

## REVIEWS

### CONTRASTING APPROACHES TO WRITING INTRODUCTORY TEXTS

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703218661

*Medieval Africa, 1250–1800*. By ROLAND OLIVER and ANTHONY ATMORE.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pp. viii + 251. £40; \$59.95  
(ISBN 0-521-79024-7); £14.95; \$21.95, paperback (ISBN 0-521-79372-6).

*Introduction to the History of African Civilization, Volume II: Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa*. By C. MAGBAILY FYLE. Lanham MD: University Press of America, 2001. Pp. xii + 190. \$36, paperback (ISBN 0-7618-2107-4).

KEY WORDS: Teaching texts, precolonial, colonial, postcolonial.

These two texts, both explicitly intended as introductions to African history for students, are in many ways polar opposites, and not because they deal with different time periods. Oliver and Atmore's book on Africa from 1250 to 1800 (curiously designated 'medieval Africa') is an attractively produced volume that reads more like a series of scholarly essays than a typical introductory textbook. Fyle's book, in contrast, is the epitome of an introductory text, but is presented in such an unprepossessing package and in such simple, direct language that it could easily be underestimated.

*Medieval Africa* (a revision of *The African Middle Ages 1400–1800*, originally published 1981) is organized geographically, focusing in turn on thirteen sub-regions: three in Mediterranean Africa, two in western Africa, the middle Nile region, north-eastern Africa, the upper Nile and east African plateau, northern central Africa, west-central Africa, south-central Africa, the Indian Ocean coast and Zimbabwe and southern Africa. Each sub-regional chapter (all but one 14–18 pages long) deals with the entire 1250–1800 period in a thoughtful, interpretive essay that will inform and interest even advanced students of Africa who are non-specialists in that particular area.

As the authors note, extending the time period of the original book back 150 years forced them to begin their discussion of each sub-region 'from the inside ... before the earliest contemporary reports of them by outsiders' (p. 12). This results in new introductory material for each chapter, ranging from a few additional paragraphs to three to four pages. Additionally, the authors substantially revise and expand their treatment of Mediterranean Africa (in three chapters rather than two), add a new chapter on northern central Africa and lengthen the introduction from four pages to thirteen. The new introduction is a first-rate essay itself, providing broad contextual argument that links the different historical trajectories of Africa north and south of the equator (essentially north and west Africa, on one hand, and east/central/southern Africa, on the other) to geographical and ecological differences between the two macro-regions that fostered contrasting developments in trade, transport, the spread of Islam and warfare.

That said, most chapters are not extensive revisions of the 1981 originals. The one remaining chapter that is extensively reworked is on southern Africa, reflecting the outpouring of new historical research on that region over the past twenty years (this is the only chapter, moreover, with a further reading list consisting entirely of sources published since 1981). The least-changed chapter is disappointingly, and surprisingly, the one on east Africa, Oliver's own long-time area of specialization.

Moreover, while focusing each chapter on a relatively small and integrated sub-region allows thematic treatment and interpretation that retains some degree of sociohistorical nuance and complexity, there is also a cost. With this approach, the treatment of wide-ranging developments that extended across multiple sub-regions – such as the Atlantic Slave Trade – can lose power and coherence. Indeed, using geography as the exclusive organizing principle detracts from the book's overall appeal as an introductory African history text, the most effective of which (in my experience) are organized in some combination of theme, chronology and broader geographical regions than used here. Kevin Shillington's popular text, for example (*History of Africa*, revised edition, 1995), takes this approach. So, too, does Magbaily Fyle's textbook on twentieth-century Africa.

Fyle's book, clearly presented from an African-centered perspective, is divided into thirteen chapters, mostly 10–14 pages long and organized into short, easily manageable sections, rarely exceeding one to two pages. Two chapters cover the coming of colonial rule and African responses, especially resistance. The next five explore various aspects of colonialism in Africa – administrative systems, the economy, social change, the psychological impact of colonialism (given much more attention here than in most textbooks) and protest movements. Chapter VIII then covers all of twentieth-century South Africa, followed by three chapters on decolonization, and two on postcolonial Africa.

The strongest aspect of the book is its treatment of colonial rule, especially the five core chapters on this period. This is in part because the bulk of the book – 10 of 13 chapters – is devoted to this era. Conversely, South Africa and postcolonial Africa are treated in much briefer and more fragmentary ways. The single chapter on South Africa, even though the longest in the book, barely begins to do justice to the often distinct, complex and fascinating twentieth-century historical dynamics of that place. The two chapters on postcolonial Africa are better, focusing in clear and engaging ways on two broad, important topics – political economy and intra-state politics, especially conflict. But their limited space and restricted focus mean that many of the myriad issues and problems characterizing this era are omitted. For example, neither Africa's worsening environmental degradation nor the devastating AIDS epidemic is discussed. Still, this is an introductory text worthy of consideration, despite the undistinguished quality of its production (including crudely drawn maps) and steep price.

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## NEW LOCAL HISTORIES

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*A Place in the World: New Local Historiographies from Africa and South-Asia.*

Edited by AXEL HARNEIT-SIEVERS. Leiden: Brill, 2002. Pp. 384. No price given (ISBN 1568-1203); paperback (ISBN 90-04-12303-2).

KEY WORDS: Historiography, identity, local history, memoirs.

These essays are comprehensive analyses of the local historiographies of modern African societies, supplemented by three case studies on the Indian sub-continent. Analyzed in their appropriate political, social and geographic context, the case studies reveal that 'new' local histories are common in regions where colonialism and Christian missions encouraged rapid development in the twentieth century. Reflecting various local and regional expressions, these historical writings

appeal to multiple consumers, especially the local intelligentsia who utilize them to consolidate their political legitimacy.

The volume is organized into three parts that cover African and Asian modern history. Part 1 analyzes the contested local historiographies of Nigeria and Cameroon. Axel Harneit-Sievers's chapter surveys Igbo local histories in the twentieth century. Analyzed in the context of the colonial and postcolonial state, the impact of Christian missions and the rapidly shifting sociopolitical conditions of the decolonization process, these local historiographies reflected evolving Igbo communal consciousness. Despite the emphasis on communal identity, Igbo local historians underscore the significance of modern development in a postcolonial context. Toyin Falola's chapter on Yoruba hometown histories is a comprehensive survey of the impact of modernization, especially through Christian missions, colonial imperatives and postcolonial political developments on Yoruba communities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Ute Rosenthaler's chapter on Calabar historiography focuses on the impact of European commerce, Christian missions, colonial rule and postcolonial regimes on the major ethnic groups in Calabar and neighboring communities. As Efik, Ibibio and Qua elites constructed their identities to reflect changing political and economic interests, they embraced contentious local traditions. Osarhieme Osadolor's chapter on Benin City analyzes the impact of the pioneering studies of the renowned local historian Jacob Egharevba on subsequent local histories during the postcolonial period. While the postcolonial historiography was shaped by the prevailing political and social developments, it also reflected Benin's importance in West African history. Mindful of their community's cultural significance, local historians projected Benin into the wider Nigerian political context. Brigitte Buhler's chapter on the Wiya of Cameroon is a local discursive analysis that affirms Wiya social action and the production of locality.

Part 2 considers local historiographies from eastern and south-central Africa. Robert Papstein's chapter on the Central African Historical Research Project analyzes the preservation of invaluable manuscripts of local histories in Zambia. Given the ongoing problems with African archives, Papstein suggests that professional historians need to encourage the publication of these critical manuscripts. Wilhelm Mohlig's chapter on the relevance of oral tradition in the production of history textbooks in Namibia focuses on the development of cultural identity among ethnic minority groups, notably Gciriku and Shambyu. This assertion of communal identity was in opposition to rapid urbanization and Kwangali hegemony. In his chapter on Kikuyu historiography, John Lonsdale contends that Mau Mau memoirs were not merely local histories. They are significant to the postcolonial nation-state project. While Kenyan African National Union leaders insist that all Kenyans, not just Mau Mau, fought gallantly for independence, the memoirs contend that the decisive contribution of the Mau Mau to the liberation struggle must not be forgotten. Thomas Geider's chapter analyzes the production of the Habari texts in Swahili-speaking communities of East Africa. With reference to important political, social and economic context, this text provides some insight into the biographies of major historical figures. Finally, Terence Ranger's chapter on Zimbabwe is an insightful analysis of the frontier style historiography that affirmed the mission of the cattle-keeping, literate, Christian modernizers of the Zambezi region.

The final section includes studies on north India, by Antje Linkenbach; on the Kiranti of east Nepal, by Martin Gaenszle; and on local caste history in contemporary urban India, by Ursula Rao. Linkenbach's case study concludes that local historical writings in Garhwal and Kumaon have sought to create a more cohesive communal identity. Gaenszle contends that Kiranti local historiography combines

academic style with traditional forms of representing the past. Rao's case study shows that local historical accounts strengthen caste solidarity in an urban environment.

The volume effectively articulates the complex meaning of tradition, community and power in a rapidly shifting modern context. It fills an important void in the intellectual and local history of contemporary African societies. While the Asian section is limited in scope, the African sections are comprehensive. Their scope and depth make them a significant contribution to African historical analysis.

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## ARCHAEOLOGY IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

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*Southern Africa and the Swahili World.* By FELIX CHAMI and GILBERT PWITI. (Studies in the African Past 2). Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press, 2002 (distributed by African Books Collective, Oxford). Pp. vi + 138, 67 figures and plates, 24 tables. £17.95; \$29.95, paperback (ISBN 9976-60-367-3).

KEY WORDS: Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, archaeology, precolonial.

There are many levels upon which this volume can be considered. It would be very easy to focus on the glaring technical errors that occur throughout the book, including misspelling, incorrect use of language and misalignment of figures. It is impossible to overlook these problems entirely as they impede the reading of some of the chapters.

A second line of consideration is the academic quality of the individual chapters. The volume in its first half serves as a vehicle for the publication of Chami's recent research at Kaole on the Tanzanian coast. Wood's chapter on the glass beads from Kaole is especially useful, providing a long-needed coherent overview on bead use and availability in East African coastal archaeology, which she is able to compare with her earlier work on beads from the southern African interior. The presentation of the fieldwork itself is basic and there is sometimes a lack of logic in interpretation. The earliest radiocarbon date calibrates to AD 1202. 'This date suggests that the site of Kaole Ruins was occupied from about AD 1100 or slightly earlier' (p. 31). Why this should be, we are not told. Perhaps the most telling statement on the significance of this work at Kaole is that in the introductory chapter entitled 'Kaole and the Swahili world', Kaole is only mentioned four times and on each occasion only in passing.

Besides this focus on research at Kaole, the second half of the volume is made up of chapters on other aspects of eastern and southern African archaeology. Of these, the chapters by Pradines, Mapunda and Chirikure *et al.* are most useful. Pradines, basing his study on his recent investigations at Gedi, on the Kenyan coast, discusses the internal organization of Swahili towns and the relationship between stone and mud-built sections of the town. Mapunda considers the metallurgy of the coast and generates a hypothesis to explain the absence of major iron smelting after about AD 500, suggesting that a technology involving miniature bowl furnaces developed, which has thus far left little archaeological trace. Chirikure *et al.* provide a systematic comparison of the pottery from later sites in western and northern Zimbabwe. This reveals the close association of the different assemblages which is interpreted as resulting from the common origin of the Torwa and Mutapa states out of the preceding Zimbabwe culture.

The significance of this volume should however be judged on a still broader academic level. The series of which this volume is a part represents an important stage in the development of archaeology in eastern and southern Africa, whereby Africans themselves begin to create and orchestrate the archaeological agenda. This is essential for the future of the discipline on the continent. Therefore the volume's greatest value is in the process of constructing archaeology itself. This is epitomized by Chami's opening chapter setting out his perspectives on the Swahili coast. Chami draws inspiration from Bernal's *Black Athena* in demonstrating a paradigm shift in the interpretation of Swahili archaeology, recognizing the importance of the southern coast and emphasizing the Bantu-speaking characteristics of society. Like *Black Athena*, if we look beyond the methodological and theoretical shortcomings of how the argument is constructed and if we overlook the concern with promoting Tanzanian rather than Kenyan coastal archaeology, there is a very important point that we need to recognize and address.

Undoubtedly the development of an African archaeology will be a difficult process, fraught with problems. The increasing marginalization and insularity of the *West African Journal of Archaeology* is an excellent example of how this initiative might develop. Undoubtedly, this Eastern and Southern African series will be of particular importance to regional archaeologies and it will become standard use for the region's university students. Where these become the sole sources, the very basic errors may come back to plague future archaeology. One very simple example will suffice. On p. 33 a species list is provided for the different animals recognized in the bone assemblage from Kaole, identified by a bone specialist. This list includes 'roof rat', almost certainly a misspelling of roof rat, an indigenous African burrowing rodent, inhabiting rural areas. In the accompanying text the author (who is not a bone specialist) refers to this as rat, presumably meaning the non-African urban pest, *Rattus rattus*, which introduces a whole series of unwarranted implications regarding trade, urban conditions, disease vectors and so on. Thus will history be rewritten, unless care is taken in the preparation of these volumes.

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## THE HISTORICAL ECOLOGY OF ARID LANDS

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*The Archaeology of Drylands: Living at the Margin*. Edited by GRAEME BARKER and

DAVID GILBERTSON. London: Routledge, 2000. Pp. xxviii + 372. £80; \$130 (ISBN 0-415-23001-2).

KEY WORDS: Archaeology, environment, historical ecology.

With consensus about global warming projecting a current century temperature rise in the sub-tropics of 2–3 degrees centigrade, and that in the tropics of 1–2 degrees, the already alarming increase in the expansion of the world's drylands can only accelerate. Even non-alarmists speak of some 150 million environmental refugees by the year 2050, creating social, political and public health crises that will be most acute in arid lands. These are dire predictions. Yet, with the long-term perspective of the historian and archaeologist contributors to this volume, its tone is remarkably sanguine. Does this collection provide a coherent and convincing argument that lessons from deep-time can be applied to present debates about desertification and sustainability? Generally, yes. Do the editors succeed in

demonstrating the importance of understanding the African experience for answering the global questions of 'Living at the margin', as articulated in Barker and Gilbertson's fine introductory chapter? Yes, quite convincingly. And will approaches illustrated in this volume help convince scholars (and perhaps even development technicians) that their default disciplinary insularity will not push forward an understanding of why traditional dryland systems have proven so remarkably resilient? Quite possibly.

Let one issue be addressed without dissembling: readers should not be dissuaded from diving into this volume because it is part of the Routledge One World Archaeology series. Admirable in intention, the series is a study in frustration, with too many volumes boasting, at most, one or two adequate chapters adrift in a sea of self-indulgent polemics and fluff. Barker and Gilbertson have solicited contributions from major players (certainly for Africa).

In fact, this reviewer would recommend the book for the personal libraries of members of three constituencies: field archaeologists, historians and environmental scientists such as geomorphologists, hydrologists and ecologists. For the natural scientist, this volume will serve as a superb reminder that the human hand has long been heavy on these harsh, risk-prone arid environments. Many chapters show how small-scale human inputs can result in large-scale landform transformations. There is currently something of a revolution in thinking about human–land relations that goes by the name Historical Ecology. For the biophysical sciences, this revolution encourages a deeper appreciation of the many scales (temporal and spatial) of abrupt and non-linear changes in climate, in suites of vegetation and animals and in soils that characterize arid lands. On the human sciences side, we better appreciate the persistent and recursive effect on fragile lands of changing human exploitation, occupation and demographic patterns. In this, the chapter by Spillman on 'The dynamic climatology of drylands' is slightly disappointing, being a (quite competent) review of debates and theories about expansion of drylands, rather than a guide to the non-specialist on the non-equilibrium interaction of human and natural processes. Still, this book will be a significant addition to the core library of emerging Historical Ecology.

The cross-cultural comparative perspective will be most useful to archaeologists grappling with global themes of risk, flexibility and resilience. The second signature theme of Historical Ecology is perception: individuals and communities make decisions, mobilize labour or violence, and retain or transform land-modification strategies (such as the astonishing array of water-retention schemes illustrated in this volume) based upon their perception of risk. In this volume, we have a rich sampling of how communities translated long-term historical experience with, as Kinahan puts it in his excellent chapter on 'Disequilibrium ecosystem in Botswana', the inverse relationship between variability of rainfall and long-term low average annual rainfall. For archaeologists concerned with deep-time clues to resilience and sustainability, this volume is a study in successes (measured over the long-term) based upon flexible and deeply grounded local knowledge. There is a lesson here for development technicians with their notoriously short memories and one-size-fits-all programmes.

And for the historian, the individual scale of coping comes to the fore with several case studies of conflict between farmers and herders, of flashpoints between neighboring peoples or states over water and of the invention (and malleability) of origin or ownership myths central to many conflicts about access to water. The lesson for historians might be that reasons for resilience can only be known after integrating several scales of analysis (including the necessarily archaeological longest term). No historian need wonder if any of these archaeologist contributors are his or her sibling.

A number of chapters present methods or perspectives that this reviewer will adapt to his own archaeological and palaeoclimate research in arid West Africa. *The Archaeology of Drylands* is testimony to the creativity of the African peoples when dealing with persistent unpredictability and high risk – and with an areally expanding problem of ‘marginalization’. The complementary case studies (particularly from the Middle East and the Southwest of the United States) will remind Africanists that the historical lessons to be drawn are of global applicability to the predicted sad consequences of future expansion of the world’s drylands.

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## AN ARCHAEOLOGY FOR HISTORIANS

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*An Archaeology of Elmina: Africans and Europeans on the Gold Coast, 1400–1900.*

By CHRISTOPHER R. DECORSE. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001. Pp. x + 286. \$45 (ISBN 1-56098-971-8).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, precolonial, archaeology, slave trade.

Elmina is one of the storied places of the last half-millennium of West African history, a place where Europeans of many nationalities encountered a heterogeneous group of African peoples. The history is shadowed by Elmina’s role as a fortress of the slave trade, a bastion and symbol of European exploitation of a troubled continent. Christopher DeCorse’s account of Elmina provides another view of the settlement, emphasizing the community that grew up at Elmina, influenced by the European presence but ultimately an African town, testament to the African ability to adapt and persevere in a world economy.

The book’s six chapters are well organized, beginning with a historical background that refers Elmina to broader contexts: the Akan region, European mercantilist and imperial rivalries, the availability and types of documentation that may be consulted and the social organization of the town. Chapter 2 provides more detail on Elmina, emphasizing the physical setting. Maps indicate the expansion of the town, especially during the Dutch period, and surviving architectural features corroborate the documents. DeCorse considers the implications for identifying social sectors, housing types and ritual spaces in the archaeological record.

Chapter 3 is a good summary of the field methods and the locations of excavation areas. DeCorse refers to ‘thousands of archaeological levels’ which he compiled into analytical complexes that roughly approximate historic periods: pre-European, Portuguese (c. 1471–1637), Dutch seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the 1873 British takeover and destruction horizon, British (1873–80), colonial (1880–1900) and twentieth century. The first three chapters set the stage for an archaeological analysis: what can archaeology tell us that history cannot?

Chapters 4 (subsistence, craft specialization and trade), 5 (the European trade) and 6 (with a section on ritual and world view) present the substance of the archaeological interpretation. Here we see the import of DeCorse’s introductory sentence (p. 1): ‘This is an archaeological study, but documentary records, oral sources, and ethnographic data have been used to interpret the material record’. In fact, the non-archaeological sources dominate the discussion. For example, DeCorse presents species lists of marine and terrestrial resources ‘as represented in the documentary accounts’ (Tables 4.2, 4.3), but not of archaeological finds,



except for an unquantified list of mollusks (Table 4.1). He notes that the fragmentary nature of the remains provides evidence of butchering techniques compatible with those known from historical and ethnographic sources (p. 114).

DeCorse considers pottery, metals, glass beads, ivory, salt making and European trade goods. For each category of materials, he turns to the documentary and ethnographic record, placing the materials in wider context but rarely in the specific context of the archaeological assemblages, strata and features. For instance, the long catalog of recovered European ceramics clearly was painstakingly identified, but DeCorse presents only the list of types and their manufacture dates, not sherd counts. European imports were found in 'many different contexts' (p. 155). The collection accounted for 'almost one-fifth' of the ceramics recovered (p. 151), and Portuguese ceramics were represented by 'only about 300 sherds' (p. 156), with the implication that Portuguese ceramics were not a significant presence in local households. What proportion of the total sherd assemblage was recovered from Portuguese period contexts? Did Portuguese sherds make up a smaller minority of the sherds of their period than did the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century types of their respective periods? Did imported European ceramics replace types or vessel forms of traditional manufacture, or were they additions to the assemblage? Many archaeologists will ask such questions, but they are not DeCorse's concern in this volume.

DeCorse's book is well produced and illustrated, exhaustively end-noted, thoroughly referenced, scholarly and quite readable. It is not an archaeological report. It is history wrapped around archaeological categories, a series of ethnohistorical discourses inspired by archaeological finds. DeCorse emphasizes historical and cultural perspectives, not the details of the archaeological record. Archaeologists interested in comprehensive analysis of contexts, spatial and temporal patterning of artifact assemblages, or quantified sequences that facilitate comparison with other excavated data will await more technical accounts. In the meantime, DeCorse offers a valuable resource and an interesting perspective on an important site, a fine contribution to Gold Coast history.

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## PRECOLONIAL LINEAGE STRATEGIES

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*Lignages et territoire en Afrique au XVIII<sup>e</sup> et XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles: stratégies, compétition, intégration.* Edited by CLAUDE HÉLÈNE PERROT. Paris: Editions Karthala, 2000.

Pp. 226. €22 (ISBN 2-84586-046-3).

KEY WORDS: Equatorial Africa, western Africa, precolonial, migration, settlement histories, kinship, lineages, slavery, territory.

Lineages, ruling dynasties excepted, have often not been regarded as historical subjects in the literature on West Africa: from a structuralist perspective they moved in finely tuned structural opposition through ahistoric space. Even historians have often treated them as little more than a human reservoir that fed the predatory economies of centralized societies, or seen them simply as subsections of a greater whole, the ethnic group. Claude-Hélène Perrot's edited volume presents lineages as autonomous historical actors, which develop and implement specific strategies. Within certain limits, they had freedom to make decisions and pursue their own political objectives. All the essays depict lineages as actors which competed with each other and whose main aim is demographic growth. In principle



these lineages functioned according to specific rules (exogamy, rules of descent, succession, filiation), but in practice social and political exigencies led to particular interpretations of these rules or even to their transgression, revealing the strategies that make some lineages more successful than others. Hence, some lineages exhibited considerable demographic growth and occupied extensive territories, while others stagnated or disappeared entirely. The reader is presented with a comparative perspective on actors important to precolonial African history that so far have received too little attention. Overdue is a careful historical treatment of social formations which, prior to the colonial transformation of the political landscape, were probably more important than states and ethnic groups in shaping the identity and everyday reality of most Africans. The analytic focus on smaller groups such as these makes sense, since such a micro-historical approach is well suited to examining the complex ramifications of internal social processes. Moreover, clans and lineages have in some cases been shown to be trans-ethnic entities that in terms of stability even surpass ethnic identities. The case studies of this volume are a welcome contribution to the history of lineages in francophone Africa.

Most of the contributors are African researchers, formerly Perrot's PhD students, writing about their own societies. Except for the two anthropologists Tardits and Viti, all the authors are historians. The case studies are subdivided somewhat conventionally into two sections: stateless societies and societies with centralized political systems. Even if most cases describe a whole range of strategies, they tend to emphasize certain aspects more than others. The main themes emphasized in the essays are the integration of strangers and dependants, the appropriation of territory, the relationship between first-comers and late-comers and marriage strategies.

Zézé Béké on the Nyamwa (Côte d'Ivoire) and Loubamono-Bessacque on the Ambaama (Gabon) reveal the manifold mechanisms serving to integrate strangers, who were both welcomed and feared. While these strangers play an important role in reinforcing a lineage's strength, they must be incorporated into existing hierarchies. In some cases – as evidenced also by Njiasse Njoyas on the Bamum (Cameroon) – such groups were at first accorded slave status and were settled in areas closest to warlike neighbours. Mostly they were kept in a position of dependency through subtle forms of subjugation, but occasionally they managed to attain leadership positions.

Several chapters examine the appropriation of territory. That the spatial position of a settlement or a compound says much about the status of its inhabitants and their role in the settlement process is shown in Tardits's piece on the Bamum. As such it is, among other things, an expression of the kingdom's expansion and of genealogical distance or proximity to the current ruler. The essay by Gonnin on the Toura (Côte d'Ivoire) draws attention to the strategies deployed to occupy a particular spatial position. By establishing related sub-settlements and appropriating important symbolic or sacred places, the Toura segmentary lineages competed to secure what appears to be unoccupied territory.

Many of the case studies deal with the relationship between first-comers and late-comers. Kala-Ngoma describes how the migrating Beembe (Congo) initially took advantage of their matrilinearity by having their women marry into the patrilineages already settled there, a strategy which enabled the former to gain control of the land and ultimately drive away their predecessors. In the nineteenth century economic changes led to rapid population growth and to the appearance of polygamous big men. These developments affected the genealogical system, making it increasingly patrilinear. Similarly, amongst the Baoulé (Côte d'Ivoire), whose expansion Viti studies in great detail, earlier stateless settlers were not

recognized as landholders in their own right, but were either ethnically assimilated or driven out. Older territorial structures were thus subsumed by new lineage territories, whose particular arrangements around a political centre formed a micro-state. First the outermost boundaries were secured by establishing settlements at strategic locations; next the territory between centre and periphery was settled; finally, increasingly hierarchical political relationships formed. During subsequent expansion, people belonging to different micro-states joined together on the settlement frontier.

Perrot describes similar expansion processes amongst the Anyi (Côte d'Ivoire) and enriches her analysis by considering ecological and demographic factors. The most successful of the Anyi kingdoms was unique as it did not expand into the insalubrious vicinity of a river. Furthermore, demographic growth was primarily achieved by integrating captives. New settlements were founded by princes whose mothers were of slave status. In a matrilineal society, this ensured the loyalty of these settlements to the ruler's lineage, since the descendants of such captive women had no kinship ties outside their father's lineage. Koumba-Manfoubi describes similar strategies amongst the Punu (Gabon) and shows that those lineages whose territory was crossed by a slave trade route were at a distinct advantage. Finally, clever marriage strategies allowed certain lineages to secure considerable expanses of territory.

To avoid some of the thorny methodological problems arising from the use of oral sources, the studies explicitly sidestep the highly ideological issue of origins and limit their time frame to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, in most contributions the problem remains: legitimizing the occupation of land, creating hierarchies among lineages and defining the status of new settlers are no less ideological than the issue of 'origins'. Such matters, too, are connected with ongoing legitimating discourses that draw on contradictory historical narratives and ritual practices and are used in actual conflicts. With the exception of Perrot's and Tardits's articles, which include discussions on sources and methods (neither are original contributions, but were published in 1985), a more careful and extended reflection upon the oral sources and a sound contextualization of the historical narratives and genealogies would have been welcome.

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## RESPECTABILITY AND THE CULTURE OF COLONIAL SOCIETY

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*Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony 1750–1870: A Tragedy of Manners.* By

ROBERT ROSS. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Pp. xiv + 203. £35; \$54.95 (ISBN 0-521-62122-4).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, class, colonial, culture, identity, social.

This book concentrates on how British ideas of respectability were grafted on to the Dutch colonial system of status and hierarchy mainly because the Cape Dutch elite rejected ethnic mobilization in the interests of its own economic progress and political rights. But the bid for acceptance extended beyond the European centre to the larger community of free blacks and former slaves, brokered to a large extent by Cape liberalism. Respectability became the outward badge of British middle-class

hegemony. Status at the Cape in the eighteenth century, on the other hand, derived from a hierarchy perched on layers of slave labour, from menial to skilled, and a system of pageantry in both ritual and dress which reserved pomp for the highest echelons of Dutch officialdom. Ross cites examples of conspicuous display at state funerals and in the vicious public punishment of slaves.

Enter 'English nationalism' in the nineteenth century. Its success rested on the illusion that it was not imposed, but readily accepted. It was therefore different from the colonialism it superseded. Only in the 1840s did clashes take place as ethnicity infiltrated the press, but it was generally an expression of English, not Dutch, nationalism. The Dutch appeared more concerned with their colonial status than with nationalism; Anglicization was tolerated in public life because it could form the basis of a broad Cape colonial identity. Even in law and language there was a resigned acceptance that such compliance would reap its own rewards. This moderation is juxtaposed in Ross's narrative with an obsessive eastern Cape separatism, epitomized by the chauvinistic bicentennial celebration of Jan van Riebeeck's arrival at the Cape, in April 1852.

Respectability was the most potent ingredient of British cultural imperialism. Various stories of love and marriage percolate Ross's argument that not only the poor, but the would-be middle class also have to be rescued from the 'condescension of posterity' (p. 77). Gentility also makes its appearance, but demanded a higher income than respectability. Political economy, more than cultural analysis, lurks in Ross's construction of Englishness in Grahamstown and his version of the taming of the Cape landscape and evolution of a colonial built environment.

Not only architecture and education, but also religion competed in the respectability stakes. Christianity, Ross demonstrates, was a source of social power, certainly worth embracing for the benefits it offered, and therefore worth keeping exclusive. Hence the denominational strife that accompanied British rule after 1806, as the Dutch Reformed tradition lost dominance to Anglicanism. Missionary influence in the nineteenth century, modelled on the temporal and ecclesiastical power of the Moravians, achieved controversial fulfilment in the liberalism of Dr John Philip of the London Missionary Society and in the enactment of Ordinance 50. Legislative landmarks strengthened Christianity's hand as the harbinger of freedom and the arbiter of respectability.

If there were clear signs of respectability at the Cape in the early nineteenth century, there were also deep scars of intemperance, most notably among the Khoikhoi who were stigmatized as 'drunken and lazy'. Drinking went with prostitution in the colonial mind, but drunkenness was a much more public indiscretion. Canteens enriched wine and brandy producers and ensured the failure of prohibition, except perhaps on mission stations and in the Kat River settlement where they were banned. Ross provides compelling evidence to show that the main elements of rural working-class culture were alcohol and music.

Islam offered an alternative respectability going back to the 1770s or earlier, based on religious adherence and sobriety, not unlike that propagated by Christians. Ross defers to the work of Robert Shell and Achmat Davids to argue, however, that Cape Muslims strove for acceptance, not integration. The profound difference between Christian and Muslim traditions and their respective ambitions are not, however, explored; we are left with the heavy legacy of Christian imperialism in the making of social stratification at the Cape.

Chapter 7 examines the impact of the Kat River experiment in the acceptance and rejection of British forms of colonial respectability. Ross's empirical approach fixes growing missionary intolerance and prejudice to the quarrel between James Read (and his son) and other missionaries in 1844. It marked the racialization of Cape society, as whites struggled to maintain social hegemony in the face of poor

whiteism, inebriated British soldiers and growing numbers of white convicts and orphaned children who alerted others to the fragility of 'superior' white status. Panic broke out in 1851, stoked by celebrations of slave emancipation, the convict crisis and the Kat River rebellion, all of which Ross describes as the 'deep politics' of kinship, gender and master-servant relations that were pitted against the 'high politics' of formal institutions, which eventually led to representative government at the Cape in 1853.

Again, Ross sides with the Dutch, commending their tacit, if tactical, decision not to play the ethnic card which might have hindered the inauguration of a Cape parliament that they confidently expected to dominate (p. 166). He argues, in conclusion, that the 1853 constitution put a premium on respectability, notwithstanding its 'democratic' pretensions. It increasingly pushed up the markers of respectability as Cape liberalism succumbed to the Registration Act of 1887, which made the franchise more and more unattainable for aspirant African and Coloured voters.

*Status and Respectability* is an accomplished cultural history of the Cape that properly historicizes colonial domination under the Dutch and British, expertly glides between the experiences of European, slave and Khoi communities and consummately commands the complexities of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonial representation. It is already a standard text, a status it richly deserves.

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GREG CUTHBERTSON

## SOCIAL AGENCY AND IRON WORKING IN EQUATORIAL AFRICA

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703288666

*Pride of Men: Ironworking in 19th Century West Central Africa.* By COLEEN E. KRIGER. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann; Oxford: James Currey; and Cape Town: David Philip, 1999. Pp. xix + 261. £40 (ISBN 0-85255-682-9); £15.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-632-2).

KEY WORDS: Equatorial Africa, archaeology, precolonial, handicrafts, social.

This book develops new perspectives on the history of iron and copper working in the Zaire River basin. Kriger argues that a key misconception among Africanists is that iron production was an important part of the Bantu migrations, allowing rapid expansion. She also asserts that African historians have sometimes naively argued that metal production was a critical engine of development leading to political centralization. Kriger's claims, however, are not always sustained empirically.

Kriger wants to understand iron working in the Zaire River basin prior to the period she studies, the nineteenth century. She draws on archaeological methods to establish the development of iron working in the region. She argues that archaeologists use clichéd representations of early iron production by focusing on origins. Actually, archaeologists often document early sites because surveys turn up such evidence, not because there is some archaeological agenda to find such sites. Moreover, when Kriger characterizes archaeological studies as depicting early ironworkers as passive, one wonders how she has missed studies that assess the roles that ironworkers had in shaping early Iron Age societies. She often gets archaeological dating evidence wrong, but at least she tries to integrate archaeological knowledge into her historical renderings.

Kruger's concerns about the ideas that have characterized iron production in Africa extend to European depictions of iron working that frequently proved mistaken. She notes that such descriptions inordinately emphasize the ritual performances surrounding iron production. Here her perspective mirrors earlier analyses of representations of iron working in the Great Lakes region.<sup>1</sup> Her failure to cite such work and to examine deep time studies in the Great Lakes Region may mislead her readers into thinking that her own study breaks new ground in its examination of European representations.

Another of Kruger's primary contentions is that iron smithing receives relatively little attention in the literature when compared to iron smelting. She has a point regarding archaeology, but her failure to reference studies of smithing in antiquity and more popular works on smithing contradict the assertion that her perspective is new.<sup>2</sup>

The history of iron production is filled with huge silent spaces that call for the exercise of creative imagination. This being the case, it is important that such historical imagination fit with knowledge about iron production outside the Zaire River basin, especially in neighboring regions. For example, Kruger believes that women were the lowest consumers of iron products, an argument that fits her interpretation that in the nineteenth century much of iron output went into prestige goods consumed by elite and wealthy men. This contradicts conventional ideas that women as agricultural consumers would have consumed much of the iron produced. But there is no persuasive evidence to sustain it.

Consistent with her initial thesis, Kruger stresses the importance of black-smithing but simultaneously diminishes the role of iron smelting. In the process she often overstates her case, as in arguing for the individual control and ownership exercised by the master smelter over the smelting – contrary to evidence from the Great Lakes region, where ownership resided in the corporate group, not the individual.

One of Kruger's most contentious ideas is that there were never enough iron goods to meet the demand in nineteenth-century Zaire. She argues that there were artificially induced shortages to keep demand for products high: 'it was the deliberately created scarcity of technological knowledge and skill that was the most important factor in limiting the numbers of furnaces at work' (p. 74). This contrasts with abundant evidence from elsewhere on the continent, where smelters responded to demand by rapidly expanding their operations, sometimes incorporating other ethnic groups to meet demands.<sup>3</sup> If Kruger is to persuade her readers that the inversion of market principles was at work, it is incumbent upon her to avoid the creation of a new myth by providing specific, substantive examples that prove the case.

Kruger is at her strongest when she focuses on material objects to develop local histories, working from the perspective that the object contains history. She prefers the analysis of the object on morphological grounds and shows repeatedly, for example, how technological choices were made, how styles changed to suit the preferences of consumers and how political forces compelled innovation. Kruger says that she wants to write a social history that puts people front and center, in

<sup>1</sup> Peter R. Schmidt, 'Cultural representations of African iron production', in Peter R. Schmidt (ed.), *The Culture and Technology of African Iron Production* (Gainesville FL, 1996), 1–28.

<sup>2</sup> Patrick R. McNaughton, *The Mande Blacksmiths* (Bloomington, 1988).

<sup>3</sup> Peter R. Schmidt, 'Reconfiguring the Barongo: reproductive symbolism and reproduction among a work association of iron smelters', in Schmidt (ed.), *Culture and Technology of African Iron Production*, 74–127.

other words, a history that integrates social agency. If history is to be derived from the material object, then agency may be opaque and indirect with an emphasis on technological decision-making. Kriger is on more solid ground in linking morphology and style to social agency, particularly when there are well-documented social contexts in which these attributes occur. She succeeds in showing how forged objects were used in status displays and in the exercise of power and authority and for this her work deserves wide circulation.

Kriger's study of forged objects excels in demonstrating the linkages between social context and changes in such objects. Her work with fancy knives, axes and swords is superb and demonstrates how metalworking responded to new economic opportunities and changing social conditions. She shows convincingly how objects used in open display as prestige goods can be read to understand social processes, particularly the rising wealth of smiths, elites and local government officials during the economic boom of the nineteenth century. Kriger also looks at the upward social mobility of blacksmiths in the Zaire River basin during that period, through their production of currency objects and of innovative prestige goods. This is a persuasive argument based on archival evidence and meticulous examination of many objects in museum collections.

Kriger's emphasis on inventions and innovation in iron working in nineteenth-century Zaire, however, gives the false impression that this is the first era of innovation in African iron production. There is a growing literature on ancient innovation and invention in iron working – a critical deep time context for understanding how the Zaire developments fit into a larger continental history.

As a study of the relationships of production and consumption with status and power, however, *Pride of Men* opens new understandings of the economic and social conditions that once gave rise to the prestige and independent power of ironworkers in African cultures, not just in nineteenth-century Zaire but also – if we use her study as strong inference – when Bantu-speaking communities first began to produce iron in central and east Africa.

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PETER R. SCHMIDT

## ALCOHOL AND SOCIAL POWER

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703298662

*Potent Brews: A Social History of Alcohol in East Africa 1850–1999.* By JUSTIN WILLIS. Nairobi: The British Institute in Eastern Africa and EAEP; Oxford: James Currey; Athens: Ohio University Press; Kampala: Fountain Publishers; Dar-es-Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota, 2002. Pp. xii + 304. £45 (ISBN 0-85255-471-0). £16.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-470-2).

KEY WORDS: Eastern Africa, precolonial, colonial, postcolonial, alcohol, gender, generational conflict, social.

The relationship between the consumption of alcohol and social morality has been the subject of lively theoretical and philosophical disputations in many societies. Does the consumption of alcohol hinder or facilitate the promotion of a moral society? Is alcohol 'a subversive liquid' that threatens the social order? Can the patterns in the consumption of alcohol serve as a reliable indicator of the nature of power and even gender relations, within any given society? Justin Willis's book is an elaborate attempt to address these questions within the context of precolonial, colonial and postcolonial East Africa. The bulk of the material for

the book is based on three case studies: Kajiado district in Kenya; Hoima district in Uganda; and Rungwe and Kyela districts in Tanzania. Willis relies on 'qualitative oral interviews' to frame his arguments. Although he carried out archival work in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, he discounts the centrality of archival sources in a study of this kind. Archival sources, Willis states, are silent on 'African discourses about drink'. Further, archival sources are a biased record of those who 'have had the most hostile attitude to drink in general, and to "traditional" liquor in particular'.

For most of the period under study, 'traditional' liquor, remained the dominant form of alcohol for Africans. This was made from 'finger millet, ... sorghum, bulrush millet, maize'. In this category must also be included palm wine, and distilled alcohol from 'readily available materials'. Colonialism introduced European-style bottled beer, grape wines and 'spirits'.

According to Willis, the sole purpose for the consumption of alcohol for individuals is to make them happy. The brewing and consumption of alcohol is therefore an effort to satisfy this desire for happiness that alcohol bestows on individuals. But drinking has several unpleasant outcomes. It can have 'disruptive effects', undermine authority and social order, and lead 'the dominant as well as the subordinate out of the normal paths of behavior' (p. 14). This leads Willis to conclude that 'the practice and discourse of drinking have always revealed the ambiguities of power' (p. 265). And it is on the theme of power that Willis devotes most of his intellectual exploration and analysis.

In order to demonstrate the 'ambiguities of power' tied to drinking, Willis is quick to discount the notion of 'integrated' drinking, which holds that the consumption of alcohol in 'small scale pre-industrial societies' had minimal harmful effects on individuals and the society. In the East African communities under study in this book, people were aware not only of the 'euphoric moment' brought on by drinking, but also of the danger that drinking introduced in the management of social relations. In a bid to manage this danger, the consumption of alcohol followed established patterns that reaffirmed the power of the elder men, especially over women and young men. Elder men had the social role of guarding against the unruliness of drunken young men and sexual adventurism of drunken women. To be able to exert their power and authority, elder men were expected to conduct themselves with appropriate temperance. Specifically, they had to avoid making 'fools of themselves', or becoming 'incapable in front of women and children' after drinking. It was therefore not appropriate for elder men to drink with women and younger men. The introduction of European-style alcohol during the colonial period did little to dislodge the power of elder men. They embraced colonial legal provisions that on the whole affirmed their power over women and young men.

In the postcolonial period bottled beer came to be deliberately associated with development, while traditional alcohol was associated with laziness and anti-development, especially in the rural areas. In each period, however, men still dominated in the consumption of alcohol. They also continued to wield power. Often, they 'sorted themselves into groups by generation within the drinking place with elders avoiding the direct drinking companionship of younger men' (p. 218).

Willis's exhaustive study is a challenging book to read. Part of this challenge comes from the reader being confronted with a multiplicity of themes that the author attempted to weave together throughout the book. These include: power and its legitimacy; the brewing, marketing and social uses of alcohol; alcohol and gender relations; colonialism, Africans and alcohol. These themes (and others), are pursued at different points in the book as if they were independent studies. The interrelationship between power and consumption of alcohol, while fascinating, is not convincingly demonstrated in this study. This assertion seems to assume that



the three communities surveyed had similar social institutions and therefore definitions of power in the precolonial period and that these patterns were maintained in subsequent periods. This is difficult to establish. Willis seems to have underplayed the differences in social institutions among the communities that he studied, leading him to see his project as being 'far more a story of similarity than it is of differences'. The content of the similarities is, however, not readily apparent in this study. Further, is the consumption of alcohol, as outlined by Willis, the source or consequence of power? On a related matter, it is worth asking how the inhabitants of the communities studied would react to the theoretical conclusions arrived at by Willis. Would they see themselves and their comprehension of power (at all levels), reflected in this study?

The discussion on elder men also raises a lot of questions. Did these men originate from the same social segment of society in the period under study? Colonial rule created a new class of rulers (at least in Kenya), who subverted the integrity of precolonial social and political institutions. The strength of these new elder men was the result of colonial power and not of cultural legitimacy. Are the elder men under colonial rule any more legitimate than those in the post-colonial period?

The problems discussed in this book have a cross-cultural and even international dimension that Willis should surely have explored in order to demonstrate the uniqueness of the case in East Africa. How have other societies responded to social and moral challenges posed by alcohol? For example, is the argument of 'ambiguities of power' of alcohol similar to the legal and social arguments marshaled to justify 'prohibition' in the USA? How is alcohol portrayed in advertisements outside East Africa?

But this is still a very valuable book. For the general reader, it has fascinating details on the development of colonial policy on the consumption of alcohol by Africans, Christianity and alcohol, and of course the 'drunken settlers'. In the classroom, this is an invaluable text in graduate/undergraduate courses that combine history and anthropology. It raises questions that can form the basis of very energetic classroom discussions. Willis has, with determination, pursued a subject rarely tackled in scholarship and attempted to show how alcohol can be a window into a society and its social challenges. It is well researched, detailed and carefully documented.

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## JIHĀD AND DEFENSIVE MODERNIZATION IN NORTHWEST AFRICA

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*Jihad and its Interpretations in Pre-Colonial Morocco: State–Society Relations during the French Conquest of Algeria.* By AMIRA K. BENNISON. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002. Pp. xviii + 205. £50 (ISBN 0-7007-1693-9).

KEY WORDS: Morocco, precolonial, civil society, Islam, imperialism, politics.

The idea of *jihād* as an ideological motor for modernization seems completely at odds with current popular Western perceptions of Islam. In nineteenth-century North Africa, however, Muslim leaders, both rulers and political challengers, invoked *jihād*, not only to validate resistance to European military and economic encroachments, but also to combat *fasād*, which Amira Bennison defines as corruption of the Muslim body politic, including dissidence and rebellion in opposition

to modern reform. In his attempts to strengthen the Moroccan polity through military, administrative and economic modernization, Sultan Mawlay ʿAbd al-Rahmān (1822–59) and his religious scholars made a nuanced formulation of the theory that people who resisted the state’s centralizing mission committed *fasād* and therefore subjected themselves to divinely sanctioned censure and punishment.

Bennison explores the development of *jihād* theory in the context of changing patterns of world economic and military power, particularly as manifested in France’s invasion of Algeria in 1830 and the ensuing war between the French army and the charismatic western Algerian resistance leader ʿAbd al-Qādir. Starting from the premise that precolonial Morocco was not ‘a closed unit of reference’ but ‘a regional Islamic society ... located within the cultural nexus of the *dār al-Islām* in its entirety’ (p. 3), she compares the evolution of ʿAlawī ideology with similar developments in the Ottoman state. She also shows that Mawlay ʿAbd al-Rahmān’s successors up to 1912, when the French and Spanish protectorates were declared, continued to employ *jihād* as a tool of defensive modernization.

Bennison’s book succeeds more effectively than any study I have seen in demonstrating that Morocco in the nineteenth century was a dynamic political community, which, in the face of growing international pressures, engaged in a continuous public debate over the proper relationship between state and society, Morocco’s constitution, as it were. Because she takes this debate very seriously, she is able to show persuasively that the Algerian crisis was not only an issue of interstate power relations but also the stimulus for a thorough rethinking of the terms and limits of Moroccan state legitimacy.

Mawlay ʿAbd al-Rahmān’s dynasty, the ʿAlawī lineage of *shurafā*, or descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, came to power in the seventeenth century on an ideological platform of *jihād* against the Portuguese and Spanish infidels who violated Morocco’s coast lands. The authority of the sharifian state, therefore, was inseparable from the struggle to defend the *dār al-Islām* against external threats, which continued in one form or another into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The French seizure of the Ottoman deylik of Algiers was especially menacing because Moroccan public opinion generally regarded western Algeria, centered on the venerable city of Tlemcen, as rightfully part of the ʿAlawī patrimony. Knowing this, Mawlay ʿAbd al-Rahmān deftly promoted the idea that *jihād* against *fasād* was just as important as resistance to the French and that a God-approved struggle against internal dissidence, localism, recalcitrance and revolt was the ideological key to modern self-strengthening.

This book also provides a meticulous, lucid narrative of the events of 1830–47, when relations between the French, ʿAbd al-Qādir forces and the sultanate were extremely complex and always changing. Bennison tells the story from the perspectives of both the ʿAlawī ruling class and the peoples of northeastern Morocco who faced the undefined and turbulent Algero-Moroccan frontier zone. Drawing on an impressive range of archival sources in both European languages and Arabic, including the Archives Royales and the Bibliothèque Générale in Rabat, she unravels the multi-polar complexities of the story with great skill and gives us the most penetrating study we have to date of the consequences of the Algerian crisis for Moroccan society and government.

She makes it plain that the management and control of jihadist ideology was no less a tricky business in the nineteenth century than it has been in the contemporary world. Mawlay ʿAbd al-Rahmān claimed that as *amir al-muʾminin*, or Commander of the Faithful, his subjects, including ʿAbd al-Qādir and the tribes of western Algeria, should accept him as the exclusive arbiter of *jihād* against both infidel invaders and corruptors of the body politic. The sultan failed, however, to

control the jihadist discourse. Rather, he, ʿAbd al-Qādir, the Idrisi elite of northern Morocco (the other prestigious *shurafāʾ* lineage, which thought it might be better qualified to deal with the French than the ʿAlawī family was), and various rebel groups in the frontier zone all hurled jihadist thunderbolts at one another at one time or another during the 1830–47 period. The sultan also failed to resolve the conspicuous contradiction between the demands of universalist *jihād* in defense of the *dār al-Islām* and the need for pragmatic collaboration with Europeans as part of the *jihād* against *fasād* and thus the struggle to strengthen the state.

In 1845, for example, the French persuaded Mawlay ʿAbd al-Rahmān to sign the Treaty of Lalla Maghnia, which fixed a Western-style boundary between Morocco and Algeria. The sultan declared that people who opposed this modern accommodation were guilty of *fasād*. Opponents of the treaty retorted that the sultan himself betrayed his divine trust because he effectively renounced future armed *jihād* to recover western Algeria.

In Bennison’s view, however, neither the treaty nor ʿAbd al-Qādir’s surrender in 1847 represented an ideological watershed for the sultanate. Rather, public contention over state authority accompanied the succession of crises that vexed Morocco right up to 1912. Today, the ʿAlawī dynasty, still very much in power, keeps a tight lid on popular jihadist rhetoric. At the same time, the king rests his authority on the principle of sharifian legitimacy, a construct whose efficacy is historically rooted in *jihād* against both infidels and enemies of modern reform.

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## GENDER, COLONIALISM AND ECONOMIC DYNAMICS IN NIGERIA

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703318663

*The Bluest Hands: A Social and Economic History of Women Dyers in Abeokuta (Nigeria), 1890–1940.* By JUDITH A. BYFIELD. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann; Oxford: James Currey, 2002. Pp. xxxix + 263. \$64.95; £45 (ISBN 0-325-07009-1); \$24.95; £16.95, paperback (ISBN 0-325-07008-3).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, precolonial, colonial, economic, handicrafts, gender, social.

This useful book opens important windows into the history of gender, local production and colonialism in West Africa. Byfield focuses on the history of female indigo – or *adire* – dyers in Abeokuta to explore the relationship between these dyers and the structures of colonialism. Rather than focusing on export agriculture – largely dominated by men – Byfield examines an industry that supplied commodities for African rather than European markets. However, she demonstrates that the success of this ‘local’ dyeing industry was intimately tied to the growing wealth of cash-crop farmers, who used their new incomes to purchase dyed cloth. Likewise, female dyers were able to develop and expand the indigo dyeing industry in Abeokuta *because* they took advantage of new forms of credit, the availability of cheap, imported cloth and transport infrastructure that came with colonialism. Thus, Byfield shows how one, local industry was tied to other broader economic transformations brought by colonial rule. Contrary to the vast literature on ‘de-industrialization’, Byfield convincingly argues that, in the case of the indigo dyeing industry at least, integration into a global economy actually promoted development rather than wiping out local craft producers. Byfield integrates her discussion of these broader issues into the cultural and economic

history of the nineteenth-century dyeing industry, the cultural and social roles of clothing/cloth in Yoruba society and the changing political structure of the Egba United Government. She also provides an excellent overview of the structure of the indigo dyeing industry, which highlights the complexity of the industry and the numerous methods used by dyers to produce dyed cloth.

Byfield's vision is firmly historical. After demonstrating that the industry initially succeeded because producers took advantage of economic changes brought by colonial rule, Byfield then shows how these external linkages could make the industry vulnerable to the fluctuations of the world market. By the 1920s and 1930s the entire industry was in crisis, as a direct result of declining terms of trade and the Great Depression. The interwar economic crisis hurt indigo dyers in two ways. First, European firms reduced and restricted credit, which undercut the business practices of the dyers. Second, incomes of Africans – especially cash-crop producers – declined, which in turn reduced the best market for indigo cloth. Women responded by cutting prices and adopting new technologies (caustic soda and synthetic indigo) to reduce production costs. These responses actually put more pressure on the industry. The use of new technologies allowed new producers to enter the industry without having trained extensively, and, along with the reduction in prices, led to intense competition between producers. This led some women to approach the *alake* – or 'king' of Abeokuta – in the hope he might resolve the problems faced by the dyers. The *alake* – who had close ties to the British through the mechanisms of 'indirect' rule – responded by banning the use of the new technologies, a decision that many women actually opposed, but was both unwilling and unable to address the real economic issues that were at the root causes of the decline. On the other hand, the *alake* and the colonial state passed laws that helped protect men's income and authority. Elder men thereby regained control over labor, land, credit and women while women were denied protection for the very real social and economic gains they had made during the early colonial period.

Thus, the responses of the colonial state and representatives of the 'Native Authority' to the changes of the 1920s and 1930s were profoundly gendered. Women had little direct access to or control over the state, and little was done to redress the problems faced by an industry that they dominated. While both men and women requested state intervention to shield them from the economic downturn and rising tax rates imposed by the colonial state, only men were given that protection. This resulted in increasing gender inequities as women were subordinated to men in order to safeguard male authority and limit male indebtedness while doing nothing to protect the incomes of female dyers.

Byfield does not simply cast women as passive participants in this process. Women found fissures within the colonial state and tried to renegotiate gender relations and their economic position. Women felt that they had a right to present their concerns to the state and found ways to deal with the crisis in their industry without pursuing an anti-colonial agenda. Women effectively forced the *alake* and colonial state to call a commission of enquiry which recommended that the ban on the new dying technologies be reversed. They were successful because they used literate, educated men as lawyers and letter writers, and deluged different branches of the colonial state with their concerns. They forced the colonial state, in a sense, into conflict with itself, which resulted in a reversal of policy and a defeat for their representative, the *alake*. Unfortunately, broader structural problems continued to damage the industry. Byfield demonstrates that the crisis only intensified after 1937, and the industry continued to decline.

This is thoughtful and provocative history. Byfield has provided an important and welcome contribution to the social history of colonialism and gender in Nigeria

that is creatively and exhaustively researched. Byfield's real contribution is to locate and trace the history of female dyers within the broader events and changes ushered in by colonial rule. At all times dyers were active agents in carving out an economic and social place for themselves, and looked for ways to minimize and adapt to the increasingly difficult environment they faced by the 1930s. Byfield also demonstrates that West Africans developed trade between colonies that linked together producers in different parts of Africa leading to local economic growth. Hopefully, Byfield's work will stimulate further studies of the gendered dynamics of colonialism and the dynamics of regional and local economies within Africa during the colonial period.

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SEAN STILWELL

### THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR RE-SURVEYED

DOI: 10.1017/S002185370332866X

*The South African War, 1899–1902.* By BILL NASSON. London: Arnold, 1999. Pp. xvi + 304. £45 (ISBN 0-340-74154-6); paperback, £16.99 (ISBN 0-340-61427-7).

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

Anniversaries are good for history book sales, and the centenary years of the South African War have proved to be no exception. Several studies of high quality, including edited collections, have appeared over the past four years or so, while other well-established histories of the conflict have been republished and repackaged. Although this is intended to be a general history, published in Arnold's 'Modern Wars' series, it does not fall into the trap of simply retelling an old story, for the author incorporates the most up-to-date insights into the war, including the conflict's race and gender aspects and its profound legacy. Here, the author's pioneering expertise in the involvement of Africans and 'Coloureds' in the conflict is particularly evident. The volume does not over-emphasize the political aspects of the war, so that the reader never loses sight of the fact that its course was decided on the battlefield. Neither does this study, like some military histories, get saturated by pedantry: the 'trees' of military detail are there, for these campaigns are essential to the story, but the 'wood' – the wider sweep of the conflict, as well as its global imperial and international context – remains clearly visible throughout.

The volume, moreover, has been thoroughly planned and logically structured. Chapter 1 explores the origins of the war and places them in the wider strategic framework of imperial expansion and global partition. Nasson highlights the deliberate policy of confrontation that led to war, while rejecting simplistic mono-causal explanations. 'The push was not economic determinism but the decisive affirmation of imperial political supremacy', he writes, but adds: 'Equally, that Britain did not go to war *for* gold does not mean that the war was not essentially *about* its overarching effects' (p. 37). The lack of strategic vision among the Boer political leadership is readily apparent. British political resolve would not collapse, as it had after Majuba. Neither would foreign powers suddenly come to the rescue, as some Boer leaders vainly anticipated, so a British victory was virtually inevitable. Chapter 2 examines the strategic objectives and military strengths and weaknesses of both sides. The British, in particular, began hostilities from a

position of weakness, an almost traditional feature of imperial military adventures, as Milner noted with equanimity at the outset. The military aspects are discussed with a commendable balance of description and analysis, and battles are illustrated by maps that are models of cartographic clarity. Chapter 3 examines the Boer offensive, when the republican forces squandered their initial tactical advantage by becoming bogged down in sieges at Kimberley, Mafeking and Ladysmith, while coastal ports, the lifelines of imperial forces, lay largely undefended. Chapter 4 analyses the first British offensive, including the humiliating defeats of 'Black Week', and the abortive attempted relief of Ladysmith. Chapter 5 concentrates on the second British offensive, when Lord Roberts's great assault ended in the capture of the two Boer capitals of Bloemfontein and Pretoria, wrongly anticipated by the British as marking the end of the conflict. Chapter 6 examines the beginning of the guerrilla phase of the war. Chapter 7 deals with the British counter-insurgency campaign, including the use of concentration camps (employed so recently by the Spanish in Cuba), and the employment of Boer 'hensoppers' and 'joiners', as well as thousands of African allies, as the Anglo-Boer conflict increasingly took on the character of a South African and Boer civil war. The Boers lost control of the countryside, not only to the British, but also crucially to Africans. One example cited by Nasson, the Zulu attack on Holkrantz in April 1902 in retribution for cattle confiscations and forced labour demands, illustrates the point well. Along with about 100 Zulus, 56 commandos were killed. The strength of African resistance combined with Kitchener's ruthless use of concentration camps, hensoppers and joiners, to persuade the Boers to accept reluctantly a surrender under generous terms. Chapter 8 provides particularly vivid insights into Boer and British metropolitan and southern African attitudes towards the war and each other. British attitudes, often laced with anti-semitism, veered between virtually racist images of Boers and admiration for their robust defence of their doomed frontier way of life. Chapter 9 surveys the ways that the conflict has been commemorated and recalled both fictionally and factually over the past century. Significantly, the war passed beyond living memory as the country entered into the closing, often violent decades of white rule. After the transition to majority rule, it provided an opportunity for African and Afrikaner nationalists to highlight their common if somewhat different traditions of anti-imperialism, creating new myths and leaving English-speaking South African identity seemingly as marginalized and anaemic as ever. The chapter highlights the ways in which the concentration camp experience highlighted the Afrikaner nationalist sense of victimhood. The camps did not come to occupy nearly as great a significance in African collective memory, even though African inmates were almost as numerous, perhaps – as suggested here – because of the far greater and sustained indignities visited on Africans throughout the succeeding century, but also because the camps affected a much higher proportion of the much smaller Boer population. The volume concludes with a rich survey of the conflict's southern African and global significance.

This is undoubtedly, in the opinion of this reviewer, the most accessible single-authored history of the war to appear to date. Teachers and students alike will be very grateful to him for this lucid survey, while future contributors to the 'Modern Wars' series have been provided with a model approach to conflict.

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DONAL LOWRY

DOI: 10.1017/S002185370338666

*African Modernities*. Edited by JAN-GEORG DEUTSCH, PETER PROBST and HEIKE SCHMIDT. Oxford: James Currey; Portsmouth NH: Heinemann, 2002. Pp. viii + 184. £40 (ISBN 0-85255-793-0); £14.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-792-2).  
KEY WORDS: African modernities, colonial, postcolonial, culture, politics.

This slim book grapples with ‘modernity’ and its relevance for African studies. The reader was eager to see whether the impressive team of international scholars convened for the occasion would triumph, however temporarily, over the concept nobody has seemed lately to be able to avoid. I am not sure one will find decisive victories in the collection: as the introduction reminds us apologetically, there still exists a considerable amount of ‘unfinished business’ here. But for people interested in Africa studies, although the contributors’ wrestling techniques vary in quality and will, the book carries a respectable amount of factual and analytical information.

The introduction provides a useful history of the debates over modernity and modernization and does an earnest job at exploring the many pitfalls of the concept of modernity, in particular its tendency to reinscribe the righteousness of the West in historical narratives. It also playfully warns us that, even if scholars have abandoned planes in favour of walking on foot and relying on the ‘natives’ for directions (J. Spencer), the theoretical air traffic over Africa is unlikely to cease.

After this breath of stylistic air, serious matters begin. In the first chapter, Richard Rathbone gives an elegant discussion of the vibrant forms of modernity that existed in West Africa before the coming of Islam and of Europeans. Looking at nineteenth-century Ghanaian debates about something called ‘progress’, Rathbone demonstrates that African contributions to modernity, as well as conversations about it, have long preceded current quibbling. The contribution by John Lonsdale, ‘Jomo Kenyatta, God and the Modern World’, attacks the Himalayesque peak of modernity from another, astute angle. After disposing of modernity thanks to a conveniently insipid definition borrowed from Giddens (‘the human effects of the expansion of markets in goods, labour or knowledge, and the growing power of states over people, in the past two centuries’), Lonsdale embarks into the moral storm of late colonialism and independence, and shows Kenyatta’s ability in navigating the contradictions of the modern world. Above all, the chapter’s erudite craft provides a welcome opportunity to understand Kenyatta, a complex and under-analyzed character in modern Kenyan history. In the following chapter, Liz Gunner’s title, ‘Dislocation, memory and modernity: the Prophet Isiah Shembe’, gives due notice that we are now entering deep rhetorical waters. Yet Gunner’s fine study of the church and career of Shembe, a prophet and cultural broker in South Africa, successfully suggests the importance of literacy, print memory and church archives in the new relationship between converts and the modern world. The next contribution, a casual promenade in the Likoni Ferry (Mombasa) photography studios, displays as much *chic* as it lacks substance. To the advantage of the reader, however, Heike Behrend’s study can be consumed as a light course before the three final chapters. W. Knobl’s ‘Modernization theory, modernization, and African modernities’ painstakingly traces the emergence of the modernization paradigm in the 1950s, its decline in the 1970s and its current resurrection under the label modernity. Simon Gikandi’s paper on ‘Reason, modernity, and the African crisis’ draws from Mbembe, Houtondji and Gyekye to argue that Africans are still theoretically excluded from modernity, but politically forced into its institutional apparatus.



But if the reader wants to savour directly the *tour de force* in the collection, she must go to the 35 pages written by John Comaroff entitled 'Governmentality, materiality, legality, modernity: on the colonial state in Africa'. This is a major contribution revisiting colonial authority, nationalism, citizenship, hegemony and social discipline in Africa and uncovering how the concept of the state has played a central role in shaping South African social studies. Last but not least, a brilliant footnote depicting modernity as a chimera forged by the West to explain Africa ruthlessly exposes the hidden strands of the concept while putting it gently back in its right place. Here might well lie the book's authentic *botte secrète*.

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FLORENCE BERNAULT

## REFORMIST INTELLECTUALS OF EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY ETHIOPIA

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*Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia: The Reformist Intellectuals of the Early Twentieth Century*. By BAHRU ZEWEDE. Oxford: James Currey; Athens: Ohio University Press; Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2002. Pp. xxii + 228. £45 (ISBN 0-85255-453-2); £16.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-452-4).

KEY WORDS: Ethiopia, historiography, intellectual, nationalism, politics.

For too long, historians and social scientists of Africa have neglected Ethiopia when they consider broad patterns on the continent. Alone, Ethiopia managed to defeat its would-be European master and to remain politically independent for most of the twentieth century. This provided a unique context for the development of the first generations of Ethiopian intellectuals, and in this work of outstanding achievement, Bahru Zewde brings to life the ideas of a remarkable group of Ethiopians – roughly from the Battle of Adwa in 1896 to the Italian invasion in 1935.

Some like Dr. Charles Martin, or as he was known under his Ethiopian name, *Hakim Wärqenäh Eshäté*, had been educated entirely abroad. Others were products of a combination of Ethiopian Orthodox Church education with further training or experience abroad, sometimes in places such as Egypt. Still others had attended mission schools in Ethiopia and beyond. Whatever the particular combination of influences, Ethiopian intellectuals of the early twentieth century shared a burning desire to use their knowledge of the world to help 'modernize' their country.

In a way, Ethiopian political independence made understanding economic 'backwardness' all the more pressing. By 1912, one of the most impressive of the thinkers of the period, Gäbrä-Heywät Baykädañ, was alarmed that European colonies were beginning to develop faster than Ethiopia: 'If we look at the Sudan, which had been ravaged by the Dervishes, we realize how a desert can be transformed into a Garden of Eden when ruled by such intelligent people as the British' (p. 51).

What an awful irony! For writers like Gäbrä-Heywät, one can say that the only fate worse than being exploited was *not* being exploited. Such contradictions created a painful ambivalence within many Ethiopian intellectuals. On the one hand, they were the first generation of indigenous nationalists – proud of their country considered as a 'nation', on a world stage shared by other nations. Like nationalists everywhere, they wrote histories that projected the present backward and connected it with a glorious past. But the awareness of their country's poverty

compared to the West – and, much worse, the realization that many Ethiopians themselves would oppose the measures that seemed necessary to overcome backwardness – drove many intellectuals into despair. Täklä-Hawaryat Täklä-Maryam, for example, was reluctantly forced to the conclusion that Ethiopians ‘had been more adept at destroying than at building. One could search in vain for an Amharic word for “progress”. Robbery and murder are equated with heroism and honour, litigation with knowledge’ (p. 100).

In this context, a very few Ethiopians, like Afäwäq Gäbrä-Iyyäsus, formally sided with Italy when it occupied Addis Ababa in 1936. He is reputed to have explained, ‘I did what I did because I believed that if Italy took over Ethiopia, civilized it and made it prosperous, the day will then come when the Ethiopians, having become civilized, strong and prosperous, will free themselves from Italy, just as the United States did with England’ (p. 56).

But a far more common reaction on the part of Ethiopian intellectuals was to throw themselves once more into a renewed study of world history with a view to extracting lessons. ‘There are few people’, asserts Bahru, ‘as obsessed with history as Ethiopians’ (p. 141). It was in this context that the example of Japan – a nation outside the West that was nonetheless able to adopt Western technology and organization in order to take its place as a world power – was hit upon as a beacon of hope in Ethiopia. Gäbrä-Heywät was one of the first to point to Japan as a model for reform from within in order to meet a threat from without, and he went on, remarkably, to develop many of the points that dependency theorists of Latin America would make decades later.

By the end of the 1920s, some foreign observers began to dub the intellectuals ‘Young Ethiopians’, in comparison with similar and previous movements in Turkey and Egypt. Free thinkers, Young Ethiopians attacked slavery and the mistreatment of the peasantry. They set out schemes to rationalize governmental administration. And they contributed to newspapers and schools, wrote books and articles, and a few began to serve in the higher echelons of the government by the early 1930s.

By that point, the intellectual flowering that Bahru describes began to come to a close as Täfäri Mäkonnen consolidated power as Emperor Haylä Sellasé. Even though Täfäri/ Haylä Sellasé had earlier found intellectuals useful in his struggle against conservative elements of the nobility, the Emperor felt uncomfortable with too much independence once he was in power. And so he began a series of efforts to censor and to disperse. But far more critical for the end of this story was the Italian invasion of 1935. Some of the educated went into exile, but many more were called to their deaths in 1937 when Italian authorities targeted intellectuals in a wild retribution for an attempt on the life of the Viceroy Graziani.

This is one of the most important books on Ethiopian history to appear during the last couple of decades. Article-length studies, usually of particular personalities, existed before Bahru’s work, and an extremely limited amount of translation of Ethiopian intellectuals’ writings (most in Amharic) had been carried out. This study is the first to attempt to convey the full sweep of early twentieth-century intellectual history, and in that role, it will no doubt become foundational for Ethiopian studies. But it could be argued that Bahru’s work has, as well, a relevance far beyond. Scholars of Africa and of South Asia may not be able to understand colonialism fully without pondering the contradictions that *Pioneers of Change* describes. Sometimes, it is only an absence that illuminates certain aspects of a presence.

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DONALD L. DONHAM

## RURAL PROTEST IN COLONIAL GHANA

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703358669

*British Rule and Rural Protest in Southern Ghana.* By LI ANSHAN. New York: Peter Lang, 2002. Pp. xvi + 207. £35 (ISBN 0-8204-5188-6).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, colonial, resistance, rural.

This book is based on a Ph.D. thesis that was finished in 1993, and ‘explores social protest through a series of case studies’ (p. 1). Unfortunately very little new thought has been brought to bear on the analysis of these case studies beyond what was done for the Ph.D. The latest works cited are from the early 1990s, except for a 1995 journal article by the author. This is a serious weakness since during the intervening time there has been an outpouring of scholarly work on southern Ghana. Even for the pre-1990 period there are some significant gaps in the bibliography. Missing is any mention of David Henige’s work on the importance of ‘feedback’ from written sources in influencing the development of ‘native customs’ in the colonial period, which is central to understanding the plethora of interminable stool disputes that were an intrinsic feature of the colonial era. Likewise there is no familiarity with Robert Stone’s periodization of indirect rule which provides valuable ways of understanding changing responses on the part of a variety of local actors to new government policies. In contrast Anshan Li’s own periodization of colonial policy goes no further than 1900 and is basically irrelevant to his study (p. 6). One of the author’s case studies deals with resistance on the part of the ‘people’ to the colonial government’s Forest Bill of 1911, but obviously he has no familiarity with Anne Phillips’s study which provides crucial insights into the continuing importance of customary law regarding land in the Gold Coast.

In discussing earlier attempts to write colonial African history Li rejects what he describes as the ‘dichotomous’ approach that much of this historiography has taken. For example, he points out, as others have recognized before, that there ‘was no rigid division between urban and rural areas in colonial Ghana’ (p. 5). Rural protest was not simply peasant protest as it often involved urban participation and vice versa. Nevertheless, Li is not able to escape the rigid ‘dichotomizing’ unfortunately so often evident in the Chinese Marxist tradition out of which he comes. He sees colonial society as strictly divided: ‘commoners against chiefs’, ‘lesser chiefs against paramount chiefs’, religious leaders in conflict with ‘secular authority’ and ‘educated Africans’ versus chiefs (pp. 13–14). He has very little understanding of the interior architecture of the predominantly matrilineal people of southern Ghana. It is significant that he only mentions the word matrilineal once and never enters into any discussion of the *abusua*, or the matrilineage, around which Akan societies are structured. Apart from cutting across both tribal and political boundaries, as Adu Boahen has pointed out, the *abusua* is both generationally and socially inclusive. It can contain both the highly literate and the uneducated as well as domestics (people of slave origin) and the free born. Struggles over succession inevitably drew in these people as potential competitors for traditional office and gave the politics of the colonial period a particularly parochial quality. As colonial government officials realized, the participants in these disputes defied easy social characterization with factions liberally sprinkled with members from all strata of Gold Coast society.

Undoubtedly Li would have been forced to deal with these unique aspects of colonial society’s political life if he had looked at who the actual contestants were in the case studies that he describes. There is no indication that he interviewed Ghanaian informants from whom rich detail of this nature would be available. Using such oral information has become the *sine qua non* for historical research in

an area with a well-established literary and biographic tradition. A wide range of informants are available and they add an incomparable dimension to any study of Ghana's colonial past. This is particularly important for this study which does attempt to treat most of the colonial period, by beginning with religious movements in the first decade of the twentieth century and concluding by looking at resistance to the colonial government's attempts to control the spread of the swollen shoot cocoa disease in the 1940s and 1950s. Particularly for the later events a rich array of informants are still alive who could have added significant detail to the material Li presents –material which does not add much to what has already been said.

Peter Lang's *Society and Politics in Africa* series has given scholars from less well-known African studies programmes an opportunity to be published. However, for many of their authors, like Professor Li, English is obviously not a first language. This makes careful copy editing especially important. Unfortunately this has not been the case for this work. It is replete with grammatical errors, often several on a single page, that vary from the misuse of definite and indefinite articles, to wrong tenses and pronouns without antecedents. Worst of all there are many examples of garbled syntax that defy comprehension. This is not the first Peter Lang work that this reviewer has seen with such flaws. Clearly there is something wrong with the company's editorial process that needs to be addressed if the press is to gain academic recognition. The absence of an index for a scholarly work of this nature is also unacceptable.

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ROGER GOCKING

## CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES AND POLITICS IN BRITISH AFRICA AND BEYOND

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703368665

*Christian Missionaries and the State in the Third World*. Edited by HOLGR BERNT HANSEN and MICHAEL TWADDLE. Oxford: James Currey; Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002. Pp. x + 307. £45 (ISBN 0-85255-784-1); £19.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-783-3).

KEY WORDS: Colonial, missions, politics.

Is there not something a little shopworn about the concepts in the title of this collection? The 'Third World' and 'the state' portends weighty discussions drawing on Crawford Young, Theda Skocpol, Immanuel Wallerstein and British Marxists. One need not worry, there are none. The two editors are both East Africanists, and the book, compiled mostly from a conference, is heavily weighted toward the British Empire in Africa, and, taken as such, it is a very useful volume. The marketing is deceptive. The book should be called, 'Christian Missionaries and Politics in British Africa, rounded out with a few non-Africanist essays.'

Fifteen chapters are devoted to Africa, thirteen of them to English-speaking Africa, with several by the northern European colleagues of Professor Hansen. This is the core of the book, and in many ways it is a treat. Daniel Antwi and Paul Jenkins tell an intriguing story about West Indian missionaries in Ghana and the radical heritage of the Basel mission. John Rowe writes about the Ganda *Kabaka* Mutesa, who manipulated oafish missionaries of various faiths and sects. Doug Stuart suggests that missionaries provided the state in South Africa with a racist lexicon. Roger Beck looks at commercially minded missionaries in the Cape.

Torstein Jorgensen demonstrates the effect of the union of religious and political power in the Zulu king Mpande. Deborah Gaitskell examines the gender-specific educational efforts of mission institutions in South Africa. Jonathan Miran sums up Ethiopian Christianity. Niels Kastfelt writes about the relationship between 'tribe' and Christian, vs. 'state' and Muslim identities in Northern Nigeria. Jarle Simensen writes a less satisfying chapter on Akim Abuakwa, Ghana. Holger Hansen's chapter usefully summarizes Lugard's history in Uganda and the state's tolerant recognition of Catholics and Anglicans. John McCracken writes about Malawi and Livingstonia. John Lonsdale's chapter is incisive and entertaining as usual, if also difficult to resolve into a unitary thesis. He compares Kenya and Rhodesia, as a sort of companion piece to Terry Ranger's book on the subject. Harry Langworthy writes about the extraordinary radical missionary Joseph Booth, whose demands for non-racial social justice he places squarely within, if on one end of, the British missionary tradition (in introducing Langworthy's chapter, Twaddle oddly impugns Booth's character as a gentleman). James Campbell condenses some aspects of his excellent book about the African Methodist Episcopal Church in South Africa, *Songs of Zion*, but cannot do it full justice in a single chapter. Michael West looks at Church Independency in 1920s Rhodesia. A nice essay by Andrew Wheeler on Christians and Muslims in Sudan links ethnogenesis and religion.

Mary Turner discusses religion and labor control in Jamaica, arguing that churches offered associative forms that countered the hegemonic fragmentation of laborers. Donald Wood writes about the Rev. John Wray, a missionary on the edge of political expression in Guiana. There are also chapters on Haitian Voodoo, and on Protestants and Catholics in Columbia. It seems a bit brash for a book about 'the Third World' to leave out the early modern era, the Arab world, India, China and the French empire. Perhaps more seriously it substitutes non-Africanist bookends for a real synthesis of Africanist with non-Africanist scholarship. Twaddle writes, 'elites rather than tribal peoples as a whole provided many missionaries with their first converts'. What are 'tribal peoples'? The Ganda? Ethiopians? Are they to be grouped with Fijians? What is a 'non-mainstream Christian' mission? Twaddle's introduction is really a set of 'remarks', a mix of observations and small and common-sensical conclusions. The central essays are the pieces about evangelism and politics in British Africa, many of them nice redactions of large parts of the authors' recent monographs, and that is the book's value for Africanists.

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PAUL S. LANDAU

## MISSIONARIES AND THE STATE IN GERMAN SOUTH WEST AFRICA

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703378661

*Mission Colonialism and Liberation: The Lutheran Church in Namibia, 1840-1966.*

By CARL-J. HELLBERG. Windhoek: New Namibia Books, 1997 (distributed by African Books Collective, Oxford). Pp. xi + 321. No price given, paperback (ISBN 99916-31-59-3).

*Mission, Church and State Relations in South West Africa under German Rule (1884-1915).* By NILS OLE OERMANN. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1999.

Pp. 267. No price given (ISBN 3-515-067578-x).

KEY WORDS: Namibia, colonial, missions.

Following President Nujoma's comments ordering church leaders to seek spies in their missionary past, it is to be hoped that the work under review will go some way to quieting the president's paranoia, and filling the gaps that exist in Namibian historiography. Hellberg's study, dedicated to President Nujoma, stands in contrast to Oermann's more balanced work and will be discussed first.

Using secondary sources and some archival material, Hellberg attempts to present the history of the relationship between the Rhenish and Finnish missionary societies, colonialism and liberation in Namibia between 1840 and 1966. Hellberg's background in the solidarity and church movement is reflected in his belief that there has been a continual 'fight for human rights and freedom from oppression from the very beginning of European colonisation. In this struggle the Christian ideology was an important source of inspiration' (pp. ix-x). It is this belief that underlies the book. Namibia's history is presented in a rather confusing mix of settler and africanist historiography. Hellberg explicitly dismisses settler history, only to reintroduce a conceptual framework of tribes as closed social systems in which 'Each tribe had a distinct political, social and religious pattern of life' (p. 9). Stereotypes abound, a timeless ethnographic present pervades the work and Bushmen 'seem capable of "smelling" their way to water' (p. 10). Except for the last chapter, the book is lacking on developments in Ovamboland, which Hellberg presents as by-passed by events in the wider world – no mention is made of southern traders and hunters, who had been travelling to Ovamboland from at least the 1850s, nor of southern Angolan traders and slavers who had been active since the early eighteenth century. The work is badly edited. The maps show the Waterberg too far west. Names are given incorrectly (thus it should be Hendrik Jacob Wikar not Hans Johan Wiker [p. 23]). Jan Jonker Afrikaner died whilst fighting *against* Hendrik Witbooi, not as his ally (p. 93). The work is essentially a narrative history of central Namibia. It is conspicuously thin on the role of the mission and the mission itself. Written by a partial insider, one would have expected more on developments and relations between the liberation movements and the church. Unfortunately the foundations upon which this work is based are flawed.

Oermann's book, based on an Oxford D.Phil., analyses the general interaction between mission, church and state in German South West Africa (GSWA), and evaluates the political impact of those relations. Using primary evidence, Oermann seeks to gain insight into social and political life in the colony and colonial politics in Berlin. Though Oermann concentrates on the activities of the Rhenish and Finnish missionary societies, he seeks to include all the missions and churches formally active. Dismissing blanket terms, such as 'the mission', Oermann traces the changing political perspectives, attitudes and subsequent impacts of individual missionaries and mission societies. Not for Oermann sweeping claims regarding the support of Rhenish missionaries for colonial aspirations. Instead he traces the attitudes of individual missionaries to the activities of Imperial Germany. For Oermann, the missionaries as individuals, as 'fathers, jurors, German citizens, soldiers and African teachers in one person' (p. 23), matters. The relations of individuals, and not only political decisions made by Berlin, Barmen or Windhoek, determined how mission, church and state relations developed.

Oermann is interesting on the origins and development of the Rhenish Mission Society (RMS) in Wuppertal-Barmen, particularly his emphasis on the differences that existed between individual missionaries. He gives a valuable exposition of the conflict within the RMS between those interested in the expansion of Christianity integrated with German identity and culture and the theologically motivated interest of those seeking to bring the 'light of Christianity' to the unenlightened world. He warns: 'By simplifying the theological tensions between evangelical-revivalist and more liberal missionaries, between seminarians and



theologians, one may wrongly assume that there was only one kind of Christianity and preaching with which Africans were confronted' (p. 44).

Oermann argues that African chiefs actively sought out and used missionaries for their own purposes. Meanwhile, in the troubled conditions that existed in central Namibia from the 1840s onwards, missionaries were anxious for any form of European protection, English or German. In a cutting aside to those who rely on published contemporary material, he notes that there are differences in expressed opinion regarding German colonization in published missionary accounts and the letters written by missionaries to their superiors in Germany. Thus, the letters of missionary Viehe were critical of German colonization, whereas the published accounts, written for the benefit of German funders, were positive.

Oermann provides a detailed and readable introduction to the development of German colonial administration. Particularly innovative is his analysis of the differing religious affiliations of colonial officials and the impact of these commitments on their activities. In keeping with Oermann's emphasis on the importance of the individual, individual conflicts with regard to all manner of issues between missionaries and administrators are discussed. The genocide perpetrated upon the Herero and Nama between 1904 and 1908 occupies a substantial part of the book. Oermann is struck by the manner in which the RMS, whose missionaries were accused of having aided the Herero, stood unified. Oermann emphasizes that the mission was uniquely placed to provide first-hand accounts of what was taking place in GSWA, and that the mission actively used this information to exert pressure on the government and colonial administration. Indeed, the mission actively underplayed the war by not exposing in public the activities of German settlers and soldiers. Oermann considers how it could be 'that missionaries who were deeply moved by the acts of cruelty and injustice did not hesitate to co-operate with the colonial government and the military which were effectively responsible for these cruelties' (p. 107). He argues that a reciprocal relationship developed in which the German government assisted the RMS in improving its image and the missionaries actively assisted in the collection of Herero into camps.

The Herero–German war marks a break in Namibian history and in Oermann's work. The war speeded up the introduction of other missionary societies and churches. The activities of Catholic missionaries, their varying orders and interests, as well as Anglicans, Ethiopianists and the Dutch Reformed Church are all discussed, albeit in far less depth than the RMS, with the exception of the Finnish Mission Society (active in Ovamboland) which Oermann covers in detail. The activities of the German Evangelical Lutheran church was of central importance for the settler administration and society. As an example Oermann takes the building of the *Christuskirche* that dominates the skyline of Windhoek and argues that a Protestant church was regarded as a cultural institution rather than a house of God. As such, priests, sent out to minister to the settler community, hoped that the *Christuskirche* would become the centre of Christianity whilst settlers and press regarded it as an expression of German national pride.

Oermann provides an intense and disturbing insight into German colonial society. We are guided past courts that sentence 14- and 10-year-old children to 40 lashes and six months' imprisonment in chains, German settlers who repeatedly rape a 10-year-old girl and a missionary who ensures that these men go free on the basis of his testimony. The absence of information, except in the case of mission evangelist Franz Hoesemab, regarding the manner in which Africans viewed church and the missionary endeavour is unfortunate and exposes a major deficiency in Namibian history. Missing from the book are definitions as to what Oermann takes to be mission, church and state. In addition, one needs to have some prior understanding of German theology: references to 'Albrecht Ritschl



and the historical critical Tübingen school of Ferdinand Christian Baur' (p. 125) are beyond most readers. Nevertheless, this is a satisfying book to read, which has been written by somebody who kept an open mind, worked hard and truly knew his material.

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JAN-BART GEWALD

## DELAFOSSÉ AND AFRICAN STUDIES

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703388668

*Maurice Delafosse: entre orientalisme et ethnographie: l'itinéraire d'un africaniste (1870–1926)*. Edited by JEAN-LOUP AMSELLE and EMMANUELLE SIBEUD. Preface by Christophe Wondji. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1998. Pp. 320. FF 145 (ISBN 2-7068-1356-3).

KEY WORDS: Colonial administration, anthropology, historiography, linguistics, method, social sciences.

This book presents the majority of the papers given at an international conference organized by Jean-Loup Amselle and Emmanuelle Sibeud at the École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris in November 1996, thus coinciding with and commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the great scholar-administrator's death. Its sixteen essays are arranged in three sections: the first two are primarily concerned with evaluating Maurice Delafosse's ideological positions in the context of his times, while the third examines his contributions to then-budding academic disciplines.

The book does not (and probably was not intended to) present a comprehensive assessment of Delafosse's life and work, but it does illuminate numerous facets, thus very usefully complementing the scattered analyses of the French colonial venture. Indeed, its inclusion of widely divergent points of view is a significant merit, though greater coherence might have been achieved had some chapters explicitly examined a larger selection of Delafosse's writings. The book concludes with a 167-item bibliography of the pioneering author's publications that largely integrates and supersedes earlier lists, including the one provided by Henri Labouret, another scholar-administrator and Delafosse's successor as professor at the Ecole des Langues orientales in Paris, in his memorial tribute (*Académie des sciences coloniales: comptes rendus des séances*, 8 [1926–7], 537–51). The major source for Delafosse's life remains the hagiographical, but detailed and extensively documented, biography by his daughter Louise (*Maurice Delafosse: le Berrichon conquis par l'Afrique* [Paris: Société française d'histoire d'outre-mer, 1976], 428 pp.).

Several chapters explore Delafosse's judgements about African and other non-Western cultures, his understanding of the concept of 'civilization' and views about French colonial policies. Several more discuss his role in the emergence of the politically loaded concept of a specifically Black African Islam (*islam noir*). Jean Schmitz explores his simultaneous interest in 'orientalist' research, privileging the study of manuscripts written in Arabic or in African languages transcribed in Arabic characters, and in what we would now call ethnography, as well as the subsequent disjunction of these two fields (and near disappearance of the former) in later French research on sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, the relationship between these two paradigms was a keynote of discussion at the conference, though not one fully reflected in the published articles. Several writers present contrasting viewpoints about the degree to which Delafosse influenced Marcel Griaule and his

disciples, who dominated African studies in France from the 1930s through the 1950s, and remain an enduring methodological and ideological reference. Jean-Hervé Jézéquel explores Delafosse's role in the emergence of ethnographic writing by Africans – mostly in reviews founded by colonial governments or agencies – in the 1910s. Several papers mention, but do not thoroughly explore, his impact on younger generations of African intellectuals. Clemens Zobel compares Delafosse's outlook and achievements to those of Leo Frobenius, while Emmanuelle Sibeud and Filippo Zerilli study his relationship with Arnold Van Gennep and several articles compare his work to that of Charles Monteil. This writer is inclined to believe that Alice Conklin may well be right when she hypothetically suggests that Delafosse may have been a precursor of multiculturalism.

Several articles consider Delafosse's writings on a particular population or region. These include Robert Launay on the Senufo, particularly those of the Korhogo area; Fabio Viti, on the Ano of the Ivory Coast; and Benoît Hazard, on the Voltaic languages – a language family that Delafosse was the first to identify.

The most successful essays are perhaps those that examine, in some detail, the relationships between Delafosse's scholarly endeavours and particular research methodologies and subject matters. Jacques Frémeaux analyses continuities between Delafosse's objectives and methods (and those of his father-in-law and scholarly collaborator, Octave Houdas) and the ones developed since the 1830s by the bureaux arabes in Algeria. Jean-Louis Triaud explores Delafosse's attempts to provide African peoples with a history stretching back, in some cases, over two thousand years and his related fascination with state structures, and establishes links with the preoccupations of specialists in European history then teaching at French universities, and particularly their striving for chronological and documentary rigour. Marie-Albane de Suremain explores Delafosse's influence – manifest from the 1930s and especially 1950s onwards – on academic geography, a field with which he had lesser affinity. Robert Nicolai compares Delafosse's views on the Songhay language to those held by other writers from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, and shows that Delafosse – arguing from oral traditions and cultural processes, as well as the structure and vocabulary of the language – often anticipated the positions favoured by recent scholars.

In this reviewer's opinion, one dimension of Delafosse's contribution would have merited greater emphasis. In her view, Delafosse not only shaped subsequent thinking on numerous topics, but is an author who can still be read with profit. His carefully annotated editions and translations of West African Arabic chronicles will endure as major sources for the history of the region. The data he presents in his monographs on both Islam and 'traditional' religion have by no means been fully exploited. Although enormous progress has since been accomplished in the study of the Manding languages to which he was so particularly attached, his *Dictionnaire mandingue-français* is still unsurpassed in its presentation of their semantic riches, as are his analyses of the cognates of Manding words in Arabic, Berber and a wide range of sub-Saharan languages. But there may even be something to learn from Delafosse's method. For he has been one of the very few scholars working in West Africa to combine approaches drawn from history, ethnography, linguistics and (albeit to a lesser extent) sociology and archaeology, and to have valued and collected both oral traditions and manuscript sources. Even though his hypotheses must not infrequently be rejected in the light of fuller evidence, and a few now seem fantastical, they are never arbitrary and always closely reasoned.

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TAL TAMARI

## FILM, SOCIAL CONTROL AND POPULAR CULTURE

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*Flickering Shadows: Cinema and Identity in Colonial Zimbabwe.* By J. M. BURNS.  
Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002. Pp. xxv + 278. \$28; £23.50, paperback  
(ISBN 0-89680-224-8).

KEY WORDS: Zimbabwe, colonial, film, identity, popular culture, white settlement.

When cinema arrived in colonial Zimbabwe its effect was immediate and dramatic. On one of the first occasions a film was shown in a mining compound the audience proved so appreciative that those outside thought that a riot was taking place. Mine owners were pleased with cinema too. Movies provided an effective alternative to the violence and drunkenness of compound life. And African entrepreneurs quickly grasped their commercial significance, renting out halls in locations and townships for their own bioscope showings. But soon settlers grew alarmed about the social effects of this new medium. The Scouting Association and white women's clubs demanded censorship, and the police received complaints about films that were perceived to pose a threat to the colonial order. Settlers in Bulawayo were particularly anxious that Africans laughed at a scene in *Zulu Town* in which a black ice skater knocked down a white woman. Shortly after the banning of this film the authorities also restricted to whites only the screening of the first interracial heavy weight boxing championship, won by an African American. Whites were not just fearful of what they perceived to be the African propensity to imitate but also the threat of African male sexuality to settler women. Films were 'ruthlessly censored', shorn of images that might engender African revolt, encourage familiarity between races or, worse still, miscegenation.

But censorship forms only part of Burns's account of cinema and society in colonial Zimbabwe. The bulk of his study is about European attempts to understand the impact of the film on Africans and to exploit it as a tool of social and cultural hegemony. At its core the book is a discussion of the most ambitious state-sponsored film production unit in Africa, the Central African Film Unit (CAFU) and its successor, the Rhodesian Information Services Film Unit (RIS). These stood in a long tradition of colonial film making, owing a good deal of their approach to the Colonial Film Unit (CFU). The head of the CFU, William Sellers, did much to shape the prevailing assumptions about African audiences, that they were incapable of understanding cartoons, complex plots and magnification, that they required a slower pace than Western audiences and accepted images literally. Despite a good deal of research to the contrary from Julian Huxley and the anthropologist P. Morton Williams these assumptions underpinned CAFU and RIS productions. The former made simple films to indoctrinate audiences in the virtues of law and order and to extol the benefits of state intervention in African agriculture. The latter made crude propaganda films which denounced African nationalists and celebrated the strengths of the Rhodesian army, which was shown defeating freedom fighters in mock battles. Not surprisingly, African reaction to such films ranged from indifference to anger and threats of violence. The film *Chiefs Tour*, which chronicled the travels of key Rhodesian chiefs to Europe, was reviled. After one showing a spectator observed, 'Look at them, old people who are deceived by sweets'. Rural Africans clearly did understand what they were being shown.

The subtitle of the book tells us that it is a study of identity. This is true only to the extent that it is about white mentalities. We are shown how the Western attempts to represent the other tell us more about the fantasies of the colonizer than the colonized. We learn how settlers searched tirelessly for 'symbolic and

material boundaries' that distinguished them from their African subjects. And we see their discomfort in becoming the subjects of a 'reverse ethnography'; 'placed on display (through film) for the gaze of the colonised' (p. 16). As such the book sheds new light on the anxieties and moral panics that lay just beneath the surface of triumphal settlerdom. We are told little about black identities because Burns never considers the commercial films Africans chose to watch. The African passion for the B grade cowboy movie and the generic hero, 'Jack', does figure a number of times, but by the 1960s African audiences were watching a far greater range of films including James Bond, Elvis Presley and Tarzan. And these films had a profound effect on style, slang and notions of masculinity. Young men mimicked the attire of cowboys and later the Comrades modelled themselves on action heroes.

Burns's timely study is useful for opening up study of film but there remains much more to do to show how film shaped African urban life and began a love-affair with American culture which in recent times has idolized the likes of J. R. Ewing, Dolly Parton and Hulk Hogan.

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DAVID MAXWELL

## PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL CHANGE IN ZAMBIA

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703408669

*The Lunda-Ndembu: Style, Change, and Social Transformation in South Central Africa.* By JAMES A. PRITCHETT. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001.

Pp. xiv + 377. \$65; £54.50 (ISBN 0-299-17150-7); \$27.95; £23.95, paperback (ISBN 0-299-17154-X).

KEY WORDS: Zambia, colonial, postcolonial, cultural, social.

This book is both an account of the Lunda-Ndembu people of northwestern Zambia and a general reflection on notions of continuity and change in Africa. It draws on the rich scholarship on the peoples of the Central African plateau as well as on James Pritchett's fourteen years experience in the region. *The Lunda-Ndembu* is elegantly constructed around the major themes that structure much of Lunda-Ndembu life. These include: people and the environment, the individual and the group, the old and the young, females and males, the rich and the poor, us and them, as well as this world and the other world. These themes are not presented as a series of clear dichotomies, but rather as complex, fluid processes deeply embedded in historical contexts as well as current processes.

Indeed, Pritchett demonstrates a sophisticated knowledge of the historical material on the Lunda-Ndembu as well as on the region. He discusses the impact of the caravan trade, the introduction of cassava and the coming of missionaries and colonial officials, not as overpowering external forces, but as important elements of a complex social process, involving negotiations between foreign and local ideas and practices. Pritchett describes social change among the Lunda-Ndembu as a delicate process, requiring long arguments about past practices and concerted efforts to convince the population that new practices were and are compatible with long-standing assumptions about Lunda-Ndembu society. This work thus supports the current scholarship on colonial and postcolonial Africa, with its emphasis on negotiations and reconfigurations of foreign ideas and practices rather than on colonialism being seen as an unstoppable juggernaut, destroying local cultures and societies.

The themes of the book reveal much about the core beliefs of the Lunda-Ndembu and their role in social transformation over time. The relationship

between the individual and the group is a leitmotif that threads through the narrative. Pritchett's evidence supports Vansina's claim that the Central African region is characterized by 'the passionate drive to protect individual autonomy while endeavouring to build up widespread linkages' (pp. 119–20). The balance between individual and group loyalties is a key component of Lunda-Ndembu life. The environment is seen as an endless frontier and a place where individual initiative can change societal and individual fortunes. Travel is a core metaphor, deeply embedded in a past characterized by caravan trade, labour migration and river travel. The discourses and experiences of travel reinforce the tendency for individuals and their followers to form new villages/power bases. Yet loyalty to the larger community remains strong as well. The dichotomy between individual rights and group rights shapes other relations as well. Successful young men (particularly in regard to material wealth) can receive the prestige normally awarded to elders, but this does not disturb the general respect for elders. Gender segregation defines most people's lives, yet individual women are achieving new status through education. Individuals are encouraged to seek wealth, but they are judged by their concern for the poor and their generosity to the group. The rich need the poor to obtain social respect and status. Individual political success is applauded, but it can only be achieved by mobilizing group identity in the struggle for power and material resources. Finally, even in the spirit world, individual and group loyalties coexist in interesting ways. Death does not sever one's relationship to the group and the land. Even the entry of foreigners into the spirit world has complicated but not significantly changed Lunda-Ndembu cosmology.

In his concluding discussion of style, change and social transformation, Pritchett argues that the Lunda-Ndembu world is characterized by a 'bricolage of constancy and change' (p. 319). Pritchett does not deny change. Indeed, his attention to historical evidence demonstrates considerable adaptability over time. However, Pritchett argues that a core set of practices continue to dominate Lunda-Ndembu life. He differentiates style or fashion from deeper transgenerational social change. The latter is not simply a matter of replacing one belief system and practice with another. It is a lengthy and contested process that requires time, advocacy and a convincing concordance between the old and new. While arguing for the existence of a core set of cultural practices can be a dangerous business, especially from a historical perspective, Pritchett's thick description of Lunda-Ndembu life convincingly demonstrates the complex, protracted efforts required for social transformation. His work challenges current tendencies to focus on global change and social disruption and provides a model for investigating the complexities and continuities of social change in our increasingly global/local world.

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## THE SHARPEVILLE MASSACRE: LEVELS OF CAUSATION

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703418665

*An Ordinary Atrocity: Sharpeville and its Massacre.* By PHILIP FRANKEL. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001. Pp. viii + 263. \$30; £18.95 (ISBN 0-300-09178-8).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, apartheid, nationalism, police, protest.

In the aftermath of South Africa's 1948 election, as the Afrikaner National Party began enforcing its apartheid policies and the African National Congress launched

the Defiance Campaign in 1952, two diametrically opposed political cultures confronted each other. Inspired by religious mythology, legitimated by the Dutch Reformed Churches and disciplined by the *Broederbond*, Afrikaner nationalism controlled the white state. The African National Congress, a product of four decades of protest politics, was an incomparably weaker movement, its fragile branch network scarcely a decade old. Nevertheless, it was committed to the liberation of the black majority and to equality before the law for all South Africans. There was no room for compromise between these two political cultures, no mechanisms for political dialogue.

It was this reality that the Sharpeville massacre on 21 March 1960 was to expose with unexpected brutality. As the police opened fire on an unarmed crowd protesting the pass laws, at least 69 individuals were killed (70 per cent shot in the back) and – at a minimum – 200 seriously wounded. Thereafter the African National Congress and its allies in the Congress Alliance were banned, as was the Pan Africanist Congress – a splinter group that had organized the Sharpeville protest. Philip Frankel, an authority on apartheid's security forces and Senior Lecturer in Political Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, has returned to this 'Ordinary Atrocity', arguing that Sharpeville was the defining event of South Africa's twentieth century, 'a moment or occurrence after whose appearance on the historic landscape nothing was quite what it had been, and nothing could quite be anticipated by even the most prescient of social commentators' (p. 3). At this point, the fault lines of South African politics were revealed as never before: the liberation movement reacting to what it saw as premeditated and brutal repression, the defenders of apartheid's law and order exercising their right to self-defence in the face of what they perceived to be a bloodthirsty mob. In reassessing these events, Frankel's meticulous, forensic analysis unearths the more banal realities of evil unleashed in a context of racist stereotyping which promoted fear, paranoia and the dehumanizing of 'the other'.

Probing well beyond the less than diligent and now dusty Wessels Commission of Inquiry, Frankel has gathered further evidence, most importantly oral history from more than 100 interviews with surviving protesters and members of the police – elderly individuals still wrestling with their traumas, depressions, angers and regrets forty years later. Part 1, 'Ante: Sharpeville and early apartheid', describes what the Department of Bantu Affairs perversely considered a model township. In reality its African Advisory Board was ineffectual, the overall control of the Vereeniging Town Council paternalistic, and the location superintendent 'at the best of times reluctant to talk to "kaffirs"' (p. 39). Frankel also explores the growing influence of the Pan Africanist Congress, the presence of intimidating gangs and the blight of unemployment.

Part 2, 'The Massacre', offers a more detailed analysis of the Sharpeville Pan Africanist Congress, its haphazard organization, inadequate crowd control and the mood-swings of protesters gathered around the police station – approximately twenty-five thousand, many of them children. It is also a painstaking investigation of the 300 heavily armed police, their siege mentality, incompetence, inadequate training and rising internal tensions: between commanding officers, between black and white members, raw reservists and veterans of the force. Into this combustible mix came happenstance: police/crowd scuffles along the perimeter fence, several drunken individuals and two random pistol shots. Although there was no warning to disperse and no command to fire, the result was a devastating fusillade of 'well over 1000 rounds ... discharged first into the face of the crowd, and then into their fleeing rear' (p. 116). This tragedy, Frankel argues, was not a case of premeditated state slaughter. Rather, the events 'have a far wider socio-political significance which touches on more universal and infinitely complex issues such as the general



mechanics of the authoritarian state, crowd behaviour, the social psychology of oppression and violence, the impulses and forces motivating political behaviour, and, in the last instance, the mutation of men into killers' (p. 170). There had been no capacity to dialogue, no ability to negotiate.

Part 3, 'Towards democracy; Sharpeville 1960–1999 aftermath', moves briskly through the following decades into South Africa's political transition, paying particular attention to the traumatized, drab community of Sharpeville, its prolonged collective depression and eventually renewed protests in the 1980s. It is, Frankel suggests, a community still languishing, waiting for the full recognition it deserves as an historic site – although in 1996 Nelson Mandela did sign South Africa's new non-racial constitution in Sharpeville's stadium.

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PETER WALSH

## NOT-ALWAYS-SO-IMPORTANT SECRET TALKS AND THE FALL OF APARTHEID

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703428661

*The Fall of Apartheid: The Inside Story from Smuts to Mbeki.* By ROBERT HARVEY.

London: Palgrave, 2001. Pp. xv + 257. £45; \$65 (ISBN 0-333-80247-0).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, apartheid, nationalism.

From 1985, despite the South African government's public displeasure, various groups of whites from within the country engaged in dialogue with the African National Congress (ANC) in exile, and such dialogue clearly played some part in laying the ground for the later negotiated settlement. What was not public knowledge in the late 1980s was that people connected to the government itself were also beginning to engage in dialogue with key ANC figures. The day after his release Nelson Mandela revealed that he had held discussions with government officials for years, and he described these talks in some detail in his *Long Walk to Freedom* (1994). Secret meetings held in England between a group of Afrikaners, reporting to the South African National Intelligence Service, and leading exile members of the ANC, were briefly discussed in Allister Sparks's *Tomorrow is Another Country* (1994). Harvey's book contains the first detailed account of these talks and he claims that they were far more important than Sparks realized.

His book is far from a general account of 'the fall of apartheid', and his subtitle is as misleading as the title. Nor is this a scholarly contribution to recent South African history. Its author, a journalist and politician, does not burden his book with any footnotes, and much of it is written in racy, semi-popular style. Harvey tells us that Michael Young, public affairs director of Consolidated Gold Fields and initiator of the secret meetings in England, after stumbling across 'the Afrikaner soul ... like some latter-day Bartolomeu Dias', was 'one of the very first to venture into the intellectual heart of Afrikanerdom, Stellenbosch University' (pp. 24, 26)! Much of the first half of the book is a potted and frequently unreliable history of South Africa from the end of the South African war to the mid-1980s. The focus is on the history of Afrikaners, with Smuts cast as 'the architect of apartheid' (pp. 36–8), and policy examined anecdotally, with particular emphasis on the role of the Broederbond and a few pages devoted to an incident in the history of the Diocesan College, Cape Town (pp. 80–2).

Harvey's one significant new unpublished source is a record of the secret talks in England. There were eight meetings, the first in October 1987, the last in



mid-1990. Though called the Mells Park talks, the first two meetings were at other venues. The contribution the book makes is to reveal in more detail than was previously known what was discussed at these talks. Harvey dismisses the significance of other 'one-off' meetings, though he does not even mention the key occasion in September 1985 when leading representatives of South African big business held discussions with Oliver Tambo and other ANC officials in Zambia. The well-known meeting held in Dakar, Senegal in 1987 is mentioned only in passing (p. 123). Much of the context in which the Mells Park talks took place is therefore lost, and Harvey clearly misunderstands some of what went on. He thinks that all three of the initial ANC participants were blacks, when one was of Indian origin and two were whites (pp. 127, 135, 138). More importantly, these talks hardly 'initiated the dialogue between the ANC and the Afrikaner community' (p. xii), and Harvey's speculation that the talks, which he insists on calling 'negotiations', were an essential conduit for messages from Mandela to be passed to Mbeki (pp. 228–9) is not convincing. So this is a book to be used with considerable caution. Though it contains material not available anywhere else on the 24 days of talks in England, it provides no firm evidence to alter what is otherwise known of the way in which South Africa moved towards its negotiated settlement.

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CHRISTOPHER SAUNDERS

## DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN ZIMBABWE HISTORY

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*The Historical Dimensions of Democracy and Human Rights in Zimbabwe. Volume 1: Pre-Colonial and Colonial Legacies.* Edited by NGWABI BHEBE and TERENCE RANGER. Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2001 (distributed by African Books Collective, Oxford). Pp. xvii + 169. £14.95; \$24.95, paperback (ISBN 0908307942).

KEY WORDS: Zimbabwe, democracy, precolonial, colonial.

Since the late 1980s and early 1990s when Africa experienced the second 'wind of change', leading to the democratization process, the demand for democracy has gone hand in hand with the demand for restoration and respect for human rights. It was almost taken for granted that once democracy had been attained, human rights would naturally follow. However, this was not to be. It was soon realized that in some cases the very process of democratization not only highlighted human rights abuses, but also provided fertile ground for their commission.

As the editors of this book observe, democracy and human rights are the most hotly debated issues in Zimbabwe and internationally. In this respect the conference held in Zimbabwe in September 1996 could not have been at a more opportune time. More significantly perhaps, the book appeared at a time when Zimbabwe was internationally singled out for lack of democracy and for human rights violations, committed with impunity under the leadership of Robert Mugabe.

Cast against this background, the book is definitely more than welcome. Never before has a book on the subject of democracy and human rights been written with a clear focus on the historical dimensions of human rights. The discourse on democracy and human rights in Zimbabwe reflects the local dynamics. Nevertheless, part of the growing wind of change that has been affecting southern Africa

generally, referred to variously as the 'second liberation', the 'second independence' and also as the 'New Democratic Revolution', partly reflects the international dynamics.

The chapters are appealingly arranged, preceded by a very elaborate introduction which sets the tone for what follows. Chapter 1, by Kings Phiri, focuses on the politically centralized societies of central Africa. Phiri emphasizes the differences among them, contrary to the single-despot model which tended to be favoured by Eurocentric scholars. He strongly rejects the idea of justifying non-accountable styles of governance and violation of human rights by African tradition. For Phiri, both democracy and observance of human rights were not some strange animal brought by colonial officials.

The second chapter, by Innocent Pikirayi, an archaeologist, illuminates the extent to which 'historical archaeology' can be used to understand the extent to which democracy and human rights were practised in precolonial times. Combining elements of historical and cognitive archaeology, he argues that there existed a political tradition that represented continuity and change. He argues that the collapse of the Mutapas was a reflection of their failure of accountability and loss of legitimacy.

Ranger, in the third chapter, points out that African politics were transformed beyond recognition during European rule. He notes that for much of the colonial period, precolonial societies were projected as undemocratic. Missionaries and colonial officials worked closely to propagate this idea. This is the theme clearly articulated by Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni in the fourth chapter. Michael O. West, in chapter 5, focuses on black elite responses to imperial ideologies of democracy and attempts to restore the place of proto-nationalism in the historiography of Zimbabwe.

In chapter 6 Welshman Ncube explores the limits of the colonial courts as guarantors of human rights and democracy. He points out that the citizens could not always rely on the courts because evidence shows that there were times that the legal fraternity participated in the violation of human rights. He also demonstrates continuity of institutions and practices in Zimbabwe that manifest legal failures to guarantee human rights.

In chapter 7 Kenneth Vickery demonstrates interactions between black and white trade unionism. He further shows that this interaction was short-lived as race became more pronounced than class. The question of rights and democracy tended to cloud the issue of class interests between the leaders of black and white unions. It was in this respect, as Anthony King shows in the final chapter, that the call for a 'Build a Nation' campaign failed, human rights and franchise laws remaining very unfavourable towards Africans.

This is an important book at a time when civil society is heavily engaged in championing the cause for human rights in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in the region. The book is certainly a challenge to those who see human rights violations as a recent phenomenon. This book has put democracy and human rights squarely into their historical perspective. It is a must for academics (across disciplines) and anyone interested in these issues, not just in Zimbabwe but in the region as a whole.

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B. J. PHIRI