursions back as far as the Agricultural Revolution (10,000 B.C.) in this wide ranging and generally exciting history of imperialism and its opponents. Curtin's approach is typological and chronology is not strictly essential, yet the book manages to move from one time and place to another with remarkable grace and the reader is rarely lost. The elegant comparison of Russian/Soviet Central Asia with South Africa in chapter 4 is a good example of how Curtin manages to finesse this technique.

Curtin's work is really a series of essays, or perhaps lectures (fourteen chapters might easily translate into fourteen weeks of a term), since it seems to be written primarily for a teaching audience, divided into four parts. The first part, called 'Conquest' is a survey of the advantages that industrial societies gained in the nineteenth century over those which had lagged behind: advantages which made widespread conquest possible. Although in this section Curtin focuses primarily on Western Europe, the United States and Japan, elsewhere he shows how even non-industrial world groups such as 'Ladino' (Spanish speaking but culturally mixed) Mexicans might use the same advantages. The second part of the book, 'Cultural change and imperial rule', is a typology of various colonial systems, both the indirect rule systems used in most of Africa and India, and what he calls 'plural societies', of which settler societies like South Africa are typical.

In this third section, 'Conversion', Curtin switches to culture, and outlines how many non-western societies adopted western cultural patterns, especially religious conversion, with the aim of modernizing. One chapter deals primarily with Uganda's religious wars of the late nineteenth century. This is followed by one on the more general strategy of 'defensive modernization', an approach that includes a cultural component but primarily concerns the adoption and adaptation of western technology and techniques (such as literacy or modern medicine) before and during colonial episodes, in a variety of primarily nineteenth century, states, such as Hawaii, Madagascar and Siam. Two final chapters in the section deal with the strongest of the defensive modernizers, Turkey and Japan; these are intended

to make a contrast between defensive and successful industrialization in Japan and less successful attempts at industrialization (albeit accompanied by strong westernization) in Turkey.

Curtin's final section, 'Independence and the liquidation of empires', deals with nationalist movements, although it ranges widely in fact from pre-colonial resistance movements and millenarian movements like the Xhosa cattle killing or the Melanesian cargo cults to defensive modernization and the more familiar story of anti-colonial organizations in Africa and Asia. More detailed case studies explore the ways in which Ghana and Indonesia have sought to develop viable independent states in the political and diplomatic sphere.

Curtin writes from a non-Marxist materialist perspective. Although he makes occasional nods toward the diffusion of western music, food, and aesthetic norms, his primary emphasis when discussing culture is on material elements of economics and politics. He does not engage in serious debate with more conventional Marxist concepts of imperialism and focuses on industrialization much more than on capitalism. Curtin's model of imperial expansion relies heavily on the 'man on the spot' and 'empire by default' models championed, among others, by Robinson and Gallagher. In dealing with the move toward independence and post-colonial politics, there is no systematic exploration of the concepts of 'neo-colonialism', either to debate with or to study, even in the chapter on Ghana and Nkrumah. In the case studies, Curtin does not develop a sustained model of revolutionary war and subsequent socialist nationalism, for example through Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh or other theorists of social transformation. Similarly, he ignores entirely the vast new literature generated by post-modernism on the cultural effects of colonialism.

Curtin's analytical pose will make this book appear conservative or at least out of step with current discussion to many readers – although his decision not to engage in debate with either Marxists or post-modernists makes it non-combatative conservatism. Such an assessment should not detract from the value of the book for what it does do, which is provides a well-written overview of the engagement of the west with the non-west over the past century. It will serve well as a textbook, even a core textbook, for a course in the general history of the non-western world or a modern world history course. Its clarity and elegance, and the insights that his case studies provide, will make it an excellent teaching text.

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JOHN THORNTON

### SCHOLARSHIP AND POPULIST POLEMIC

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*L'État libre du Congo : Paradis perdu*. By JULES MARCHAL. Borgloon, Belgium: Editions Paula Bellings, 1996. 2 vols. Pp. 399 + 429. Paperback, no price given (ISBN 2-9600123-0-5).\*

KEY WORDS: Zaïre (Democratic Republic of Congo), imperialism, historiography.

This is a translation of *De Kongostaat van Leopold II* (Antwerpen, 1988) which the author wrote under the pseudonym A. M. Delathuy, augmented by passages from two other books written under the same pseudonym: *Missie en Staat in Oud-Kongo* (2 vols, Berchem, 1992–4) and *Jezuïten in Kongo met zwaard en kruis* (Berchem, 1986). Jules Marchal had a distinguished career both in the Belgian

\* Editors' note: we are grateful to Professor Fetter for agreeing to review a book published four years before our request to him.

colonial administration and with the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and his books are intended to acquaint both French- and Dutch-speaking Belgians with their country's misdeeds during the colonization of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Although Marchal's work crosses the fine line between scholarship and political advocacy, scholars ignore the latter at their peril. The journalist Adam Hochschild, in his extremely popular *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (New York, 1998), identifies Marchal along with Jan Vansina as 'the two greatest scholars of this period' (p. 352). To academics, this is a disturbing juxtaposition. Vansina has reconstructed the history of Central Africa through a careful examination of primary and secondary materials, oral evidence, archaeological remains and botanical analysis. Marchal, by contrast, is a polemicist, motivated by an urge to unveil colonial atrocities and to right the injustices that still plague Africa. He also reaches a Dutch- and French-speaking public well beyond that available to most historians.

Rather than advocate that professional historians try to beat polemicists at their own game, I would like to address the question of how we can convey this difference to our own students and to the general public. The Hochschilds and Marchals of the world are eminently capable of uncovering skeletons in the colonial closet: dirty deals between politicians, administrative intimidation by decapitation, the missionary practice of kidnapping and beating their charges. It is not wrong to expose past crimes. What is questionable is the decontextualization of early colonial history.

Marchal's 800 pages are divided into 33 chapters contained in five major parts, whose titles I translate, as follows: Africa about 1876; The confiscation of paradise by the king; The reign of terror; On the edge of the Terror; and Catholic Missions, 1885–1908. There is nothing exceptional here that might not be found in an historian's account of the period. But closer inspection indicates practices that might not pass disciplinary muster. These include near total silence on Africans as individuals. This is a history of Europeans in Africa which excludes serious coverage of the Congolese, except for the Swahili slave traders to whom Leopold's Free State temporarily delegated authority. Again, the work focuses on individuals rather than collectivities as causes of action. Many of the chapters consist of potted versions of the biography of an individual or the history of a religious order. Parts 2 and 3 do contain careful narratives of colonial accounting in terms of money and lives lost. Finally, except for those sections, Marchal uses his primary and secondary sources in a way quite different from that of professional historians. It is almost as though the citations are a validation of his work in the archives or an embellishment to the text rather than part of an effort to reconstruct a historical reality. What is lost is a sense of the institutional constraints under which the various colonial players operated.

In summary, Marchal has shown considerable dedication and idealism in his work. He may well encourage a new generation of Belgians to follow in his footsteps, but the immediate product of his labours is frustrating to the professional historian.

*University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

BRUCE FETTER

## AFRICAN STRUGGLE IN PORT ELIZABETH

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*Making a Voice: African Resistance to Segregation in South Africa*. By THANDEKA JOYCE F. KIRK. Boulder, CO: Westview, 2000. Pp. xxii + 342. No price given for cloth (ISBN 0-8133-2769-5); £19.50 paperback (ISBN 0-8133-3797-6).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, urban.

There is a rich scholarly literature on urban South African history centred around segregation and the means by which African populations were housed and controlled in towns. *Making a Voice* is a valuable and nuanced contribution to that literature. Based on a 1987 University of Wisconsin PhD, this volume is really a micro-study of the small city of Port Elizabeth focusing on the period from 1880 to 1910. The most important chapter examines the creation of New Brighton township and its early evolution from 1903, though Kirk has succeeded in recovering material on earlier African life in the city as well. Port Elizabeth, unlike Cape Town, Johannesburg or Durban, was one of the smaller cities that actually cradled the evolution of African settled town life in South Africa so it makes an excellent site for a case study. There is also a special interest in exploring conditions and conflicts in detail long before the Group Areas Act of 1950 or even the Urban Areas Act of 1923, the usual landmark events in this history.

The sobering reality is that the themes Kirk sensitively explores have repeated themselves over the generations and are not without contemporary resonance in present-day urban planning conflicts over housing the poor. The earliest location planned by the city fathers of Port Elizabeth goes back to 1855. It was ironically called Native Strangers' Location and within a generation was too central for the taste of the white citizenry. It was to be typical of the city that the attempt to replace it with the Reservoir site resulted in two locations existing simultaneously, while many Africans lived on private white-owned property in 'private' locations without any state control.

The goals of the state proved contradictory. Respectable housing was wanted for Africans that was neat and clean but which their measly pay could sustain. Africans were needed promptly at their workplace but whites wished them out of sight and out of mind. A striking feature in the nineteenth century was the playing out of Trapido's localized little tradition of Cape liberalism: there were whites who wished to exempt propertied or educated Africans from removal and who believed that freehold rights should be available for those that could afford to own property. A less lofty reason for the survival of the private locations was the long-term role of slum landlords who lived off the rent of poor Africans. In consequence, the long history of real and threatened removals in Port Elizabeth dragged on, often with policies contradicted by new legislation. In a familiar scenario, it was at last the threat of plague which became the excuse that forced the destruction of Strangers and then Reservoir. However, many of the African population moved not to New Brighton but to Korsten, the racially mixed 'native free state' where conditions were more favourable for urban life on the part of poor people. In 1910, less than half of the African population in Port Elizabeth seem to have been living in New Brighton.

The planning of New Brighton was a rather shaky sort of 'experiment', as Kirk terms it. The 'family' houses were too small and too expensive. The concession, grudgingly made, to permit Africans to construct their own houses, foundered largely due to poverty. With a financial system based on municipal rents, the possibility of decent maintenance and upkeep was defeated by the massive scale of non-payment. In order to survive, African residents rented out what space they could, notably to migrants anxious for a cheap roof over their heads, recreating

slum conditions. Nonetheless it is important to note that many Africans did move to New Brighton and succeeded in making it less controlled and more self-governing than the state had ever intended.

Kirk is certainly successful in capturing the roots of a long-term struggle for improved living conditions, social and economic, on the part of black Port Elizabeth. Most of this struggle was about survival and concerned 'informal' if effective means of resistance. However, her incident-filled narrative contains a considerable discussion of the 'general strike' of June 1901, a protest against the health pass forcing Africans (and Coloureds) to show that they were free of plague when they travelled. This strike was successful even in involving women domestic workers, and it achieved its goal.

It is not easy to capture the 'voice' of nineteenth-century urban Africans but Kirk's careful examination of a wide range of sources is suggestive and useful. She is eager to emphasize the bond between working- and middle-class Africans and the beginnings of influence from America (notably through the African and American Working Men's Union, an organization of black businessmen partly inspired by a handful of resident black Americans in Port Elizabeth). For this period, she is right to suggest the modest circumstances in which a small and very circumscribed African middle class lived. Even where they claimed exemption from the circumstances in which working class Africans lived, the nascent middle class merely sought privileges that others desired as well. The wedge was driven in by the state and does not lack significance, but at this juncture there is little sense of class hostility or tension. Nor were there enough black voters to give the elite any opportunity for an elected political platform in Port Elizabeth.

Perhaps the one unconvincing part of Kirk's argument is her claim that black mobilization was aimed against 'segregation' (not much used as a South African term before the end of this period). In fact it was against resettlement and against segregation – on terms that were unfavourable to all Africans. Much effort was in fact aimed at building black autonomy, at improving conditions within the segregated structures that existed and were being developed. The gulf between black and white was such that some wider belief in integration (as opposed to promoting claims for individual rights under British law) would have made little sense.

One obvious lacuna in this rich and multi-faceted study is the lack of attention paid to the Coloured population, which outnumbered the Africans for most of this period. Their relative equivalence in numbers is shared by Port Elizabeth with relatively few South African towns and makes for a distinctive facet to this history. Surely this would make a fascinating and important story and must form part of the history of race and class in Port Elizabeth. But that would be another study.

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BILL FREUND

### MANDATES MATTERED

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*Mandates and Empire: The League of Nations and Africa, 1914–1931*. By MICHAEL D. CALLAHAN. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1999. Pp. x + 297. £55 (ISBN 1-902210-23-9).

KEY WORDS: Colonial, imperialism.

The tropical African mandates awarded to Great Britain and France after the First World War have not received much attention in recent years, and most historians are content to dismiss them as little more than colonies in disguise. After all, their supervision rested with the League of Nations' Permanent Mandates

Commission, the majority of whose nine members were always colonial powers, and where the British and French representatives were themselves former colonial governors or governors-general. Whatever the obligations imposed by the terms of the mandates, the only concrete limitation on the mandatory powers' freedom of action was the requirement to submit annual reports for examination by the Commission, whose only effective powers were those of moral suasion and the threat of public rebuke. However, as Michael Callahan demonstrates in this extensively researched and detailed study, the influence of the Permanent Mandates Commission was much greater than it appeared. In practice, both the British and the French were anxious to avoid public criticism and tailored not merely their reports but also their policies accordingly. As a result, the mandate system could claim some notable successes. In 1923, for example, pressure from the PMC was instrumental in securing a revision of the frontier between the British and Belgian mandates so as to keep the kingdom of Rwanda united. Similarly, Tanganyika's status as a mandated territory contributed significantly to the eventual failure of plans for the 'closer union' of British East Africa in 1931.

As Professor Callahan points out, the British found it easier to accept the new international order than did the French. The 'sacred trust of civilization' embodied in the mandate system was not incompatible with British principles of trusteeship and the preparation of colonial subjects for eventual self-government. These principles also had powerful champions among administrators in the mandates, permanent officials in London, politicians, including the occasional cabinet minister, and influential organizations such as the League of Nations Union and the Aborigines Protection Society. Indeed, one of the most effective spokesmen for the mandates was Britain's own representative on the PMC, F. D. Lugard. On the other hand, the French were extremely suspicious of the mandate system and its potential impact on their own administrative practices. After Germany's admission to the League in 1926 and its appointment to the PMC a year later, they were also much more worried about the threat of German influence and managed to nullify the mandates' guarantees of equal treatment for the citizens of all League members. However, they could not evade the spirit or the provisions of the mandates altogether. Despite their initial demand that the mandates be treated 'as integral parts of [the Mandatory's] territory', they quickly decided to administer Togo and Cameroon as autonomous territories instead of incorporating them into their African federations, thus avoiding any possible charge of 'annexationism'. More significantly still, despite their preoccupation with the military potential of the mandates and their insistence on the right to raise troops for use outside the mandate in the event of war, the French also felt obliged to avoid charges of militarism by ending conscription, reducing the number of troops garrisoned in the mandates and transferring control over them from the Ministry of War to the local commissioners.

On the whole, Professor Callahan's case for revising conventional views about the relative insignificance of the mandate system is quite persuasive. However, his thesis that the mandates 'contributed to an evolution in the culture of colonialism' in general is rather more difficult to sustain. Certainly, the mandate system introduced some new words into the vocabulary of European imperialism; but changes in rhetoric did not translate automatically into changes of policy. To demonstrate the impact of the mandate system on imperial practice between the wars, one would have to investigate how far policies in the existing African colonies were affected by the new currents of internationalism, and such a task would have produced a different – and much longer – book.

As its sub-title indicates, *Mandates and Empire* is not a complete account of the tropical African mandates. To trace their history through the very different conditions created by the depression, the rise of Nazi Germany and the decline of



the League, the onset of the Second World War and the eventual creation of the United Nations will require the second volume that Professor Callahan clearly intends to write. If that volume proves to be as interesting as this one, his readers will be well satisfied.

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### BRITISH COLONIALISM AND ITS OPPONENTS

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*Imperialism, Race and Resistance: Africa and Britain, 1919–1945*. By BARBARA BUSH. London: Routledge, 1999. Pp. xviii + 394. £17.99, paperback (ISBN 0-415-15973-3).

KEY WORDS: imperialism, race, resistance.

This book explores linkages between the growth of anti-colonial resistance, intensifying opposition to racism and the workings of imperial power in the changing relationship between Britain and its African empire during the inter-war period. Bush chooses three case studies, namely West Africa, South Africa and Great Britain itself, to illustrate her contention that ‘tensions between white dreams of power and black dreams of freedom were seminal in transforming Britain’s relationship with Africa’ (p. i).

The book is divided into four sections. The first, which consists of a single chapter, sets the broader context. Here Bush challenges the idea that British imperialism was weakened by the First World War. She demonstrates how imperial control over African colonies was strengthened by the new international order brokered at Versailles and by Britain’s responses to perceived threats of Bolshevism and nascent African nationalism. This was a period in which the colonial administration was extended and streamlined and Africa became increasingly important, both to the British economy and in terms of its prestige as a world power.

Section two consists of three chapters focusing on West Africa, which serves as an example of non-settler colonies. The region was also chosen because it was regarded as a model of imperial rule and the most advanced part of Britain’s tropical empire in Africa. Bush starts by exploring contradictions between the discourse of benevolent trusteeship and the coercion and violence implicit in the maintenance of imperial control as experienced by administrators on the ground. She then investigates the nature of white expatriate culture and the significance of gendered and racialized social boundaries in bolstering colonial power. This segment ends with an examination of intensifying resistance to colonial rule and British responses to popular discontent, which in turn tended to stimulate further protest in a spiral of escalating resistance and repression. The added effects of global war culminated in West Africa, especially the Gold Coast, becoming a hotbed of radical African nationalism and Pan Africanist thought by the mid-1940s.

The three chapters that make up the third section concentrate on South Africa as a case study of white settler rule. South Africa, despite enjoying political autonomy, was selected ‘because of its central position in international race discourses as the fierce crucible of racial experiments in segregation’ (p. 5). The first chapter outlines the considerable contribution of British imperial policy to the implementation of segregation in South Africa and its complicity in maintaining white supremacism during the inter-war period to secure British interests in the region. This is followed by an analysis of the vicissitudes of black resistance in the

context of the consolidation of the racist state. The final chapter of this section explores the nature of British liberal involvement in black politics and the reasons for Africans losing faith in their liberal allies by the time apartheid was implemented.

The last part of the book turns the spotlight on Britain, examining some of the repercussions of empire on the metropole. Bush first elaborates on the racism experienced by the growing black community in Britain and the resultant emergence of a radical black political consciousness that identified with Africa as well as with struggles against racism and imperialism globally. She next evaluates the significance of liberal and leftist engagement with black activists and intellectuals for the growing challenge to British imperialism in the heart of the empire itself. The final chapter of this section outlines how heightened domestic pressure for change, resistance in Africa itself as well as international developments in the late 1930s and during the Second World War reshaped the imperial outlook and redefined Britain's relationship with her African colonies. The book ends with a brief analysis of continuities and disjunctures in Africa's relationship with the west between the period of formal empire and the current order, in which racism and imperialism have endured, though in different forms.

This is on the whole a nuanced, insightful, well written and provocative work. The strength of Bush's analysis, best illustrated in the West African section, is her ability to bring localized detail from the colonial margins and global structures of British imperialism into perspective simultaneously. Bush's study is, however, less accomplished in the South African section where repeated minor errors betray a lack of familiarity with the material. Suffice it to say that it is Pixley not Pixie Seme, Bamangwato not Bangwato, Sobhuza not Sobhenza, Hertzog not Herzog and that Dingaan's Day was on the 16th not the 12th of December.

This is nevertheless a book that I would recommend to anyone interested in the history of Africa or of British imperialism in the continent in the inter-war period.

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MOHAMED ADHIKARI

## DUALA LANDS AND COLONIAL REGIMES

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*Grundbesitz, Landkonflikte und kolonialer Wandel: Douala 1880 bis 1960*. By ANDREAS ECKERT. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1999 (Beiträge zur Kolonial- und Überseegeschichte, Band 70). Pp. X + 504; DM 144.00, paperback (ISBN 3-515-06777-9).

KEY WORDS: Cameroon, colonial, land, urban.

What happened to the Duala, the middlemen of the Cameroons River, under colonial rule? Living in an area that was to become the main port of Cameroon and a terminus of two railway lines, the Duala had to bear the full brunt of colonial penetration. In many places in Africa colonial rule meant not much more than the imposition of a new overlord. In Douala, however, it initiated far-reaching political, economic and social change. And these transformations happened in a rather short time span. In his meticulously researched pioneering study on land-ownership, land conflicts and colonial change in Douala from 1880 to 1960 Andreas Eckert highlights the twin processes of town-planning and land-ownership in the metropolitan area of this expanding economic centre.

Initially, colonial town planning had the aim of creating a racially segregated city with the best plots retained in European hands. For the Duala as communal owners of the land this meant dispossession and relocation, with the ensuing threat

of marginalization. The area newly allocated to Africans by the German colonial administration was far removed from the waterfront. Hence the Duala not only risked losing direct access to the means of communication and trade, but also their social pre-eminence. What made matters worse was the fact that the inland area was considered a realm of slaves. No wonder, then, that they openly opposed the German plans for a 'European model-city'. Shortly before the outbreak of the First World War the Duala even rose in rebellion. Later, they took their case to Versailles, hoping that the delegates at the peace conference would listen to their pleas, which they moulded in nationalist language. Yet their hopes were in vain. The French shelved the openly segregationist parts of the German plan but pressed on with their predecessors' urbanization policy: separating commercial from residential areas and European from African quarters and, last but not least, actively promoting a shift from communal to individual land-ownership. Surprisingly, the Duala eventually acquiesced. When the French administration went ahead with their plans for expropriation in Akwa town in 1937, local people accepted compensation and moved without further delay. Why?

Eckert's study is essentially an attempt to answer this vexing question. He does so combining administrative, political and economic history with a painstaking study of the colonial land registers. While the political developments have been analysed before, Eckert comes up with new insights into the economic activities of the former Duala middlemen after the Germans had destroyed their trade monopoly. First, they took to cocoa farming using family and slave labour, some even registering their plantations with the local administration. Thanks to their early access to western education, Duala men were also able to dominate clerical jobs in business and administration. Then, in the mid-thirties, more and more Duala started to register their urban land plots as property. Eckert thinks that they did this in direct response to falling cash crop prices in the depression years. This is certainly a fair assumption, and it may very well have been the case. Yet, the archival documents Eckert consulted do not really address this issue. Instead, they point to a shift in land rights away from communal to individual property in town. And thanks to Eckert's efforts we get to know the names, gender and trades of the new urban landowners as well as the size of the plots registered (in an appendix Eckert meticulously lists all the land deals which left traces in the archives). It thus becomes clear that chiefs and their kin were among the best placed to gain access to landed property, indicating social continuities despite dramatic changes. Another group with significant landed property was the newly emerging educated elite. On the other hand, the land registers indicate a rather wide distribution of land-ownership with some of the biggest landowners coming from other areas of Cameroon. However, the land registers do not tell much about the place of the individuals mentioned in the fabric of local society. Probably not even the trades indicated are a reliable guide as it is difficult to know what 'hunter', to mention but one example, meant in local terms.

Hence, the impression of a rather wide distribution of ownership might be more apparent than real. We cannot tell. Nonetheless, it is fair to say with Eckert that the Duala elite shifted from trade to farming and eventually to urban real estate. People of the water, as they had called themselves, came to be people of the land. Or should we rather say: lords of the land turned into landlords, from merchant-prince to rentier? Whatever we call it, Eckert thinks that this development helped to diffuse political conflicts during the second scramble for Africa and during decolonisation. Indeed, the Duala who had been in the vanguard of anti-colonial nationalism after the First World War lost out to others in politics, not least because as early as 1947 Bamileke, Basa and other newcomers to Douala had attained majority status within the port city. The principle of one man one vote helped further to marginalize the Duala in the years before independence. On the

other hand, an increasing number of land deals show that at least some Duala profited handsomely from accelerated urban growth and the economic boom of the fifties. Real estate had become a major economic resource by this time.

Eckert demonstrates how useful land registers are for the social historian, and has also made a major contribution to Cameroonian history and, more generally, to African urban history, a bitterly under-researched field of study. If only he had been willing to downsize his thesis to a more convenient length.

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ALBERT WIRZ

### THE 'MÉTIS' OF FRENCH WEST AFRICA

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*Children of the French Empire: Miscegenation and Colonial Society in French West Africa, 1895–1960*. By OWEN WHITE. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.  
Pp. 200. £40 (ISBN 0-19-820819-7).

KEY WORDS: Western, colonial, race.

In a brief but fascinating work Owen White traces the fate of the 4,000 or so offspring of French men and West African women from the end of the nineteenth century until decolonization in 1960. While small in number, the *métis*, as the offspring were called, were a matter of great concern to the French. While in the British empire there were administrative directives against sexual contact with the 'natives', no such strictures existed in the French empire. While such contacts were frowned upon, especially after the First World War, they continued even then. The French fathers do not come off very well in this story: they rarely recognized their children – the colonial official Maurice Delafosse is a notable exception – and after their service in the colony usually abandoned them.

Paternal recognition was important for the child in many ways. It led to financial obligations to the children, a right to carry the father's name and, most importantly, the right to become a French citizen. French citizenship protected someone born in Africa from the arbitrary disciplinary system of the French administration, gave rights to political participation in the colony's life and access to the higher posts of the administration. But rarely was paternity recognized.

The African mothers did not fare well either. They were often ostracized by their community for having engaged in a relationship with a foreigner – even when often, it appears, it was done against her will. The child she had with the European was an object of administrative intervention; often the child was taken by the administration to an orphanage, regardless of whether the mother consented or not. Although nearly all these children had at least one identifiable parent, the woman who had given birth to them and raised them for the first years of their lives, the children were classified as 'orphans'. The *métis* were too valued to be left to the African environment. France had a responsibility towards these children, but they were also seen as having a pre-determined role as useful intermediaries between Europe and Africa.

French attitudes toward the *métis* were ambivalent. Some thought they were more intelligent than Africans; the admixture of European blood had presumably elevated them a notch above that of the 'natives'. Here was a continuity of hoary racist stereotypes. Others saw the *métis* as degenerate, the unnatural result of the crossing of two species which should not have mated. Here, there was an echo of nineteenth-century ideas of blacks and whites forming not only contrasting races, but differing species, producing a kind of hybrid, a product inferior to either of its parents. Some of the attitudes appear to have been coloured by various forms of

projection. The *métis*, because he had been abandoned by white society, was presumed to harbour a deep hatred for it and hence was treacherous and untrustworthy. In actuality, the *métis* desired above all to be counted as whites; they took on their fathers' names even when they had not been officially recognized. They identified with the civilizing mission France claimed to pursue and showed in their writings limited sympathy for the traditional African world.

White has attempted to capture the attitudes of the various protagonists in this drama. Archives are richer in detailing institutional arrangements, but they too betray attitudes. Special schools were set up for the *métis*, separate from those for the Africans, but they were sorely underfunded and provided a level of care that would not have been tolerated for European children. Many such schools or orphanages underfed the children, provided dismal housing and offered rags as clothing and bedding. The schooling was appropriate for the mid-level positions for which the administration intended the *métis*: schoolteachers, nurses' aides and clerks of various sorts. By dealing with a population group that was seen as neither quite European nor African, White is able to examine the degree to which France was inclusive in its overseas policies. The promises of assimilation fell short of the rhetoric. Africans, disappointed by French policies, became nationalists; the *métis* could not as readily find a way of expressing their identity.

*Children of the French Empire* provides a very useful prism through which to view the French imperial system and its culture. This book is a 'must' for anyone interested in understanding both.

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### COLLABORATOR AND/OR NATIONALIST?

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*Koinange-wa-Mbiyu: Mau Mau's Misunderstood Leader*. By JEFF KOINANGE.  
Lewes, Sussex: The Book Guild, 2000. Pp. xxii + 126. £15.95 (ISBN 1-85776-412-9).

KEY WORDS: Kenya, chieftaincy, nationalism, accommodation to colonialism.

The eminent African historian Adu Boahen argued in his *African Perspectives on Colonialism* that the term 'collaborator' is 'very pejorative' and 'totally wrong in the African context'. A collaborator, Boahen felt, 'is surely somebody who sacrifices the interests of his nation for his own selfish ends'. Boahen's remarks were related directly to the initial imposition of colonial rule in Africa. The term collaborator has over the years assumed sometimes elastic and varied meanings to include those Africans who served as chiefs under colonial rule. These chiefs owed their positions of power, wealth and influence to the colonial administration. On occasion, some of them participated in varieties of nationalist resistance. In central Kenya, Robert Tignor's *The Colonial Transformation of Kenya* demonstrates that appointed chiefs not only 'undermined pre-colonial political institutions', but also engaged in 'widespread corruption'. This made them the 'wealthiest persons in a location'. This background is crucial in the appraisal of Jeff Koinange's text.

Koinange is the grandson of Senior Chief Koinange-wa-Mbiyu, who was one of the wealthiest and most powerful Gikuyu chiefs in colonial Kenya. After 'brushing past' *The Myth of Mau Mau* by Carl Rosberg and John Nottingham at the New York University library, Jeff Koinange resolved to write this book. It is therefore in part specialized family history. The volume is corrective in tone: eager to establish the centrality of the Koinange family, and especially Chief Koinange, in Kenya's struggle for political independence.

The first six chapters are an exceedingly brief outline of several themes and issues: family history, the imposition of colonial rule in Kenya, land alienation for white settlers, the origin of the squatter problem and the rise of Koinange-wa-Mbiyu as chief. There are interesting details here which ordinarily only family members can be expected to know. These include the circumstances surrounding the chief's several marriages, and also the burial of one of his sons 'underneath the house and in total secrecy to avoid any kind of government suspicion'. This was after this son 'accidentally shot himself while cleaning a loaded rifle in the chief's house'. These chapters are, however, too brief, almost sketchy, and as a result no effort is made to offer an extensive discussion of the issues and historical context of the society in which the chief lived.

In chapters 6–11 Jeff Koinange pursues two difficult objectives; to portray his grandfather as an able and imaginative colonial chief (rewarded with, among other things, several imperial medals), and also a fierce nationalist. It is in this effort that he fails to be convincing. Although we now know that Chief Koinange was self-assured, articulate and respected by some of his fellow Gikuyu for his integrity, he was nonetheless an appointee of the colonial government. His position as a chief made him, as Tignor has said of colonial chiefs in central Kenya, 'a prime agent of colonial rule', relied upon by various colonial agencies to implement changes that 'were unpopular with the people'. Indeed one of the most glaring omissions in this book is any detailed discussion of Koinange as chief: his relationship with the people that he ruled on behalf of the colonial government. This type of information, which is likely not to be very complimentary, cannot be attained by relying on the recollections of the chief's children and family. Chief Koinange together with Josiah Njonjo and Waruhiu Kungu, represented for an extended period conservative leadership of the Gikuyu. The Kikuyu Association formed by these chiefs was relied upon by the colonial government to undermine the influence of Harry Thuku's more radical East African Association in Gikuyuland.

The conversion of Koinange-wa-Mbiyu from a cautious conservative Gikuyu nationalist to a radical nationalist is unfortunately not adequately explained by Jeff Koinange. Was it because he felt slighted by the colonial government which relieved him of his position as Senior Chief in 1941? Or was it because of loss of social status within the Gikuyu community as a result of this demotion? And lastly, was it because he came to a late realization that cooperation or collaboration had not enabled him to recover the 'stolen lands'? Did he become the collaborator who rebelled? Also missing in this book is an analysis, however brief, of the chief's vision of nationalism. Had he moved substantially beyond specific Gikuyu (and his family's) demands to embrace territorial nationalism that formally emerged with the inauguration of the Kenya African Union in 1946? All these questions point to the need for a detailed, analytical political biography of Chief Koinange.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of this book is the information that Jeff Koinange gives about his grandfather's role in the initiation of the oath-taking campaign in Kiambu (at the chief's home), in 1950. Although this is widely known by now, it is still important to have a member of the family acknowledge it in print. The centrality of the chief to the Mau Mau movement was, however, short-lived. Less than a year later the Gikuyu establishment elite organized around Chief Koinange in Kiambu was at odds with *Muhimu* based in Nairobi over the possible employment of armed rebellion to oust settler colonialism. As the oath-taking campaign expanded, neither *Muhimu* in Nairobi nor *Parliament* in Kiambu was able to exercise control over this new brand of very radical nationalism. It would therefore be inaccurate to argue that Chief Koinange was a leader of the revolt. He was away from Gikuyuland during the crucial years of the revolt and there is no evidence that the guerillas in the forests were under his direct or indirect control.

The Mau Mau revolt remains a controversial movement in part because of the divided loyalties that it engendered within families. Chief Koinange's family was no exception. Whereas he was detained, one of his sons became a trusted Loyalist chief during the emergency overseeing the local campaigns against the Mau Mau. At the attainment of *Uhuru* (political independence), the Koinange family was generously rewarded by Kenyatta who appointed many of its members to key lucrative administrative positions. This factor reinforces Marshall Clough's basic thesis in his *Fighting Two Sides: Kenyan Chiefs and Politicians, 1918–1940*. Clough argues that wealth, social status and power acquired under colonial patronage survived colonialism and re-emerged with vigour in post-colonial Kenya. It is to colonialism and the continuity of its institutions and objectives that the Koinange family owes its prominence in Kenya. This is true, although it may astound Jeff Koinange, who seems very unhappy with the colonial government for having chosen in the end to handle his grandfather 'with the utmost disrespect'.

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### POLITICS AND URBAN ART

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*A Congo Chronicle: Patrice Lumumba in Urban Art*. Edited by BOGUMIL JEWSIEWICKI. New York: Museum of African Art, 1999. Pp. 110 including 55 full-colour paintings, 30 black-and-white illustrations. No price given, paperback (ISBN 0-945802-25-0).

KEY WORDS: Zaïre (Democratic Republic of Congo), popular culture, nationalism.

Ce beau et riche volume a servi de catalogue à une exposition qui s'est tenue à New York en 1999, organisée par Bogumil Jewsiewicki, professeur d'histoire contemporaine de l'Afrique à l'université Laval, Québec, et qui continue actuellement de tourner dans le monde. Le travail s'est développé autour d'une cinquantaine de toiles, pour la plupart collectionnées par l'auteur, dues à l'artiste Tshibumba Kanda-Matulu, qui apparaît comme le chef de file de l'ensemble. Cette peinture populaire a pris naissance vers les années 1920 dans les bars urbains de ce grand état d'Afrique centrale. C'est un genre qui reflète les réalités sociales et politiques du temps. L'exposition était plus particulièrement consacrée à la carrière politique dramatique de Patrice Lumumba, le jeune héros de l'indépendance congolaise, qui fut brièvement le premier ministre de cet état naissant, avant d'être assassiné la même année 1960 dans des circonstances mal élucidées, mais où les services secrets belges et américains furent assurément impliqués.

Ces peintures rendent compte de la façon dont le mythe national s'est développé, paradoxalement encouragé par la propagande du dictateur Mobutu qui s'empara bientôt du pouvoir (en 1965). Mais l'art populaire s'est réapproprié la conscience nationale de ce pays pluri-culturel en pleine effervescence politique. Les images sont accompagnées d'essais solides de spécialistes invités par Bogumil Jewsiewick (quatre Congolais et deux Occidentaux). Les auteurs situent les toiles dans leur contexte et en proposent l'interprétation. D'une façon plus générale, ils invitent aussi à réfléchir sur la genèse et la signification de cet art populaire typiquement urbain. Dans un texte liminaire d'une grande densité, Bogumil Jewsiewicki retrace les conditions d'existence et de création des peintres, il présente leur clientèle – constituée dans un premier temps de la petite bourgeoisie urbaine pour laquelle l'art de la photographie restait hors de portée des bourses. Il retrace aussi

le contexte socio-politique permettant de rendre compte de cette éclosion, inégalée ailleurs pendant longtemps, et propose une intéressante confrontation entre l'art urbain de Kinshasa et celui de Lubumbashi, qui tient au contexte social de chacune de ces deux villes: L'art à 'Kin la bellé', où une grande majorité de la population communique en lingala, est plus exubérant et expérimental. L'art de la peinture y fut introduit à l'origine par deux Européens, et l'enseignement à l'occidental y est plus sensible. Le peintre actuellement le plus connu en est Chéri Samba qui a désormais acquis une stature internationale. L'art populaire est à Lumumbashi, ville ouvrière où domine le swahili, plus rustre et plus solide.

Les autres contributions s'attachent surtout à retracer la formation et l'itinéraire du héros, et à suivre la naissance et l'épanouissement du mythe populaire. Ainsi est comprise et interprétée une œuvre d'une grande cohérence on dépit de la variété des peintres, dans une explication qui allie de façon remarquable analyse esthétique, histoire de l'art et histoire générale. Les nombreuses reproductions, de taille variable, sont d'excellente qualité et bien référencées. Elles démontrent le sens de l'action et du drame et l'humour aussi, y compris dans l'horreur, d'une peinture souvent naïve mais pleine de charme, indépendamment des éléments utiles qu'elle apporte à la connaissance de la société urbaine congolaise. Il s'agit une dimension encore très insuffisamment étudiée, dans un continent où pourtant la création artistique (qu'il s'agisse de peinture comme ici, mais aussi de chant, de musique et de danse) fait sans doute plus qu'ailleurs partie intégrante de la vie populaire quotidienne. Un document donc à ne pas manquer.

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CATHERINE COQUERY-VIDROVITCH

## MUSIC, MIGRATION AND IDENTITY

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*Songs of the Women Migrants: Performance and Identity in South Africa*. By DEBORAH JAMES. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press for the International African Institute, 1999. Pp. x + 238. £14.95, paperback (ISBN 0-7486-1304-8).  
KEY WORDS: South Africa, music, gender, ethnicity.

Deborah James uses performance as an occasion to explore the transformations of female gender identity, which arose both in the rural and urban areas, from migrant labour and social change from the 1950s through to the early 1990s. She documents the musical performances of migrants from the Northern Province to the mining regions around Johannesburg. *Songs of the Women migrants* can be read alongside David Coplan's fine analysis of Basuto migrants' 'word music', *In the Time of Cannibals*. James's book suggests new ways of understanding the relations between gender and ethnic identities and tradition more generally. She demonstrates that elements within performances that looked most traditional were often the product of historical disruption. Urban women's use of songs derived from villages in Lebowa represented less a replication of cultural traditions than a desire to make connections with indigenous traditions that these women had not participated in as children. James's mode of analysis also offers us an outstanding example of how to make people who are the subjects of the study become partners with the author and interpreters of their experiences and musical forms. In short, this book is a must-read.

James discusses the various versions of a musical style called *kiba*, which means to beat time or to stamp (p. 3). The first four chapters of the book concentrate on the history of *kiba* performance on the Reef. The second part of the book, chapters 5 through 7, moves the focus to women's performance and the reinvention of *kiba*



in the rural areas. The form of musical display in which male groups competed against one another developed in the context of labour migration to the Witwatersrand and was associated both with the mines and with African townships. For many decades, *kiba* remained solely the province of men from the Sotho-speaking areas of the Northern Province. James shows that far from being conservative such musical performances activate 'a new world of experience in which the gap between town and country is bridged' (p. 37). In Gauteng, the community continues to use *kiba* to address social tension and to try to bring people together through dialogue created by the *kiba* performance. Communities also use *kiba* during important celebrations such as naming ceremonies and weddings.

From the 1970s, male groups began to accept women. Now most groups have both male and female members. For many women, conflict rather than cooperation marked joint *kiba* groups, and exclusively female *kiba* groups have developed. Very different factors propelled women and men into migrant labour. Male players almost exclusively arose from the traditionalist baditsheba or 'traditional' communities, whereas women come almost exclusively from families that had long ties to Christianity. For men, poverty and lack of western education in part spurred them to take jobs on the Reef. Women, on the other hand, moved into migrancy because of the experience of recent dispossession of farms and families in the population removals of the 1960s and 1970s in Lebowa. For women, migrancy thus represented a disruption with a Christian peasant past rather than, as it was for men, a link to traditional songs and dances enjoyed at home.

*Kiba* linked women to a rural tradition in which their natal families were no longer significant participants. James thus demonstrates that it was in the urban areas that the meaning of being Sesotho became reinvented. Women's *kiba* owed much to rural songs from the area of the former homeland of Lebowa but was created in the explicitly urban environment of the Reef. It was only once women's *kiba* became dominant in the cities that rural women living in the Northern Province appropriated *kiba*.

In the final chapters of the book James analyzes the interconnections between *kiba* and older models of female empowerment. Possession by ancestors and the associated gift of healing used to be passed from grandfathers to grandsons. James documents that numbers of women are now becoming possessed by *malopo*. However, *malopo* possession itself is increasingly devalued by the community. James suggests that by providing a site for the search for female identity and connections to both ancestors and community, *kiba* groups have become a place, where women who 'have malopo' are both valued and able to bring their possession to full status as trained diviners (p. 173). *Kiba* thus again becomes a site for the reinvention of new communal and historic ties to ancestral and rural communities as it also a site for women's appropriation of new forms of power and identity.

This book should be of interest to a wide range of scholars including anthropologists, ethnomusicologists and historians. James provides us with an intelligent and sometimes moving account of how women and men have incorporated historical memories and longings and contemporary relations to create a vital artistic tradition that links rural and urban areas.

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## ETHNIC IDENTITIES

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*Ethnicity in Ghana: The Limits of Invention*. Edited by CAROLA LENTZ and PAUL NUGENT. London: Macmillan, New York: St Martin's Press, 2000. Pp. xi + 236. £42.50 (ISBN 0-312-22405-2).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, ethnicity.

As Carola Lentz and Paul Nugent correctly suggest in their introduction to this volume of essays, Ghana would not immediately spring to mind if one was asked for a list of African nations where discourses of ethnicity have played a prominent role in either the colonial or post-colonial periods. During the era of British rule, what was then the Gold Coast was notable in possessing one dominant cultural agglomeration, the Akan, around which the entire colony in many ways hinged and which appeared to transcend the identities of its constituent kingdoms. Likewise, neither the decolonization process nor the politics of independence can be said to have been particularly characterized by the mobilization of ethnic identities. Drawing on a political tradition that in the coastal towns stretched back to the mid-nineteenth century, Nkrumah's nationalist project was powerful enough by the 1950s to see off the 'tribal' idioms of the indirect rule system and the ephemeral threat from the Asante-based National Liberation Movement. Moreover, it has been argued convincingly that the NLM itself was a vehicle for a deeper (albeit contested) Asante nationalism – a rival 'national' identity that continues to shape the contours of Ghanaian politics today.

Yet in 1995 when these papers were presented at the annual conference of the Centre of African Studies at the University of Edinburgh, the question of ethnicity was very much at the forefront of Ghanaian affairs. The reason was not some transformation in the landscape of the political centre but events in the isolated northern region of the country, where the previous year an eruption of ethnic violence had left more than 300 villages destroyed, an estimated 2,000 people dead and upwards of 170,000 displaced. The so-called Guinea Fowl War – coinciding as it did with the horrors of the 1994 Rwandan genocide – appeared to cast a new and disturbing light on the politics of identity in northern Ghana treated by five of the nine chapters here. Of the remaining chapters, two focus on Asante with one each on the Anlo-Ewe and the minority groups of the central Volta region. The subtitle, *The Limits of Invention*, points to the desire of the editors to advance the debate over the creation and recreation of ethnic identities in colonial Africa. To what extent can the model of 'invention' – developed largely from case-studies from eastern, central and southern Africa – be applied to a West African context such as that of Ghana?

Possible answers to this question emerge only fitfully. This is in part because not all contributions choose to tackle head on the meanings and implications of the term 'ethnicity'; instead they range across a wide variety of social, political and religious identities that may or may not intersect with the central problem. Unsurprisingly, some of the analytical problems facing the application of the ethnic paradigm to southern Ghana emerge most clearly in the two chapters on Asante. Ivor Wilks' account of the ways in which successive Chief Commissioners identified themselves with Asante nationhood and Jean Allman's reflections on gender and identity provide two contrasting readings of the Asante encounter with colonial rule.

On the one hand, Wilks emphasizes the underlying continuity of 'Asanteness' from the precolonial to colonial periods, although it must be said that his narrative says more about the perceptions of British officials than that of their Asante subjects. On the other hand, Allman portrays the rupture of the 1880s and 1890s

as a watershed that fractured Asante state and society and, crucially, led to the marginalization of women in the political realm. It was women's ongoing role in the reproduction of lineage and household, she argues, that represents the strongest undercurrent of continuity in Asante identity. Sandra Greene also draws women to the centre of the historical process of identity formation in her discussion of the coastal Anlo Ewe. She too posits a key watershed in gender relations, but locates this shift in Anlo two hundred years earlier, in the late seventeenth century.

In contrast with these historical case-studies of coast and forest societies, once we cross the River Volta north into Ghana's savanna region the analytical focus shifts to the sociological and anthropological. Michael Schlottner on the political construction of Mamprusi identity, Artur Bogner on the 1994 Konkomba – Dagomba conflict and Sebastian Bemile on the role of language in the Dagara region all deal with contemporary issues of identity. Only one chapter on the north – David Killingray's on the recruitment of members of supposed 'martial tribes' into the colonial military and police – is by an historian. This is a crisply-written and well-documented piece, although like that by Wilks it has less to say about local constructions of identity than the workings of the colonial mind.

It is the chapter on the Dagara peoples of north-western Ghana by Carola Lentz, an anthropologist possessed of a keen historical awareness, that for this reader came closest to tackling how indigenous ethnicities might have evolved over time. Too often elsewhere, the contested meanings of identities such as Kanjarga, Grunshi, Konkomba – and in the south, even 'Akan' – have been glossed over or sidestepped. Despite these criticisms, however, this is a useful and stimulating collection, even if in the end it raises more questions than it answers. It represents a valuable contribution to the literature on Ghana and to the debate on ethnicity in Africa.

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## FAMILY RECONSTITUTION IN AFRICAN DEMOGRAPHIC HISTORY

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*Fertility, Mortality and Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Ovamboland in North Namibia, 1925–90.* By VEIJO NOTKOLA and HARRI SIISKONEN. London: Macmillan Press and New York: St Martin's Press, 2000. Pp. xiii + 188. £45. ISBN 0-333-77722-0 (Macmillan) and 0-312-22661-6 (St Martin's).

KEY WORDS: Namibia, demography, migration.

Notkola and Siiskonen's study convincingly argues for the use of missionary records to shed empirical light on the population dynamics of twentieth-century Africa. They point out that because of the dearth of civil registries, population data for Sub-Saharan Africa has been drawn almost exclusively from population censuses and sample surveys of questionable reliability. The authors offer a sophisticated methodology for selecting and processing Finnish and Namibian missionary data about baptisms, marriages, deaths, and movement from/to and within parishes to assess fertility, mortality and migration. Their method of family reconstitution enables them to trace the history of married couples, assessing when the spouses were born and where, when they married, where they settled after they married, when and where their children were born, and when and where they and their children passed away. The authors track over 15,000 individuals using sample parishes selected for the good quality of their records covering the period 1925–85.

The authors' analysis reveals that both men and women married at a late age, a finding that is essential to understanding fertility rates. The average age at marriage for the 1946–55 marriage cohorts was 23 years for women, and 28 for men. Notkola and Siiskonen identify a clear increase in life expectancy during the 1955–85 period as compared to the 1925–54 era. This shift, they underscore, provides hard data that confirms the prevailing theoretical assumption that a demographic transition occurred in Africa in the 1950s as a result of declining mortality rates.

Notkola and Siiskonen concede that their records and methodology probably undercount migratory movements because only formal 'legal' migrations were registered. In addition, the authors acknowledge that by excluding comparable data sets for Oukwanyama, Ovamboland's most populous colonial district located along the border with Angola, because of the poor quality of the parish records, cross-border population movements are also undercounted. The authors' analysis is thus much less conclusive in terms of migration and population movements. Nevertheless, Notkola and Siiskonen note a sharp decline of post-marriage out-migration (between different parishes) after the 1940s; most population movements were short-distance intra-rural migrations within Ovamboland. In addition, parish members employed as migrant labourers outside Ovamboland, or who moved to Ovamboland's new towns in the 1970s and 1980s, retained membership of their village churches owing to the absence of parishes in the towns. Notkola and Siiskonen identify migrant labour as the most significant factor explaining the late marriage age and its consequent effect on fertility, and argue that labour migrancy contributed to lower mortality rates. Among other factors, migrant labour proceeds resulted in better nutrition (as a result of wages) and the advent of government policies to improve the overall health of a crucial labour reservoir (for instance through food aid in times of famine, and efforts to suppress epidemic diseases).

Migration in general, and trans-border migration in particular, may have been the most critical factor affecting pre-1950s population dynamics, not only in Ovamboland but also elsewhere in Africa, where colonial occupation gave rise to large-scale population movements (for example, in Angola, Congo and Mozambique). By the 1950s, almost all of the inhabitants of the Kwanyama district of Ovamboland were first- or second-generation migrants from north of the border. Between the 1910s and the 1940s, population growth in Ovamboland was certainly more reflective of the influx of tens of thousands of migrants from north of the border than of any natural increase south of the border.

Moreover, the sample data are limited to the Christian segment of the population, with implications for the case study and its wider application. For example, Christians constituted just 40 per cent of Ovamboland's total population in the 1950s; extrapolations from the case study should thus be done with care. In addition, relying on an exclusively Christian sample, Notkola and Siiskonen note how closely fertility approximates 'natural' fertility, and conclude that neither Christians nor the general population used any birth control measures until the 1980s. As is clear from colonial reports, however, missions and the colonial administration strongly disapproved of birth control and aggressively fought the traditional practices of abortion and infanticide that remained, nevertheless, widespread. Late marriage ages for women, irrespective of cause or intent, effectively functioned as birth control. The authors also emphasize that even among the Christian population, infant and child mortality may be under-reported because only children who were actually baptized were registered. Any natural or unnatural mortality that occurred between the time of birth and baptism was thus not counted. Obviously, an undercount of infant and child mortality leads to an exponentially higher life expectancy average.

While the high levels of Christianization in Namibia make Notkola and Siiskonen's model and findings compelling, its application may be limited in less Christianized contexts. In addition, while the study is not specifically concerned with the onslaught of HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa, the pandemic nevertheless has implications for the authors' conclusions about the demographic transition in Africa, as HIV/AIDS may be reversing the trend towards decreasing mortality. Moreover, since women of childbearing age are especially affected, fertility levels may drop even lower. Notkola and Siiskonen's highly valuable method thus requires further reflection to optimize its significant contributions to analyzing population dynamics in twentieth-century Africa.

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## GOVERNMENT VERSUS FARMERS

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*The State against the Peasantry: Rural Struggles in Colonial and Postcolonial Mozambique*. By MERLE L. BOWEN. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000. Pp. xvi + 256. \$65 (ISBN 08139-1910-x); \$19.50, paperback (ISBN 0-8139-1917-7).

KEY WORDS: Mozambique, agriculture.

Merle Bowen's study of the politics of agricultural change in Mozambique from 1950 to 1993 opens with a stinging indictment of nearly two decades of Frelimo policy: '... the Frelimo state neglected peasants because it imagined them to be self-sufficient and believed that rural transformation would be most rapidly effected through the public sector (p. 2). Bowen's title, *The State against the Peasantry*, underscores her conviction that Frelimo's agricultural policy should not be characterized as benign neglect, but rather as a sequence of failures that directly alienated Mozambican farmers. Frelimo, of course, claimed to rule explicitly on behalf of the Mozambican peasantry. Is this an example, à la James C. Scott, of an arrogant, authoritarian state determined to improve the lot of humankind, but 'seeing' it all wrong and ultimately making things worse? Merle Bowen is well positioned to address that question. During much of her research in Mozambique in the early 1980s, Bowen had a foot and a voice among farmers in the cooperative *Ilha Josina Machel* in southern Mozambique and among policy makers at the Ministry of Agriculture in Mozambique's capital, Maputo.

Bowen surveys the politics of the past half century of national agricultural policy in Mozambique and interrogates it in the light of her research at *Ilha Josina Machel*. The book's seven chapters are organized in three parts. The first and third address the politics of national agricultural policy between 1950, when Portugal significantly altered course in her colonies, and 1993, just after the Paris Peace Accord between Renamo and Frelimo set the stage for Mozambique's first national multiparty elections. Part 2, comprising about sixty per cent of the book, provides a richly detailed study of the dynamics of agriculture and state efforts to shape farm labour and investment in *Ilha Josina Machel* from 1950, when the area was called *Ilha Mariana*, until 1983, when Renamo attacks drove many of the *Ilha's* farmers into refuge.

Located on the Incomati River near the coast in Manica District of Maputo province, *Ilha Josina Machel* has good soils and moderate temperatures. Its location, tucked into the Incomati River, allows *Ilha* residents to produce irrigated crops and sell them in the capital's most attractive markets. In flood years, the residents depend on that same proximity to major markets and roads for

emergency relief. Bowen demonstrates that Ilha farmers received comparatively high levels of agricultural investment and support from both the colonial and Frelimo governments. By Bowen's own evidence Ilha Josina Machel is not representative. If government agricultural policy was antithetical to peasant farming interests in this quite favoured situation we cannot optimistically anticipate the findings of subsequent local studies.

Privileges aside, relations between Ilha Josina Machel farmers and the people who formulated, implemented and attended to state agricultural policy were mutually frustrating under both colonial and Frelimo rule. Bowen reveals that Frelimo discounted local agricultural strategies in its efforts to achieve imagined and idealized national goals. She also demonstrates that when Frelimo acted to ensure that poor farmers as well as the powerful benefited from state agricultural policy, the better-off farmers strongly resisted. A close reading of Bowen's case study suggests that wealthy peasants were more alienated by Frelimo policy than the poor. By 1983 the problem was not Frelimo's agricultural policy or its ability to implement policy, but rather its failure to uphold the central obligation of a state – to defend its citizens.

Bowen provides a fine, textured analysis of more than two generations of farming on Ilha Josina Machel. One wishes that she had sustained the study through to 1993 and probed a bit more into the gendered nature of households and the tendency for the poorest peasants to be disproportionately female. Bowen's analysis of Mozambique's national political literature labours unnecessarily over the spent debates of the early 1990s. The challenges of privatization and the ability of a debt-hobbled state to safeguard national interests more closely reflect the dilemmas Ilha residents faced by 1993. Her analysis of literature from central and northern Mozambique often seems at odds with evidence from her case study, but perhaps that is exactly the point – Mozambique is so different north to centre to south. Finally, Bowen's indictment of Frelimo's political missteps and its disastrous emphasis on state farm agriculture is both convincing and in keeping with the current dismay with socialist and communist grand plans. But, in fairness, the crescendo of drought, floods and settler – and Renamo – inspired destruction of Mozambique's human, capital and environmental resources should not be underplayed.

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## PEULE WORLDS

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*Figures Peules*. By ROGER BOTTE, JEAN BOUTRAIS and JEAN SCHMITZ. Paris: Karthala, 1999. Pp. 524. No price given (ISBN 2-86537-983-3).

KEY WORDS: Western Africa, ethnicity, animal husbandry.

Des rencontres organisées dans le cadre du séminaire du GRÉFUL (EHESS) était né en 1994 un ouvrage portant sur 'L'archipel peul' (*Cahiers d'études africaines*). Elles suscitent maintenant dans ce livre une réflexion sur la diversité et la complexité des rapports peuls à la nature, à soi et aux autres, dans le cadre d'un peuplement diffus et atomisé. Les textes de vingt auteurs, répartis en six parties (I à VI), sont précédés d'une triple préface des éditeurs scientifiques, très clairement organisée autour de thèmes transversaux mis en perspective historique.

La question d'un 'invariant peul' se déplace d'abord vers celle de 'l'invention des peuls' (I). C. Dupuy s'interroge sur les difficultés d'une ethno-histoire peule à propos de l'art rupestre du Sahara. G. Boetsch et J. N. Ferrié critiquent la

confusion entre objets sociaux et objets biologiques effectuée par l'anthropologie physique, qu'ils relient à différentes facettes évolutives des idéologies coloniales. E. Boesen, se référant à l'ethnographie peule et à une enquête chez les *Fulbé* du Bénin, insiste sur le caractère fondamentalement esthétique de la *pulaaku*, qui est un acte d'affirmation de soi face aux autres dans des contextes sociaux spécifiques et non un code de valeurs et de règles intangibles fixant l'adhésion à la communauté 'peule'. Dans 'les jeux de mots' (IV), S. Nassourou analyse les joutes oratoires *hiirde* au nord-Cameroun: instrument de socialisation, elles renvoient aux valeurs du *pulaaku* mais sont traversées localement par d'autres institutions, ce qui les fera progressivement disparaître. A. Mohamadou examine les complexités de la 'Diathèse et (de l') aspectualité dans les noms peuls'. U. Baumgart montre que la littérature orale peule exprime des problématiques identitaires et participe également de la construction d'identités dans et par des textes narratifs.

J. Schmitz note que les trois grandes théories comparatistes du monde peul ont permis de constater qu'aucune société pastorale n'a jamais été autarcique. Diverses configurations des stratifications peules seront ainsi évoquées, d'abord celles qui contredisent 'servitude et liberté' (II). Au *Fuuta Jalo*, R. Botte fait l'histoire, à partir du *boom* négrier de la fin du dix-neuvième siècle, des traitements successifs et modulés du problème des groupes serviles, jusqu'à leur récente affirmation dans des associations. A. Ngaide examine les réévaluations identitaires des captifs au nom de l'islam et par la révolte armée en haute Casamance, tout en repérant le maintien de blocages matrimoniaux et fonciers à leur intégration. S. Fanchette analyse la société métissée, sédentaire et poulophone du Fouladou, oscillant entre le caractère unificateur de l'agropastoralisme et de l'islam et la persistance de clivages sociaux lisibles dans l'endogamie et l'ordre résidentiel. Quand il s'agit d' 'apprivoiser l'espace' (III), J. Boutrais remarque qu'il n'y a jamais de clivage absolu entre les Peuls et les autres, mais des différenciations inégales et plus ou moins anciennes selon les régions. La ligne de partage 'pastorale' passe ainsi souvent entre les peuls, produisant des 'agropastoralismes' à chaque fois spécifiques. Contre les images stéréotypées du 'nomade sahélien', T. Bierschenk analyse, au nord-Bénin, la grande diversité des modes de vie qui reposent sur la même économie familiale et agro-pastorale et dont il retrace l'évolution historique, en rapport avec des systèmes successifs de pouvoir. A. M. Pillet-Schwartz remarque qu'au Liptako on est passé de 'noyaux ethno-démographiques' à des 'noyaux socio-économiques' où le verrouillage identitaire des systèmes de production semble être une réaction volontariste aux modifications du milieu naturel et au nivellement par l'islam. Retraçant l'évolution historique de la tenure foncière au Djelgodji, P. D'Aquino et S. Dicko montrent leur double détermination par des querelles intestines à chaque groupe et par une volonté commune d'autonomie face aux grands mouvements politiques et religieux des dix-huitième et dix-neuvième siècle. Mettant les Califats de Sokoto à l'épreuve du modèle de l' 'état segmentaire', K. F. Hansen conclut que le pouvoir guerrier et administratif n'était pas centralisé mais se distribuait entre des centres périphériques, le tout étant unifié par des échanges rituels. Considérant les modes de transhumance de différents pasteurs du *Maasina* et les relations autochtones/allochtones, P. Legrosse conclut à un ordre mobile ancré dans des organisations spatiales cohérentes, ainsi qu'à une extrême diversité évolutive, notamment en rapport aux pouvoirs historiques successifs.

Dans 'pasteurs et politique' (V), J. Boutrais tente une approche pastorale de faits habituellement présentés sous le seul angle politique: il montre que se sont toujours succédé dans l'Adamaoua des phases de 'dépastoralisation' et de 'repastoralisation' aboutissant à des recompositions successives non seulement politiques, mais économiques et sociales. Examinant au Gondo Sourou l'histoire de l'infiltration peule en pays bwa, Y. Diallo décrit la mise en jeu stratégique, autour du problème majeur du contrôle de l'eau, de représentations politiques de

l'antériorité. Analysant la longue cohabitation des Peuls et des Dogons dans le Séno malien et l'inversion progressive du rapport de force entre les deux groupes, P. Bonte montre l'intégration des enjeux de développement dans les structures politiques, foncières et économiques de chacun d'entre eux. L'ouvrage s'achève par une focalisation sur quelques 'enjeux contemporains' (VI). Philippe Bernardet montre comment, en moyenne et haute Côte d'Ivoire, les tensions entre agriculteurs et éleveurs, loin de se résumer à une concurrence foncière, s'opèrent sur la base de leurs tensions internes respectives, qui doivent être analysées historiquement. M. de Bruijn et H. van Dijk, à travers l'analyse de la diversité pastorale au Mali central, de la spécificité des 'crises' et de leurs traitements pour différents pasteurs, mettent en évidence l'ignorance, source d'échecs et de conflits, qu'ont souvent les projets de développement des divisions sociales des populations 'cibles'. Examinant la diversité économique, culturelle et historique des Mbororo de Centrafrique, G. Romier met en relation leurs expansions spatiales avec l'histoire des politiques vétérinaires et conclut à une dépendance grandissante par rapport à l'extérieur.

Ce livre est un ouvrage de référence, autant par la qualité du travail éditorial que par la façon dont les textes, tout en étant pour chacun précisément focalisé sur une des multiples et spécifiques 'présences' peules, se répondent les uns aux autres sur la complexité du rapport entre histoire, identités et espaces.

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### POSSESSION HEALING IN ZANZIBAR

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*Everyday Spirits and Medical Interventions: Ethnographic and Historical Notes on Therapeutic Conventions in Zanzibar Town*. By TAPIO NISULA. Saarijärvi: Finnish Anthropological Society, 1999. Pp. 319. No price given, paperback (ISBN 952-9573-21-9).

KEY WORDS: Tanzania, health, religion.

Tapio Nisula's account of 'the tension between the deteriorating government health care and the popularity and vitality of possession healing' (p. 290) in Zanzibar Town is divided into three sections. In the first, the author presents a lively account of spirit possession activities in Zanzibar as he observed them during fieldwork in 1992-3 and 1997. This is rich ethnography, sympathetically presented, but it is too curtailed to pursue the full repercussions of Nisula's argument. There is some confusion as to when the ceremonies entail exorcism as opposed to accommodation with spirits, although Nisula describes a fascinating practice in which the healer draws the spirit from the afflicted client into her own person in order more easily to dispatch it. It would be interesting to know whether there are after-effects on the healer (as is the case, for example, among extractors of sorcery in Mayotte who suffer bad dreams as a result of their work, dreams which effectively chart the displacement of the unwanted force). Unfortunately, the ethnographic account is broken off before we get to know either healers or patients well or encounter their lives, thoughts and practices in any depth.

The second part of the book is a review and critique of the spirit possession literature. The author makes two main arguments. The first is that spirit possession needs to be understood as a fully integrated part of the Islamic culture of Zanzibar. I think that he is correct, but suspect that the picture would have been better rounded had he inquired into the range of positions held towards possession activities by Muslim clerics and others. Nisula's second argument is that the



literature has not paid proper attention to the central importance of illness and healing in spirit possession. My own reading of that literature would be different, but whatever the case and agreeing that the therapeutic angle is worth a closer look, the author's position is hampered by the fact that he goes no further than to underline his points that those undergoing possession ceremonies are seeking relief from illness and that possession is a form of therapy. What is needed is to examine or specify in what ways spirit possession articulates distress or provides therapy. What is meant by these terms and what exactly is effected in the course of possession rituals and subjective encounters with spirits with respect to the suffering of the protagonists? There are a number of theoretical positions on illness and healing that could be applied. Here the author's otherwise intelligent and very comprehensive coverage of the literature reaches its limits.

The third section is a history of colonial and post-colonial medical practices in Zanzibar designed to show the biases and problems of the medical legacy of colonialism that provide the context in which spirit possession subsists. The author describes how colonial health practices objectified hierarchical and especially racial distinctions and how the impoverishment of government hospitals in recent times has led people to seek private assistance. There is an interesting discussion of the role of pharmaceuticals in this process. However, since Zanzibars understand possession as complementary rather than alternative to biomedicine it is not clear what the relationship is between the two. Does possession really try to fill the gap? Would possession have disappeared had the achievements of biomedicine been entirely accessible to the population? To the degree that possession addresses existential and psychosocial problems, articulates selfhood, and invites or enables a poiesis of Zanzibari culture and history or a critique of politics and gender, the inadequacy of biomedical facilities is hardly a determining factor in its presence or popularity.

These criticisms aside, the book is a well written, sensible and carefully researched introduction to health-seeking activities and declining health services in Zanzibar suitable for comparison with other urban post-colonial locations and other discussions of spirit possession.

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## WOMEN'S NARRATIVES IN 1980s ZIMBABWE

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*Producing Women and Progress in Zimbabwe: Narratives of Identity and Work from the 1980s*. By CHRISTINE SYLVESTER. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000. Pp. xii + 277. \$65 (ISBN 0-325-00070-0).

KEY WORDS: Zimbabwe, gender.

*Producing Women and Progress* explores the way women in Zimbabwe understood and acted upon their experiences in the workplace during the first decade after independence (1980–90). Christine Sylvester has interviewed over four hundred women working in Harare's clothing and food processing industries, on commercial farms, in urban cooperatives and among rural cultivator groups in the provinces of East and Central Mashonaland. She posed three key questions to her informants: How do you know you are a woman? What constitutes progress for women? How can women contest notions of gender and progress that work against them in the workplace and in society?

These questions provided an entry point into women's self-understandings, their visions of progress and their ideas about possibilities for change. Most

informants recognized the link between regimes of gender inequality and their own problems and possibilities in the home and the workplace. Yet they were not paralyzed by these constraints. Indeed, the personal narratives of these workers demonstrated their commitment to moving 'along the road to progress of a self-defined sort', even if only in small ways. They sought out new opportunities and struck up unexpected alliances. As Sylvester discovered, "'she' is not where one expects her to be ... 'she's' stepping out and into dangerous mergers with identities alien to proper women' (p. 249). 'She' is not defined by outside agents, rather the women in Sylvester's studies proved quite capable of producing and acting upon knowledge about themselves and their notions of progress.

Sylvester has adopted an eclectic and daring set of methodologies to investigate this world. She uses personal narratives as an entry point for understanding the way women and men experience and construct their worlds. These narratives come alive through numerous, lengthy quotes. Yet she makes no pretense at scientific objectivity, situating herself squarely in the research process. We see her trying to deal with hostile managers, seeking to connect with busy, tired women workers, worrying about how her questions will be received, offering honest answers to informants' questions and generally experiencing the limits of her own power to control the interview process. Her own narrative reveals the limitations and difficulties facing even well intentioned researchers. Yet somehow, this messiness is more reassuring than the pretence of 'objective truth'. Moreover, it opens the possibility of drawing on other sources, most notably fiction. Inspired by the Zimbabwean novelist Chenjerai Hove's argument that all of life is invented, Sylvester argues that fictional narratives also have much to tell us about the lives and thoughts of Zimbabwean women and men. Her inspired weaving together of evidence from fiction, interviews and secondary sources is a model for researchers who want to move beyond futile debates about positivist versus post-positivist methodologies. Moreover, this book challenges scholars who believe they can predict people's lives and understandings on the basis of broad economic and political forces rather than through extensive grounded research.

*Producing Women and Progress* demonstrates the possibilities of this eclectic, people-centred approach. Sylvester was able to use it to move beyond surface appearances. Not surprisingly, she discovered that most managers, whether African or European, reflected the gender biases of their own cultural backgrounds. They spoke of women workers as 'docile' and 'passive', needing to supplement male wages rather than support a household. Yet, a counter narrative surfaced regularly, one where women emerged as good planners, tenacious opponents and effective negotiators. The narratives of women reflected this double 'reality'. While most women workers presented a litany of complaints about their powerlessness and the difficulties of dealing with male privilege, they also spoke of struggles and triumphs. The factory workers forced management to give them time for breast-feeding based on their rights as mothers. Women farm workers fought to undermine their status as unorganized casual workers by organizing stay aways and demanding rights as workers. Women in the cooperatives refused to discuss their strategies for improvement until they had grilled Sylvester with tough questions. Then they told her about their dreams of progress, their preference for women-only groups, and their solutions for running Zimbabwe if they were put in charge.

The book challenges easy assumptions about women's subordination in Zimbabwe and raises a host of issues about the way women see themselves and their world. While it can be accused of sometimes underplaying the constraints facing women in the workplace and society, the narratives leave no doubt that women workers are far more aware and active than commonly portrayed. This elegant, beautifully written book reveals a world of thoughts and actions that are rarely seen. It raises both methodological and substantive issues for studying

women in a postcolonial, globalizing world, and provides a template for a much more nuanced, in-depth approach to these issues.

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### SHORTER NOTICES

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*Sultan to Sultan: Adventures among the Masai and other Tribes of East Africa*. By M. FRENCH-SHELDON. Introduced by TRACEY JEAN BOISSEAU. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999. Pp. x + 275. £45.00 (ISBN 0-7190-5133-4); £15.99, paperback (ISBN 0-7190-5114-2).

KEY WORDS: Kenya, exploration/travel.

May French-Sheldon travelled for a little over three months in 1891 from Mombasa to Moshi, via Taveta and back to the coast down the Pangani valley. She quickly wrote a racy account of her journey emphasizing the commercial prospects of the lands she visited. Throughout her book she drew upon her position as a lone white woman braving the dangers of Africa to elicit the sympathy and alarm of her readers. She emphasized both her requisite distance and aloofness from those who she met or travelled with, and an energetic charm that made her journey easy where others would have laboured and fought. She famously dressed as a 'white queen', with court dress, blond wig and ceremonial sword at hand so that she might greet the leaders (sultans) she met appropriately dressed.

There are no maps, and little record of time or co-ordinates and limited ethnographic work in French-Sheldon's writing for this is as much an account of the negotiation of uncharted social territories in Europe and America as exploration of Africa. Boisseau's excellent introduction and thorough footnotes make French-Sheldon's position, goals and dilemmas clear. She portrayed herself as both as a woman and an authoritative explorer and so had carefully to negotiate Victorian sexual and racial politics.

All in all this a fascinating piece. It is accessible, informative and enjoyable. The volume provides a useful window into European exploration and precisely what it means to project oneself on to other peoples and places. As Boisseau concludes, present-day readers will be able 'not to rediscover a mythical Africa but to comprehend better the meaning of the cultural and political legacies she and other mythmakers have left us'. I recommend it to anyone studying the exploration of Africa or its present day images.

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*Historical Dictionary of Equatorial Guinea*. Third edition. By MAX LINIGER-GOUMAZ. (African Historical Dictionaries, 21). Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1998. Pp. xlii + 569. \$115 (ISBN 0-8108-3394-8).

KEY WORDS: Equatorial Guinea, general.

This book is a very important contribution to scholarship on Equatorial Guinea. As one of the most obscure countries in sub-Saharan Africa, dominated by the ruthless and brutal regimes of Macías and Obiang Nguema, very little scholarly work has been conducted on its history and society. Due to its status as the only Spanish possession in Sub-Saharan Africa, very few Africanists have the linguistic

background to conduct research on the country. Thus, historian Max Liniger-Goumaz has done scholars a major service by revising this dictionary yet again. It serves as an extremely useful reference on the murky contemporary politics in the country as well as an introduction to the region's rich history and diverse cultures.

The book begins with a brief chronology of major events. The author gives the bulk of his attention in this section to the violent struggles and manoeuvres of officials in the government of Obiang Nguema Teodoro during the 1980s and 1990s. Liniger-Goumaz's extremely rich knowledge of local politics and alliances between Nguema and European countries and corporations is valuable, particularly since this country attracts so little attention in the international press.

The main body of the work is made up of hundreds of entries on a wide variety of subjects. Entries can be found on religion, anthropology and economic and historical events and actors. The best entries generally are on political leaders, the role of foreign governments and opposition members. While looking through the entries on recent events such as Obiang Nguema's stifling of other parties and Bubi nationalists on Fernando Po, readers will find a very detailed anatomy of political oppression in the country. The work ends with a long bibliography that is a priceless resource for researchers.

In this genre, there are invariably minor oversights and small problems with entries. For example, there are no separate headings for ethnic communities such as the coastal Benga and Kombe. More importantly, the author's emphasis on recent political and economic events often leaves entries dealing with subjects from the colonial era a bit lacking by comparison. Finally, the lack of an index and of numbering of entries hampers consultation of the book especially for those unfamiliar with the country. Despite these quibbles, this book remains a very useful and necessary text for understanding the tragic history of Equatorial Guinea.

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*Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*. By ARNOLD HUGHES and HARRY A. GAILEY.  
Third Edition. Lanham, MD and London: Scarecrow Press, 1999. Pp.  
xxii + 231. £41.25 (ISBN 0-8108-3660-2).

KEY WORDS: Gambia, dictionary.

This third edition of the Gambian Historical Dictionary offers an introduction to Gambian history, a dictionary of 160 pages and a fine bibliography. Also included are some useful appendices that provide information on Gambian governors and administrators, election results and population statistics.

This new edition has been expanded to cover the post-independence era and covers all historical key persons, places and events, institutions and parties, and various political, economic and social topics. Entries range from 'African–West Indian society' to 'Yundum egg project' and include a notice for Juffure, a Mandinka village that has recently become a tourist attraction because Alex Haley claimed in *Roots* that it was the birthplace of his ancestor, Kunta Kinte. However, researchers interested in anything other than political history are likely to be disappointed. Entries on social and cultural issues are rare and mostly presented in the 'ethnographic present'. More attention to popular history would also take into account the history 'from below' that interests most historians today.

The 30-page bibliography is conveniently arranged and constitutes a most useful tool for every researcher. The bibliography has also been updated, although the authors admit that they had to be selective, 'identifying only the most relevant

publications on the most important subjects' (p. 199). One wonders what the most important subjects are? For instance, some important books and articles on Gambian history (by Barry, Brooks, Bühnen and Wright) are missing from the bibliography. Also, one would want more information on recorded oral sources, which are overlooked in this volume. Lists of newspapers, in contrast, seem to be exhaustive. Despite these misgivings, the bibliography will be of invaluable help to any researcher trying to become familiar with the fascinating political history of the tiny republic of the Gambia.

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FERDINAND DE JONG

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*Historical Dictionary of Djibouti*. By DAUD A. ALWAN and YOHANIS MIBRATHU (African Historical Dictionaries, 82). Lanham, MD and London: Scarecrow Press, 2000. Pp. xxviii + 165. £57.00 (ISBN 0-8108-3873-7).

KEY WORDS: Djibouti, general.

Perhaps the most important question to ask of a book like this is whether it is a useful aid to the ignorant. Having browsed and cross-referenced, I certainly came out feeling that I knew a great deal more than when I started, and that if you need information on (male) politicians and a handy reference volume to sort out the manifold combinations of consonants that denote the various political parties of the last four decades, this book is probably what you are looking for.

There are plenty of problems, some of which are presumably inherent in the genre. The titles of entries, and the amount of information included under each entry, occasionally seem curious. I scanned 'Cooperation, French' for irony, but found none; 'Criminal attacks' is not necessarily where one would look first for information on the politically-motivated bombing of restaurants patronized by expatriates. There is an uncomfortable sense that much information slips into the gaps between the entries. Why did Mohamed Djama Elabe die a 'brutal death'? What was the ethnic conflict of 1935, mentioned obliquely in the entry for 'Messageries Maritimes'? Or that of 1949, mentioned under 'Clubs'? The theme of Issa-Afar antagonism runs as a backdrop to a number of the entries, but the historicity of this is never really explored. The book's emphasis is very much on formal political activity since the 1950s, and the casual assertion that the populace were not interested in 'politics' before 1945 (concerning themselves rather with 'social issues') reveals the authorial assumptions which inform this focus.

Information on the period before 1945 is consequently scanty or apparently contradictory: there seem to be two dates given for the establishment of Djibouti as the port, in preference to Obock; and three dates for the surrender of the Vichy forces to the Allies (variously under 'Blockade', 'Vichy' and 'Nouaillhetas'). Perhaps more importantly, the information on Sufism is rather thin – though substantial enough to give one the uneasy feeling that more is needed. And while there is an entry on 'Women', there are no individual references: women are collectively significant, but not individually. There are also some potentially misleading expressions which should really have been intercepted by an editor somewhere, such as the assertion that Kitchener 'settled' at Fashoda. But overall, given the lack of material on Djibouti, the entries here and the bibliography should prove a useful resource.

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JUSTIN WILLIS

*Historical Dictionary of Liberia*. Second edition. By D. ELWOOD DUNN, AMOS J. BEYAN and CARL PATRICK BURROWES. (African Historical Dictionaries, 83). Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2001. Pp. xxxv + 436. £61.75 (ISBN 0-8108-1767-5).

KEY WORDS: Liberia, general.

Readers of this journal will be familiar with Jon Woronoff's Scarecrow series. A Liberia volume appeared in 1985 but is now updated with a new edition. It is again edited by Professor D. Elwood Dunn, this time with the collaboration of two other Liberian academics who, like himself, teach in the Liberian diaspora in the United States, Amos J. Beyan and Carl Patrick Burrows. The new volume gives us nearly twice as many pages as the first and a bibliography updated to 1999. It gets off to a bizarre start with a 'Selected chronology' that includes, '1200: Spanish explorers reach pre-Liberia' and '1550s: Arrival of the Mende, Bandi, Loms and Kpelle in modern Liberia area' (p. xiii). Luckily one can turn a few pages and find an admirable succinct survey of pre-Liberian history (have your blue pencil ready for the third edition, Mr Woronoff).

Reviewing the first edition in this journal (*JAH* 38, 468–9), I commented that its great strength was in its biographies and that in contrast many of the other entries were scrappy and perfunctory. Here it is still the same. The biographies, supplemented by lists of successive cabinet members and ambassadors, would go a long way to providing a historian with material for a comprehensive prosopological study of Liberia, while many other entries still remain meagre. There is however a most valuable long entry on the civil war of 1989–97, guiding us lucidly through its acronymic complications. And the entry under 'Economy' includes the so-called 'war economy', meaning the details of how the various contestants plundered the country's resources. The brief entry on the United States ends sadly, 'the relationship stands in need of repair' (p. 345).

London

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