

## REVIEWS

### STIMULATING BUT INSULAR

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*Sources and Methods in African History: Spoken, Written, Unearthed*. Edited by TOYIN FALOLA and CHRISTIAN JENNINGS. Rochester NY: University of Rochester Press, 2003. Pp. xxi + 409. £50; \$75 (ISBN 1-58046-134-4).

KEY WORDS: Historiography, method, sources.

This volume is a selection of revised papers from the *Pathways to Africa's Past* conference held at the University of Texas at Austin in 2001. It seeks, in its own words, to be 'both a snapshot of current academic practice and an attempt to sort through some of the problems scholars face within [the] unfolding web of sources and methods' in the writing of African history. The 23 chapters are divided into five parts, each part with its own introduction and three or four substantive contributions: archaeological sources, Africa and the Atlantic World, documentary sources, oral tradition and 'innovative sources and methods'.

Africanists have long been more aware than many of their fellow historians of issues surrounding the kinds of sources they use in reconstructing the past. Before a self-conscious postmodernism became fashionable, their desire to challenge the stereotype of Africa as having few usable historical records outside the colonial archive led to sophisticated scholarship on some of the distinctive ways of approaching African history, notably in the field of oral tradition and the historical use of anthropology and archaeology. This book provides a stimulating continuation of that trend. Some of the dominant issues of earlier decades have been eclipsed, notably linguistic evidence. Others have taken new directions, such as the use of oral testimonies and traditions and ways of utilizing colonial-era records to illuminate features of Africa's social and cultural history. Some chapters cross the boundaries of different methodologies and sources in intriguing ways, such as Laura Mitchell's combination of rock art and cadastral records or Constanze Weise's application of performance analysis to illuminate oral tradition. There are also new paths. The final section on 'innovative sources and methods' is (inevitably) eclectic but stimulating and covers social surveys, electricity usage, population records and music and dance.

Each reader will find particular chapters that provoke new ideas on how to approach his or her own work, as well as case studies that are of substantive interest in their own right. So rather than commenting on each of the divergent chapters, some overall observations may be more appropriate.

The editorial hand in this volume is light. Each section contains its own introduction which is usually stimulating but too brief to reflect on the broader implications for African history of the issues raised. The main contributions vary enormously in length and approach, some being substantive articles in their own right which appear to be rather thinly disguised thesis chapters or articles that only marginally address the methodological focus of the book, while others are concise and masterly pieces which deserve greater exposure. Almost all writers are missionaries for their own approach and rarely offer a balanced critique (Dennis Cordell's final chapter on sample surveys being a notable exception). The section on Africa and the Atlantic world is a welcome recognition of the significance of

diaspora scholarship to African history, but pays little attention to the distinctive methodological contributions that such work can make.

The organization by sections gives a useful means of categorizing sources, although visual and material sources are neglected. However, other issues of historical methodology get little direct attention. Classic themes such as gender may now be expected to pervade all writing rather than requiring specific focus. Perhaps we should be thankful that the editors have avoided some of the theoretical entanglements of the 1990s. But key questions, such as who makes the history of Africa and why, are largely dodged. Only one chapter, James Giblin's study of stories of Maji Maji in Njombe, mentions public perceptions and commemorations of history in Africa itself and offers the tantalizingly suggestive observation that 'we academic historians engage as much in the alienation of the past as in its conservation' (p. 296).

The book's origin in a Texas conference doubtless explains why all but three of its 22 contributors are based in the US (the others are in Western Europe), but a collection that aims to be a 'snapshot of current academic practice' omits at its peril any inclusion of Africanists in Africa (not to mention in Asia, the Islamic world or Latin America). Indeed one of the less encouraging features of this collection is its insularity. North Africa is almost completely absent; Arabic scholarship is ignored. Writers about one part of the continent seem unaware of key work on other regions (a West Africanist, for example, claims innovation in the study of urban youth culture and analysis of music and dance, while ignoring the well-established studies of these issues in southern Africa). Almost no contributor makes any comparative reference, either in the text or in the footnotes, to work in, or about, other parts of the world. Africanists have deliberately sought to free themselves from over-dependence on histories of the West (not always very successfully) and to cultivate their own patch. But they also need to become more aware of significant developments in Asian, Latin American and Oceanic scholarship. African history needs to break out of its relative isolation.

This collection is thus a useful indicator of some issues in the practice of African history in the United States. As such it certainly deserves a place on the student reading list. But its gaps are as revealing as its riches about the current condition of African academic history.

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## REFERENCE WORKS ON THE ANCIENT NORTHEAST

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*Historical Dictionary of Ancient Egyptian Warfare.* By ROBERT G. MORKOT.  
Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004. Pp. ix + 315. £46 (ISBN 0-8108-4862-7).

*Historical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval Nubia.* By RICHARD A. LOBBAN, JR.  
Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004. Pp. ix + 511. £84 (ISBN 0-8108-4784-1).

KEY WORDS: Dictionaries, Egyptology, war.

There is often resistance to scholars espousing paradigms different from those traditionally applied to a given subject. Nowhere is this more evident than in the study of early Near East and African complex societies. Cross-disciplinary investigations, however, serve to enrich our understanding of these cultures. These two dictionaries offer an example of the cross-disciplinary approach. Morkot, a

historian, views Egypt from without, emphasizing its relations with contemporary cultures of the region. Not an Egyptologist, he is a regionalist interested in ancient Egypt's influence on neighboring territories. Lobban, an Africanist, focuses on Nubian culture history. As an anthropologist his emphasis is culture and its different manifestations rather than historical moments. Both authors combine cultural and regional history to produce a dictionary in keeping with their own discipline's theoretical framework.

Both volumes follow a template similar to other publications in the series. They are composed of three parts: an introductory section that includes a chronology and narrative history of the subject (Egyptian conflict and Nubian general history, respectively) followed by a series of maps and illustrations; the dictionary, which makes up most of the text; and a bibliography of sources and further readings.

Yet the two dictionaries differ substantially in coverage of their respective subject. Given the more limited subject matter of *Ancient Egyptian Warfare*, one might expect this work to be the more focused, but the opposite is true. Certainly Morkot's book leans heavily toward Egypt's later history (reflecting the author's specialty): for example, the detailed entries on the individual rulers of the Ptolemaic dynasty (twelve Ptolemys plus three Kleopatras!) or the obscure Psamtiks of the 26th Dynasty. Unfortunately, equal attention is not given to earlier periods. There survive, for example, a number of votive palettes and other objects from the formative period depicting conflict, as well as actual weapons. The mace changed in form from disc to pear shape during this period, yet there is no mention of this or of other archaeologically attested military advances. In fact, the Predynastic through Middle Kingdom is only lightly touched upon even though there is evidence, albeit oblique, of considerable military action.

Morkot seems to have had difficulty in deciding what to include in the dictionary as well as which entries deserve cross-listing. Under the heading 'literature', a number of ancient literary sources are mentioned, particularly those of the New Kingdom and later periods. Early military-related texts such as the Sheikh Suleiman inscription, however, are not mentioned by name in this entry. Although it appears under the entry of the First Dynasty ruler Djer, it is not mentioned under 'literature' nor is it cross-listed as a separate entry even though the inscription deals with supposed royal military activities. The inclusion of terms such as 'platoon' also seems curious in that they do not refer to Egyptian military organization. Fortunately, the entries that are included are accurate, the usual errors made by non-specialists, few.

*Ancient Egyptian Warfare* also suffers from a lack of interpretation. Some insight from the perspective of the author would have been welcomed, particularly given the long debate over the role of 'conflict' in the unification of Egypt. Early stylized representations also lend themselves to further insights into militarism and weaponry. The battlefield palette, for example, with its depiction of slain combatants, is described, but nothing is mentioned regarding what it might mean or how it should be interpreted. Such conservatism exists throughout the text: the author presents hard facts, but lack of interpretation, speculation and professional opinion reduces the book's value for scholars.

*Ancient Egyptian Warfare* has its strengths. The introduction successfully draws the reader's attention. But perhaps its greatest contribution is its final section, the selected bibliography, which deserves special recognition for its inclusiveness and organization. A synthesis article on warfare could easily be constructed using this section as a database.

The *Historical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval Nubia* does not fall prey to the same weaknesses as *Ancient Egyptian Warfare*. Perhaps because it is a general

dictionary, the entries are more predictable and presented more evenly with respect to content. One must also remember that in a sense it is a later edition – much of the subject matter was previously published in earlier editions – so that many of the kinks associated with any new work have had a chance to be ironed out. Perhaps because of this, one of the dictionary's strengths is the author's insight, present throughout. Entries exhibit a fair amount of interpretation, many with qualifiers such as 'was presumed to be semi-sedentary' or 'may or may not have been the true lineal descendant of', which gives a broader indication of the state of Nubian studies. By such phrasing the reader is made aware of debated issues and in many cases on which side the author stands. The Nubian dictionary does include one seemingly contradictory presentation. Given the long introduction on Eurocentric approaches to Africa in general and Nubia in particular, it was surprising to find a section on 'race'. Given that culture, not the race of its practitioners, is the subject of the dictionary, a discussion of biological phenotype seems contradictory to the aims of Afrocentric scholarship. Why continue to include such a stereotypically western division? The author's position could have been better served by not bowing to this perceived need.

In summary, both dictionaries serve their intended purpose: *Ancient Egyptian Warfare* will be most useful to the student, although the excellent further readings section will appeal to the seasoned scholar as well. *Ancient and Medieval Nubia* will serve both students and scholars, particularly those who are not Nubian specialists.

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## CHANGING PERSPECTIVES IN SUDANESE ARCHAEOLOGY: A NEW SYNTHESIS

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*The Nubian Past: An Archaeology of the Sudan.* By DAVID N. EDWARDS. London: Routledge, 2004. Pp. xii + 348. £65 (ISBN 0-415-36987-8); £25, paperback (ISBN 0-415-36988-6).

KEY WORDS: Sudan, archaeology.

In this book David Edwards, a distinguished specialist in Sudanese archaeology, provides the readers with a very useful and exhaustive outline of the history of the Sudan during the Holocene (from c. 10,000 BC to the present), mainly on the basis of the archaeological evidence which has been brought to light in the last thirty years. The book is divided into nine chapters about the following topics: Nubia, the Sudan and Sudanic Africa; hunters, fishers and gatherers (c. 10,000–5000 BC); the Neolithic (c. 5000–3000 BC); Kerma and Bronze Age Kush; the Kushite Revival (XXV Dynasty and kingdom of Napata); Meroitic Kush (c. 300 BC–AD 350); Post-Meroitic transitions (c. AD 350–550); medieval Nubia (c. AD 500–1500); post-medieval Sudan and Islam (c. AD 1500–1900). The book by David Edwards is the third comprehensive synthesis of the archaeology and history of the Sudan in over forty years, and a comparison with the former ones is particularly interesting as it demonstrates how much the knowledge and perception of the ancient Sudan increased and changed since the 1960s thanks to the relevant contribution of archaeology.

In the first synthesis, *A History of the Sudan to 1821* by A. J. Arkell (London 1955, 2nd edn., 1961), an Egyptological approach was dominant, and the ancient history of Sudan was written mainly in the light of the Egyptian sources with a major emphasis on Nubia, i.e. the Nile Valley between the First and the Sixth Cataract. Actually, until the early 1960s only the Nile Valley had been more systematically investigated, particularly Lower Nubia between the First and the Third Cataract, the Dongola Reach between the Third and Fourth Cataract and the Shendi region near the Sixth Cataract. Moreover, most of the first archaeologists working in the Sudan were trained as Egyptologists, and thus more inclined to explain the cultural developments in the country in terms of Egyptian economic, political and cultural expansion and influence, rather than local achievements.

The Great Nubian Campaign in the 1960s was a turning-point in the archaeological investigation of the Nile Valley, as this campaign provided a quite complete archaeological record from prehistoric to Islamic times in Lower Nubia and pointed to a major role of the local people in the cultural development to the south of Egypt. The second synthesis, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa* by W. Y. Adams (London 1977), largely based on the preliminary results of the Great Nubian Campaign, thus presented Nubia as the core region in the cultural history of the Sudan. In this book the history of the Sudan was practically identified with the history of Nubia, and Egypt was still considered a crucial actor in this history, mainly because of the occurrence of impressive monuments along the valley, as far as the Fourth Cataract.

In the last thirty years, as a consequence of the Nubian campaign, archaeological investigation increased along the Nile Valley to the south of the Third Cataract and in the regions to the west as far as the Libyan Desert and Darfur, to the east as far as Kassala and to the south as far as Equatoria. The results of this investigation are now deeply changing the perception of the history of the Sudan. These results are making more and more evident that the social, economic and cultural development of the country was an indigenous process, the Egyptian influence was just a component of this process and other people outside Nubia contributed since prehistoric times to forge present Sudan. This new perception of the Sudanese past is very well outlined in Edwards's book, although the title combining 'Nubian past' and 'archaeology of the Sudan' suggests that the old habit of identifying the Sudan with Nubia has not yet been completely abandoned.

This book, however, has other merits deserving attention. First, as much as possible Edwards avoids speculation, and correctly states that there are relevant gaps in our knowledge of ancient Sudan and many of them will never be filled. At the same time, he demonstrates that archaeology can provide a different (and more convincing) picture of the past than most historical narratives – see for example, the problem of Aksum and the end of Meroe – and can thus contribute in a crucial way to a proper reconstruction of ancient societies and their transformations through time also for the historical periods. Finally, the author sets ancient Sudan in a proper African context, making evident that this was not a peripheral suburb of Egypt; on the contrary the Sudan was a very dynamic country which greatly contributed to the development of the whole continent.

In conclusion, this book is a very good synthesis of the present state of art in Sudanese archaeology, and can be read with much profit by specialists in Sudanese and African archaeology and history as well as educated people curious about the past of a great country.

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## ARCHAEOLOGY FROM AFRICA

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*Climate Change, Trade and Modes of Production in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Edited by FELIX CHAMI, GILBERT PWITI and CHANTAL RADIMILAHY. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press, 2003. Pp. xiii + 197. £17.95; \$35.95 (ISBN 997-660-392-4).

KEY WORDS: Archaeology, climate, trade, economic.

This is the third volume produced by the editorial team of Chami, Pwiti and Radimilahy in as many years. Like its predecessors it brings together contributions from a wide range of African archaeologists, all of them actively engaged in field-work and/or innovative laboratory-based analyses of archaeological finds. The ten papers published here – eight in English and two in French – are drawn from Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Tanzania and Nigeria. As well as attesting to the dynamism of current research by African archaeologists, they also reflect their authors' engagement with broader questions of theoretical and methodological concern in African archaeology. These questions include climatic and environmental change, international trade networks and gender, to which could be added the development of more refined chronological tools and the tracing of long-term trajectories in regional settlement histories.

Though inevitably a personal selection, several papers stand out. Manyanga, for example, ably demonstrates the importance of transcending colonial frontiers when reporting field survey results from the Zimbabwean side of the Shashe–Limpopo Rivers. His work documents the continuity and density of farming settlement in this area over the past 2,000 years and makes plain how important it is to connect his data with those already available from South Africa and Botswana to explain the history of the K2/Mapungubwe polity. Interestingly, he argues that cultivation of river floodplains must have been essential for the support of the large population living here, drawing attention to recent agricultural practices in the area as an aid for modelling those that may have been used in the past. Mapungubwe's successor as a major capital, Great Zimbabwe, is the focus of Matenga's paper, which examines the potential of wild plant resources in the economy and diet of its inhabitants. A third Zimbabwean-focused paper is that of Swan, who convincingly establishes the importance of devising methods capable of examining the environmental impacts of precolonial metallurgical industries. Her paper raises several important questions for future research and draws on historical and ethnographic data to illustrate the substantial scale on which trees may have been cut down for fuel. It goes almost without saying that, at a time when Africa, like the rest of the world, is beginning to confront rapid, humanly-caused environmental and climatic change, a sound understanding of the dynamics and history of past ecological communities is essential for their future management and conservation. Such an understanding will, at least partially, come from precisely the kind of archaeological and palaeoenvironmental work that Swan commends. In this respect, Chami's paper is attractive in trying to relate changes in archaeological settlement patterns on the Tanzanian coast to the better-known palaeoenvironmental history of southern Africa and interior East Africa. However, such proxy measures of climatic change are, at best, only suggestive and cannot be a substitute for the evidence afforded by biological, geomorphological and stable isotope indicators. His paper thus underlines the importance of building such evidence for the East African coast, not least in order to test how far the settlement shifts that he identifies reflect climatic change, rather than other factors.

Of the other contributions, Kinahan provides a brief report of hunter-gatherer activities in the clearly marginal environment of the southern Namib dune sea, Kwekason and Chami offer a short account of recent fieldwork southwest of Lake Nyanza, Tanzania, and Folorunso attempts to develop ethnoarchaeological observations of Tiv settlements in Nigeria that might help guide the excavation of older sites, though without making clear how the insights generated could be extended beyond their specific cultural and historical context. The remaining papers focus on trade, and particularly on African participation in trans-Indian Ocean commercial networks. Pikirayi provides a helpful and detailed overview of fieldwork by himself and others on Portuguese trading connections with the Mutapa state in northeastern Zimbabwe, while Rasoarifera employs changes in bead typology to develop a chronology for sites in Madagascar. He also emphasizes the importance of studying glass beads for the insights they can offer on past exchange networks. This is also a concern for Léon, who argues that most ceramics in the Merina highlands were produced and exchanged on a very local scale, though with potentially important chronological patterns in the spatial scale and degree of decoration employed. It would be interesting to see how such patterning might articulate with other social and economic changes, including the formation of the Merina state.

African archaeology tends to bemoan the problems in funding that make access to foreign literature – both as reader and publisher – difficult for many African-based scholars. Chami and his coeditors are making an important contribution in helping to overcome these problems and are to be congratulated for collating such a wide range of papers and for publishing them here with a rare minimum of typographic errors. Hopefully, their next book will continue this tradition.

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PETER MITCHELL

## SAHARAN ARCHAEOLOGY

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*Vallée de l'Azawagh (Sahara du Niger)*. By EDMOND BERNUS, PATRICE CRESSIER, ALAIN DURAND, FRANÇOIS PARIS and JEAN-FRANÇOIS SALIEGE. *Études Nigériennes*, No. 57. Editions Sépia, 1999. Pp. 422. €24.39, paperback (ISBN 2-907888-95-1).

KEY WORDS: Niger, archaeology.

Interesting book. Bound within one cover are two separate studies, each quite different in scope and objective, each in its own way solid and, yet, imperfect. Both might have been groundbreaking, in fact, had the two studies been more synergetic. Both represent an advance on the all-too usual 'hunt-and-peck' method of Saharan archaeological survey and excavation.

The area covered was much of the central drainage of the Azawagh palaeo-channel network in eastern Niger. This comprises 420,000 km<sup>2</sup> of relic channels, dried lakes, dune fields and hills and escarpments, nestled between the Air and Adrar des Ifoghas highlands. The pair of studies represents the reports on several campaigns of surface survey and selective excavation, undertaken between 1984 and 1990. The team (essentially the same members, but for the much-lamented absence of 'Suzy' Bernus) followed much of the strategy of the highly successful *Programme Archéologique d'Urgence* (1977–81) – a model of salvage survey conducted to the east in Niger, around Azelik. As with the Azelik project, we are



provided with a fine-scale, admirable geological and geomorphological background. Reflecting advances since the *Programme Archéologique d'Urgence*, the palaeoclimatology synthesis adds materially to our archive of regional sequences and to our growing appreciation of spatial patchiness of climate change within West Africa.

As well as hosting a number of sites of regional importance (such as Tamaya Mellet and Mentès), the region is of larger importance for clarifying long-term prehistoric processes. This is a landscape of multiple micro-environments – a mosaic of niches that might have encouraged seasonal rounds of exploitations or local experiments in food production by some Late Stone Age peoples. Indeed, the authors call this a 'région particulièrement privilégiée' for understanding grain domestication. Later, the Azawagh played a critical role in the development of southern Berber history and identity.

An important region, certainly, and the unsystematic survey methods ('ramassages sélectifs') employed for the first study (*Livre 1: Peuplements et environnements holocènes du bassin oriental de l'Azawagh*) perhaps do not do it full justice. The total or probabilistic surveys now regularly a feature of other sectors of Africa were not the purpose of the project members, to be sure. Yet it is precisely the total landscape understanding of the total assemblage of sites over the totality of occupation of this region that would have allowed the first and second parts of this book better to be integrated. Having registered that complaint, the first part does provide one of the best 'experiments' this reviewer has yet read in the applicability to these poor-preservation, extremes-of-climate situations of stable light isotopes. We have here a model use of carbon isotopic residuals, those of  $^{14}\text{C}$  and of  $^{13}\text{C}$ , absorbed differentially by plants (and consuming animals – including humans) as proxy measures of changing environmental conditions. Linked with a lucid and thorough discussion of the potential for trace-amount radiocarbon dating of various materials found at these sites, we have a not overly technical, well-constructed primer on the use of these stable light isotopes of great utility to any archaeologist conducting research in the Sahara.

Highly pertinent for anyone wishing to understand the often-virulent arguments amongst archaeologists about the reliability of dates from certain Saharan sites is the discussion of radiometric dates taken from surface materials at highly deflated sites (such as those near In Tekebrin, p. 119). How much lost ink, spilt on endless discussions of dates on loose wood charcoal in unconsolidated surface situations, might have been saved with exactly the fine understanding of depositional circumstances argued for here by Durand, Paris and Saliège.

The second study (*Livre 2: In Teduq du Moyen Âge à l'époque actuelle*) will be of more immediate interest to historians: a thorough study of In Teduq, a multi-component Sufi pilgrimage site. The area was occupied by the mid-first millennium AD; however, the fifteenth or early sixteenth century founding of mosques and places of religious instruction (as well as the diminishing number of water points) transforms this locality into a highly charged element within the larger sacred landscape. This is a really nicely integrated physical and human geography, and stone-and-bone archaeology, as well as a theologically informed study of landscape. The research methodology might usefully be repeated at scores, perhaps hundreds or thousands, of southern Berber sites on the southern side of the desert.

Unfortunately, in order fully to know the *evolution* of such a Sufi-informed landscape, one alone does not suffice. A major step in the right direction would have been to conduct the regional survey on the first part of *Vallée de l'Azawagh* in a way that would allow us to assess the uniqueness, the complementarity, the



network-position of In Teduq within the larger central Azawagh valley. Without that systematic survey and regional analysis, we are left frustrated, with a fine but orphaned study of one important site – the importance of which cannot be fully assessed (but can only be hinted at by the written sources). This, then, is the ultimate utility, for archaeologists and historians alike, of concepts such as Landscape (all physical, biological and cultural phenomena interacting within a region) and of Historical Ecology (an appreciation of how humans, individually and as communities, acted according to their culturally conditioned perceptions of the bio-physical world and of causation in that world) for giving an overall methodological and interpretive structure to areally-extensive research projects.

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### WHY 'ISLANDS' OF INTENSITY AMID 'SEAS' OF EXTENSIVE FARMING ?

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*Islands of Intensive Agriculture in Eastern Africa*. Edited by MATS WIDGREN and JOHN E. G. SUTTON. The British Institute in Eastern Africa and Stockholm University. Oxford: James Currey; Athens OH: Ohio University Press; Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota; Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2004. Pp. xii + 160. £14.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-428-1).

KEY WORDS: Eastern Africa, agriculture, archaeology, precolonial, colonial, postcolonial.

For observers of the African landscape, 'islands' of intensive farming in Eastern Africa have long held a special fascination. Most of these intensively cultivated farming systems (though not all) are located in highland areas and incorporate such practices as irrigation, stone terracing and manuring. These systems are known as 'islands' not only because of their geographical features but also because they are normally surrounded by more extensive production systems, especially pastoralist ones, with which they appear to be in sharp contrast.

The present volume seeks to understand the historical geography of these intensive agricultural islands in new and comparative ways. The contributing scholars are drawn from the fields of geography, anthropology and history. Most are from Swedish and British institutions, the Swedish contributors having been sponsored as a fieldwork 'team' in the late 1990s. The contributors are at different stages in their professional careers and in their fieldwork, which has resulted in considerable unevenness between the essays in quality, length and level of detail. There is more emphasis placed on some areas (Iraqw in northern Tanzania, for example) than others, while some (Taita) are not included at all. The resulting experience for the reader is a kind of patchwork in which considerable insight is gained from some chapters while the evidence from others remains tantalizingly thin. In the end, however, the volume succeeds because of the strength of the fieldwork of the contributors and the way their fieldwork informs their analysis. The introduction to the volume by co-editor Mats Widgren provides an excellent overview of the issues; a final chapter by William Adams, while too brief, manages to pull the main points together.

In his introductory chapter Widgren outlines the diverse explanations that have been offered for agricultural 'islands' in Eastern Africa. Intensive farming systems have been seen variously as resulting from population density (following Esther Boserup); geographical and environmental features; ethnically distinctive cultural practices; political centralization; or some combination of the above. The 'siege' theory of intensification depicted intensive farming as a response to violence and unrest that led groups to concentrate settlement and agrarian production in highland refuges or other protected areas. The concepts of 'island' and 'siege' have implied isolation and conflict, rather than interaction with the communities that live in the surrounding areas.

Some of the chapters take on these ideas about agricultural islands directly. William Östberg, for example, shows in his study of irrigation furrows in Marakwet, Kenya, that a decentralized rather than a hierarchical political structure governed the construction and utilization of irrigation channels. The families living in the intensively cultivated areas had long-term marriage and exchange relations with groups living in other areas, particularly pastoralists with whom 'cattle friendships' were established.

In a less fully developed chapter, Elizabeth Watson compares the Marakwet case (the focus of her previous field research) with that of Konso in the Ethiopian highlands. By comparing the two cases she explores different models of intensification; one (Marakwet) without strong social stratification and the other (Konso) having a wealthy and powerful group that can mobilize labor and land resources. Her conclusion is that a number of variables affect intensification, and that a fruitful line of inquiry would examine the relationships between population, resources and social organization.

A very interesting chapter methodologically is Lowe Börjeson's study of Iraqw intensive agriculture in the Mbulu highlands on Tanzania. Börjeson looks at the historical evolution of Iraqw farming and herding, challenging accepted 'siege' theories that have emphasized conflict between Maasai pastoralists and Iraqw cultivators. Börjeson reconstructs maps using GIS imagery and historical photographs. A strong historical section draws on the work of Yusufu Lawi to show that Iraqw identity was never that of an isolated group surrounded by hostile neighbors. Rather, Iraqw society incorporated immigrants into a 'melting pot' of inter-ethnic cohesion. In the end Börjeson argues that agricultural intensification stimulated trade, immigration and concentration of settlement, leading to population growth – not the other way around – thus turning the Boserup theory of intensification on its head.

A second chapter on Iraqw by Vesa-Matti Loiske is less well developed, but more closely focused. Loiske uses the history of one family as a window into social networks and institutionalized exchange. This modest yet detailed narrative provides a micro-level view of how families use structures of networking and exchange in their livelihood strategies. These networks in turn create new forms of social cohesion in Iraqw society, Loiske concludes, in an argument that parallels that of Börjeson.

John Sutton's chapter revisits the place that his archaeological work has made famous over the past 25 years. Because the intensively cultivated site at old Engaruka was abandoned after about 1700, it has been possible to excavate a large area of former settlement, terracing and irrigation stonework. Sutton provides a detailed description of the history of canal and farming systems in relationship to environmental change. He calls old Engaruka a 'veritable island' and views irrigation engineering technology as having been a response to the strains of population pressures and declining harvests. His own primary question, however, does not concern the origins of intensification at Engaruka but rather what caused it to come to an end.

William Adams concludes the volume with a summary of the literature on intensification in Africa, relating the work of the different contributors to urgent questions about agricultural development and sustainability. Given the unevenness of the foregoing chapters, a longer and more thorough treatment of the main points would have been welcome, especially one that elaborated more fully on the relevance of interdisciplinary research on East African agriculture.

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JAMIE MONSON

## THE COMPLEX DYNAMICS OF ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORIES

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*Highland Sanctuary: Environmental History in Tanzania's Usambara Mountains.*

By CHRISTOPHER A. CONTE. Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 2004.

Pp. xiii + 215. \$55 (ISBN 0-8214-1533-0); \$24.95, paperback (ISBN 0-8214-1554-9).

KEY WORDS: Tanzania, precolonial, colonial, postcolonial, conservation, environment, political ecology.

As part of the Easter Arc mountain chain, Tanzania's Usambara mountains have recently gained international recognition as one of the global 'hot spots' of threatened biodiversity. In this book Christopher Conte provides the indigenous and colonial antecedents of current efforts to regulate environmental relationships in the area. In comparing the quite different trajectories of environmental and social change in East and West Usambara, Conte argues that a synthesis of social and natural history can both account for this divergence and inform current conservation policy. The pivot points of the text are examples of the linkages among ecology, politics and ideologies. Conte therefore uses concepts such as contradiction, negotiation and paradox to demonstrate how context and contingency shape African landscapes.

The book's seven chapters trace 2,000 years of these dynamics. An introductory chapter lays out Conte's vision of a 'more inclusive natural history' (p. 7) and presents the notion of a 'mountain sanctuary' as an ideological model deeply rooted in the cultural landscape of Usambara. Chapter two draws on recent work by Vansina, Schoenbrun, Ehret and Waller to review the development of agricultural and pastoral land-use systems and their near-collapse in the late nineteenth century. A comparison of a failed plantation in West Usambara and a botanical research station in the East shows two faces of German and British imperial science in chapter three. The fourth chapter rejects the notion of coherent narratives and counter-narratives of colonial forest history (such as population-driven degradation or imperial exploitation) and focuses on the archival record of 'layers of tension' (p. 71) of forest economics, politics and ideology. Chapter five shows how colonial politics and policies sharpened social inequalities and increased Africans' vulnerabilities to environmental change in the 1930s and 40s, while chapter six provides a comprehensive review of the origins, course, resistance to and eventually failure of the Mlalo Basin Rehabilitation Scheme in the last 15 years of colonial rule. The closing chapter analyzes ongoing conservation and development programs by comparing forest preservation in East Usambara with coercive conservation efforts in West

Usambara. Conte concludes that these programs often fail because they ignore the complex historical dynamics and intersections of ecology, politics and ideology.

This book builds on recent scholarship to present a convincing synthesis, and it strengthens the interdisciplinary reach of environmental history. It does not, however, blaze new methodological trails. Conte demonstrates his mastery of the regional historical literature and shows how the Usambara case study reflects broader trends in rural Africa. This is a cautious and even-handed book in which the author's outrage at the arrogance of both colonial and contemporary policy-makers is quite muted. Conte tends to extrapolate and generalize only when the volume of documentation makes the conclusions clear. The strength of this cautious approach is that it allows him to show how environmental conditions are contingent on specific social and natural processes. However, this caution constrains Conte's ability to demonstrate his major points. For example, Conte argues that ideologies about environmental change in Usambara (such as persistent degradation narratives) result from unequal social actors negotiating resource access using both local and imperial ideologies. The impact of this very good point is undercut by passing references to rainmaking, the spiritual values of forests and the morality of subsistence in Usambara society – for more information on these topics Conte refers the reader to Steven Feierman's *Peasant Intellectuals* (1990). The focus on ways that social inequalities shaped paradoxes in Usambara landscapes is similarly blurred by the limited attention to the ecological consequences of gender, race and class. The call for the synthesis of social and natural history is wholly appropriate, yet Conte provides little data on the effects of particular exotic plant and animal species on Usambara's soils, water and biodiversity. Finally, the book's contribution to the debate over the effects of population pressure on agrarian change is restricted by its cursory attention to issues of historical demography, such as the degree to which colonial policies shaped twentieth-century population growth in Africa. Overall, therefore, readers will learn much about the hubris of colonial conservation from this book, but they will need to read further to develop a critical assessment of negotiation and contradiction in Usambara.

*Highland Sanctuary* is one of the few books in the Anglophone literature to draw extensively on German colonial documents and journals. Finally, Conte's point that one landscape can have multiple environmental histories is a sobering reminder that grand narratives may be good to think with, but that much fascinating complexities, ambiguities and contradictions may be ignored in such an analysis.

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MICHAEL J. SHERIDAN

## ORIENTAL ORIGINS OF SACRED KINGSHIP?

doi:10.1017/S0021853705280817

*Das Königtum von Gobir: Götter, Priester, Feste einer sakralen Gesellschaft.*

By WALTER KÜHME. Hamburg: Dr. Kovač, 2003. Pp. xiv + 260. 37 colour photographs. No price given, paperback (ISBN 3-8300-0932-1).

KEY WORDS: Historiography, precolonial, kingdoms and states.

Kühme's book is the published version of his doctoral dissertation submitted in 2002 to the University of Bayreuth, based on fieldwork in Nigeria and Niger.

The central aim of his analyses was to extract the pre-Islamic roots of the Hausa kingdom of Gobir specifically, and more generally any pre-Islamic roots in rituals and ideology of the Hausa states in the *bilād al-sūdān*. These pre-Islamic roots are linked to the much debated concept of sacred kingship (*sakrales Königtum*) which is presumed to underlie the royal institutions of these polities. Kühme strictly follows his academic mentor at Bayreuth, Dierk Lange, by postulating close connections between institutions of sacred kingship of Ancient Near Eastern civilizations and West African Iron Age and historical polities.

The study is organized in eight chapters supplemented by two appendices. Kühme starts with a geographic and cultural overview, followed by an introduction to the research history of the institution of sacred kingship. He then briefly deliberates on the general potential of oral histories but quickly comes to his all-dominating topic, the alleged Oriental origin of West African political organizations of the pre-Islamic period. The *bayajidda* legend and the *bori* cult play a central part in his interpretation. Kühme, following Lange, ascribes both to a Canaanean origin. The book continues with a collection of oral histories on the myths of origin for Gobir. The following chapter describes the various traditional titles, offices and interest groups within the court. Chapters five and six to eight deal with the *bori* cult and various other ritual festivities. A brief conclusion – based on rather vague and contrived archaeological arguments – repeats the main points of argument in favour of a millennia-old ancestry of sacred kinship and the *bori* cult within Hausaland. Certainly, without this tricky reduction of the otherwise enormous gap of 2,000 years between the presumed emergence of the alleged roots for Hausa royal institutions and their present manifestations, the whole construct would appear even more obscure.

While I agree with Lange and Kühme that the postcolonial enforced ‘Africanization’ of a number of cultural phenomena – for instance iron technology – is questionable and best understood as politically induced, I do find it difficult to revert to old diffusionist positions of the earlier twentieth century. The fact that sacred kingship has existed in some form in Africa is not to be doubted, but this may easily be ascribed to internal African trajectories which have a wide dispersion. A great number of studies have convincingly argued in this direction. Moreover, similar forms of political organization appear world-wide: from the Americas, to Europe, to Eastern Asia. Sacred kingship, then, is commonly associated with the formation of archaic states. The fact that certain features are similar wherever complex societies have evolved just reaffirms that humans act and think alike when it comes to questions of power and how that power is preserved in the hands of a few.

Despite the somewhat doubtful conclusions, Kühme’s study is quite valuable because he has collected documentary material from Gobir which otherwise might have been lost or is difficult to access. His descriptions of various rituals are detailed and the many colour photographs are helpful in visualizing them. Moreover, the appendices with king lists and praise songs may be helpful in future comparable studies. These lists and songs are, by the way, presented in English and French which brings me to a remarkable point: the volume has neither an English nor a French summary which is certainly unusual for publications on African topics. This may limit the circulation of his dissertation.

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*Sudan's Blood Memory: The Legacy of War, Ethnicity, and Slavery in Early South Sudan.* By STEPHANIE BESWICK. Rochester NY: University of Rochester Press, 2004. Pp. xxx + 270. \$75; £50 (ISBN 1-58046-151-4).

KEY WORDS: Sudan, precolonial, ethnicity, kingdoms and states.

The dramatic title of Stephanie Beswick's book links her work directly to Sudan's long-running civil wars, and the dust-jacket blurb makes explicit the assertion that modern Sudan is 'haunted by the distant past', with modern violence driven by centuries-old conflicts. Beswick argues that these conflicts are not just those between north and south, Arab and African, of which we hear much at present; she directs our attention to the importance of conflicts within southern Sudan and their historic background. There is merit in that point, but in laying such stress on the antiquity of these conflicts Beswick implicitly challenges a considerable scholarship which has emphasized the role played by Egyptian and British colonial rule, and its untidy end, in provoking conflict. It is not entirely clear that the analysis and scholarship of this work can make that challenge effective.

Beswick's real focus is the history of the Dinka, the largest ethnic group in the modern Sudan, and her argument is daring to the point of eccentricity. She suggests that 'the Dinka' occupied the Gezira, in riverain central Sudan, until the fifteenth century, when political change and slave raids from the north drove them south, setting off a chain of ethnic displacements and conflicts which have reverberated ever since. Dinka primacy in their new, southern, homeland was assured by their possession of a superior breed of cattle and better-yielding sorghum. When circumstances allowed, they developed the beginnings of a centralized political system whose rituals revealed ancient familiarity with a tradition of divine kingship which stretches back to the ancient state of Meroe. This extravagant historical reconstruction rests on rather flimsy evidence; the modern claim by some Dinka to have 'come from' the Gezira; the assumption that zebu cattle and caudatum sorghum were unknown in southern Sudan before 1400 BP; the 'uncanny resemblance' between the burial of Dinka priests and that of Meroitic kings. There is some rather cavalier referencing: to cite one example, Ed Steinhart's work on western Uganda is footnoted as evidence for events in Bahr el Ghazal. There is also some oddly unthoughtful use of oral history, which forms the basis of much of the argument. The introduction refers to the techniques for analysis of this material developed by Vansina, Feierman and others, but actually much of the use of oral material seems decidedly random. Beswick calmly (and rather irrelevantly) relays to us the cheerful assertion of one informant that among the Azande iron was smelted in 'ovens like those used for making bread'. I must remember not to eat any Azande bread.

But most worryingly, this book is based on an understanding of history and ethnicity that has been largely abandoned by scholarship on the rest of Africa. There is no attempt here to problematize Dinka identity, or to consider how modern Dinka identity has emerged. That some people who were described as Dinka have resided in parts of the Gezira is uncontroversial, and indeed important. There is record of this in recent historical time, and pointing this out reminds us that the 'dividing line' between north and south is not a clear or historically consistent one. That 'the Dinka' 'came from' the Gezira more or less *en masse* some four centuries ago is a rather different proposition: it assumes all kinds of things about ethnicity which really need to be explored. This is, as the concluding chapter unapologetically states, a history of migrations: it is billiard-ball history, in which

the ethnic group is a 'nation', an enduring body corporate with a defined and distinctive culture which makes its way around the map, with rather a lot of 'hewing' and 'thrusting', displacing other such groups, which are described as 'sovereign nations'. The occasional brief genuflections to more nuanced understandings of ethnicity only serve to exacerbate the simplicity of the model of Dinka identity offered here, and the sub-Frazerian fixation with the diffusion of 'divine kingship'.

Whether any of this really helps us understand modern-day conflict is uncertain, though clearly it does provide an interesting insight into the way that some Dinka now view their past. But it is no doubt true that, once the peace-treaty in the south is finally signed and the jockeying for land, power and position in southern Sudan becomes more intense, some people will turn to this book for historical precedent and explanation. When they do so, they may deduce from it – though this is surely not Beswick's intention – that ethnicity is immutable and conflict inevitable, and that the Sudan is irrevocably and multiply divided by its past. That may not be a very helpful lesson.

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## ETHIOPIAN CHRISTIAN ART AND PORTUGUESE CONTACTS

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*The Indigenous and the Foreign in Christian Ethiopian Art: On Portuguese-Ethiopian Contacts in the 16th–17th Centuries. Papers from the Fifth International Conference on the History of Ethiopian Art (Arrábida, 26–30 November 1999).*

Edited by MANUEL JOÃO RAMOS with ISABEL BOAVIDA. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004. Pp. xxx + 181. 14 colour plates. £45 (ISBN 0-7546-5037-5).

KEY WORDS: Ethiopia, precolonial, arts, Christianity.

This slim book is a selection of papers from a conference convened at the convent of Arrábida, Portugal, with the support of Fundação Oriente and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. As indicated by the book's two-part title, the essays refer to the impact of Ethio-Portuguese contacts upon Ethiopian Christian art, although not all of the papers adhere strictly to the appointed subject.

The essays are divided into three parts: architecture and urbanism, icon and mural painting and decorative arts. LaVerle Berry gives a useful preliminary assessment of Ethiopian and Jesuit monumental stone architecture in the Lake Tana Basin. Papers on the topic of painting include two exemplary studies. Claire Bosc-Tiessé presents a careful analysis of the reception of Western prints at the Gondarine court during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. She focuses upon the *Evangelium Arabicum*, published in Rome in 1590–1, and the *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines* of the Jesuit Jerome Nadal, first printed in 1593, the reception of which at the Ethiopian court in 1610 is documented in Jesuit records. A later seventeenth-century edition of Nadal's *Imagines* as well as the *Evangelium Arabicum* provided models for some of the murals in Queen Məntəwəwab's church of Narga Šəllase (constructed 1737–40). The paper of Anias Wion on an analysis of seventeenth-century pigments utilized in the miniatures of a Gondarine manuscript of the *Miracles of Mary* (Paris, Bibl. nat., Abb. 114) and the murals from the church of Abba Antonios near Gondar (presently at the Musée de l'Homme, Paris) reveals evidence of imported pigments utilized by painters working for the Gondarine court. Pigments identified by Raman analysis include vermilion or cinnabar, used not only for paint but also for the ink of rubricated



texts, and bright yellow or orpiment. The blue pigment in the miniatures of the *Miracles of Mary* is derived from indigo, but the blue pigment of the Abba Antonios murals appears to be smalt (a silicate of potassium and cobalt), known in Europe since the sixteenth century. Wion concludes with a discussion of possible sources of these imported pigments and the social implications of those painters with access to imported pigments as opposed to those painters dependent exclusively upon locally produced pigments.

Papers under the rubric 'decorative arts' are devoted to diverse objects. Martha Henze identifies a group of pre-1850 slit-weave tapestry kilims, presently the property of churches in northern Ethiopia, as having been produced in Western Anatolia. Stephen Bell, with the help of the curator of the Royal Armouries (Tower of London), identifies the metal helmet stored with a chain mail shirt at the monastery church of Däbrä Wärq in Goğgam as Iberian of the early sixteenth century, and he thus associates both objects with the troop of armed Portuguese soldiers who in 1541 arrived in Ethiopia to join the troops of Aṣe Gälawdewos in the struggle against the *jihad* led by Ahmad ibn Ibrahim of Adal; Bell's attempt to demonstrate that these objects are treasured relics of this 'holy war' is unconvincing. Isabel Boavida's paper on a small cross, said to have been made of the wood of the True Cross, sent to Portugal as a diplomatic gift from the court of the young Aṣe Ləba Dəngəl, uses Portuguese primary sources to follow the path of this cross from its arrival in Lisbon to the city of Zaragoza in Aragon, where it was presented to Pope Adrian VI.<sup>1</sup>

The book is handsome, the maps and reproductions are excellent. The quality of the essays is uneven, many offering little to the professional historian or art historian other than photographs of previously unpublished objects. Unfortunately, the papers presented by two highly regarded historians of Ethio-Portuguese relations, Professors Merid Wolde Aregay and Hervé Pennic, do not appear in this collection.

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MARILYN E. HELDMAN

## INTELLECTUAL LIFE OF THE WESTERN SAHARA

doi:10.1017/S0021853705310814

*La vie intellectuelle islamique dans le Sahel Quest-Africain (XVIe–XIXe siècles).*

*Une étude sociale de l'enseignement islamique en Mauritanie et au Nord du Mali (XVIe–XIXe siècles) et traduction annotée de **Fath ash-Shakūr** d'al-Bartilī al-Walātī (mort en 1805).* By CHOUKI EL HAMEL. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002.

Pp. 492. €40, paperback (ISBN 2-7475-2597-X).

KEY WORDS: Mali, Mauritania, precolonial, intellectual, Islam, text editions.

Aṭ-Ṭālib Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr aṣ-ṣiddīq al-Anṣārī al-Bartilī (or, according to variant readings and spellings, 'al-Burtulī', 'al-Bartallī', 'al-Bartīlī',

<sup>1</sup> To Boavida's Ethiopian references to the relic of the True Cross said to have been sent to Aṣe Dawit may be added external sources that document the sending of the relic of the True Cross and other relics to Aṣe Dawit by the Republic of Venice. These include A. Khater and O. H. E. Burmester, trans., *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church* (Cairo, 1970), III, part 3, 249–52; for references to pertinent Italian documents see S. Tedeschi, 'Les fils du Négus Sayfa-Ar'ād d'après un document arabo-chrétien', *Africa: Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell'Istituto Italo-Africano*, 34 (1974), 573–87.

‘al-Bartaylī’, ‘al-Barittaylī’, ‘al-Barrityalī’) was an Islamic teacher, writer and legal expert (*muftī*) born in AH 1140/AD 1727–8 in the important West Saharan trading town of Walāta. He died in the same town in AH 1219/AD 1805. He is the author of the collection of biographies *Faṭḥ ash-Shakūr fī maʿrifat aʿyān ʿulamā at-Takrūr* (a title interpreted by the translator as ‘The Key [Provided by] He Who Is Most Acknowledging [i.e. God] for Cognizance of the Eminent Learned Men of the Takrūr’). The main text of the *Faṭḥ* was completed not long after the month of *Shaʿbān* AH 1215/AD January 1801, on which falls the latest date of death al-Bartilī recorded (p. 328). However, a biography of al-Bartilī himself was added to the *Faṭḥ* by his disciple – and fellow tribesman – Ibn at-Ṭalīb aṣ-Ṣaghīr b. AbūBakr al-Bartilī. And at least one other biography (n. 169), which ends with a death date in AH 1233/AD 1818 (p. 369), was inserted in the *Faṭḥ* by unknown hands after al-Bartilī’s death. Al-Bartilī’s biographical work is an indispensable source to historians, and anthropologists, studying Walāta and a much wider area extending across the border between the modern republics of Mauritania and Mali to Timbuktu and, father east, the Aḍagh-n-Foḡhas.

Chouki El Hamel makes an outstanding contribution to Sahelian studies with this publication, which developed from his University of Paris I (Sorbonne) doctoral thesis (1992). It would have been a signal service just to make al-Bartilī’s corpus of biographies available in French translation to those who do not read Arabic. But Chouki El Hamel’s annotated translation goes far beyond that. Helpfully, it operates as an extended critical review of the pioneer edition of the Arabic text of the *Faṭḥ ash-shakūr* by Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Kattānī and Muḥammad Ḥajjī.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the three manuscripts of al-Bartilī’s work on which that edition was based, the present translation uses another four (of which only one had been available to Chouki El Hamel while writing his thesis). The translation includes two biographies (n. 41-b and n. 118) that were left out of the printed text of the al-Kattānī and Ḥajjī edition though present in the manuscripts used by these editors. Also, thanks to one of the additional four manuscripts, the translation restores as distinct biographies (n. 17 and n. 18) two texts that in all the other six manuscripts (and, under ‘n. 18’, in the al-Kattānī and Ḥajjī edition) are mistakenly amalgamated.

The thoughtful Introduction to the translation successively examines the biographical evidence on al-Bartilī himself, the structure of the *Faṭḥ* and the literary genre to which it belongs, the sources upon which al-Bartilī drew, the meaning of the geographical expression ‘at-Takrūr’ in the text (p. 72), the socio-political context and the avenues for the transmission of Islamic learning in the region at the time.

The biographies in the *Faṭḥ* follow each other in loose alphabetical order, according to the letter order in the Arabic alphabet used in the Maghrib. The work as a whole is to be ascribed to the *ṭabaqāt* (‘classes’) genre of Islamic Arabic literature. This genre covers biographical works specializing in particular categories of people (in this case, only men of learning and piety originating in the Takrūr). Two of al-Bartilī’s most significant sources belong to seventeenth-century Timbuktu literature: as-Saʿdī’s chronicle *Taʾrīkh as-Sūdān* (which includes biographies of learned and pious men) and Aḥmad Bābā’s biographical work *Kifāyat al-muḥtāj*. But, while the *Faṭḥ* resorts (in a simplified way) to the models of biographical account provided by Timbuktu writers, it lacks the sustained broad interest in political history, and the combined attention to different

<sup>1</sup> Al-Bartallī, *Faṭḥ ash-Shakūr*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Kattānī and Muḥammad Ḥajjī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, AH 1401/AD 1981).

social *élites*, which characterized the Timbuktu *ta'riḵh* genre. In other words, al-Bartilī's literary genealogy leads back to Aḥmad Bābā's and as-Sa<sup>c</sup>dī's biographical writings, but not to as-Sa<sup>c</sup>dī's innovative historical enterprise. In fact, as Chouki El Hamel shows (pp. 40, 46, 79, 116, 122, 125, 135, 138–9), the investigation of the broad historical context of the lives represented in the biographies he wrote, or borrowed from other works, was not part of what al-Bartilī's conceived of as his cultural tasks.

While rightly emphasizing the importance that the evidence in the *Fath* nevertheless has for modern historians, Chouki El Hamel points out other limitations of al-Bartilī's outlook. In certain respects, the stances adopted by the author of the *Fath* were narrower than others current in his own milieu. Hence he excluded from his text social spaces that remained open in the culture at large. In Walāta, and elsewhere in what al-Bartilī called 'the Takrūr', it was not impossible for women to acquire Islamic learning and be acknowledged as eminent figures. This was the case of, say, Khadīja bint al-<sup>c</sup>Āqil ad-Daymānī, a renowned writer who flourished at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Al-Bartilī must have known of her. But he ignores her in his work – yet he includes a biography of her brother Ahmad b. al-<sup>c</sup>Āqil ad-Daymānī (n. 42, pp. 132, 217–18).

Valuable historical information about social and ethnic tensions emerges from the *Fath*'s biographies. The Saharan ideological opposition of *Zwāyā* groups (with identities largely self-defined by an emphasis on Islamic learning and legal rules) to 'warrior' groups like the Mghāfra and Ḥassān (who claimed the right to political power) found expression in al-Bartilī's phraseology. Throughout his text he called the warrior groups *luṣūṣ* ('thieves', 'pillagers') and *ṣalama* ('tyrants'). Yet al-Bartilī's own biography in the *Fath* shows him eager to incite the Mghāfra against two Jewish visitors to Walāta who were under the protection of a local Muslim host, but on whom al-Bartilī succeeded in inflicting his harsh interpretation of Islamic law.

Chouki El Hamel's translation and discussion of the *Fath ash-Shakūr* belongs on the bookshelves of everyone interested in the Sahel.

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P. F. DE MORAES FARIAS

## AN AFRICAN ATLANTIC

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*Enslaving Connections: Changing Cultures of Africa and Brazil during the Era of Slavery.* Edited by JOSE C. CURTO and PAUL E. LOVEJOY. Amherst: Humanity Books, 2004. Pp. 323. No price given (ISBN 1-159102-153-7).

*Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441–1770.* By JAMES H. SWEET. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003. Pp. xvi + 296. \$19.95/£14.95, paperback (ISBN 0-8078-5482-4).

KEY WORDS: African diaspora, slave trade.

These two studies are among the most provocative of a new historiographical trend that places African culture at the center of the New World slave experience and views the Atlantic as a site of multidirectional cultural exchanges among Africans, Europeans and Americans. As such, each stands in stark contrast to important Americanist interpretations of slavery that place work at the center of

the slave life and argue that heterogeneous 'crowds' of slaves forged wholly new cultures in the New World, ones heavily influenced by a dominant European culture.

The twelve essays in Curto and Lovejoy's volume succeed admirably in applying new data to questions about the complex connections between Africa and Brazil. Several boldly engage important historiographical debates. For example, Ivana Elbl brilliantly marshals Portuguese sources from the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries to conclude that high volumes of slave exports in these early years of the coastal exchange indicate that Europeans plugged into a slave trade that already existed in Africa. In addition, she forces a rethinking of much literature on the profitability of the early trade, arguing that each side gained from bargains but the Portuguese did not earn 'superprofits'.

One of the great strengths of the collection is its recognition that cultural and economic exchanges were not unidirectional; Africans influenced American societies but Americans also influenced Africa. Brazilian Francisco Felix de Souza, the subject of Robin Law's essay, clearly illustrates this point. Settling at Ouidah in 1820, he acquired a near slave trading monopoly as an agent of the king of Dahomey, eventually involving himself in trade as far as Lagos. Brazilian traders also played a more significant role than historians have appreciated in the nineteenth-century 'illegal' slave trade from the Slave Coast and Kongo, as Silke Strickrodt and Susan J. Herlin reveal in two fascinating essays. Further, in an important break with scholars who have argued that internal conflicts, droughts and diseases were catalysts for slave production in the Benguela hinterlands, Rosa Cruz de Silva demonstrates that Brazilians and Portuguese 'consciously aggravated local conditions as a means of encouraging enslavement' (p. 250).

Other essays in the collection take an Africa-centered approach to Brazil's past. This is particularly true of Joseph C. Miller's valuable 'speculative inquiry', which suggests that historians should consider slaves' formative experiences in Africa and what they 'retained, how they reinvented it in order to do so, and how they remembered what they thus abandoned' (p. 81). Isolation and individuation, he writes, motivated slaves to seek connections to others as a way to restore identities. This restorative process cannot be understood if we assume that African slaves held modernist views of dislocation and loss. They perceived change differently, seeing themselves as connected to, not separated from, a past that they idealized. Variations on this approach are applied in essays that bring new evidence to bear on African influences on Brazilian Portuguese language, slave family life and slave identity.

In *Recreating Africa*, Sweet, too, emphasizes that we cannot understand the slave experience without first understanding African cultures. His study is based on records from the Portuguese Inquisition and Brazilian parishes. It is rare that a historian uncovers such a treasure trove of documents allowing glimpses into the most intimate corners of oppressed peoples' lives in the very distant past. Sweet handles his riches with the care they deserve, writing a true 'page turner', which provides heart-wrenching details about the experiences of individual captives.

Sweet's story also provides a valuable critique of important historiographical debates. Most significantly, he argues that African slaves in colonial societies neither formed creolized cultures nor cultures that retained a handful of African 'survivals'. Rather, Sweet posits that 'an essential character or worldview, based on the cultural values of a specific African region, was transferred to the Americas and survived in large measure' (p. 227). Sweet is most concerned with the actions of Central Africans in Brazil, for it was their worldview that was most easily

reproduced since more slaves were exported from Central Africa to Brazil than from any other region. However, he also explores the 'shared core cultural beliefs' of Africans from across the continent who found themselves enslaved in places as different as Lisbon, Madeira and Cape Verde.

Covering 330 years of history, the book is arranged topically rather than chronologically. In one chapter, Sweet uses marriage records to argue that, despite many constraints, some slaves forged lasting kinship groupings, more often than not with those sharing similar cultural understandings. These homogeneous groups could recreate African child rearing, gender and sex practices. Since considerably more males than females made the Atlantic crossing, some male slaves sought same-sex relationships, which, Sweet thinks, were rooted in 'flexible gender categories' that he sees as common in many parts of Africa. Another chapter explores the hardships slaves faced with respect to disease, malnutrition and abuse. Historians have long known that masters raped female slaves, as much for sexual satisfaction as to emasculate black men. What Sweet demonstrates is that masters achieved the same ends by raping male slaves. Inquisitors' records, then, reveal in new ways the horrors Africans faced in bondage and the tremendous difficulties they overcame to control some facets of their day-to-day lives.

The most important aspect of their lives that African slaves seized control of was their spirituality. Recreated African religious beliefs, then, became the foundation of slave identity and a weapon in the struggle against domination. By comparing religious practices in Central and West Africa with a multitude of practices that Inquisitors attacked, Sweet argues that 'core African beliefs' remained intact, despite the influences of Catholicism. Further, he demonstrates that some slave owners relied on Africans for healing, divination and medicine to counter witchcraft. Christianity in Brazil, he concludes, had no greater impact on the lives of Africans than African beliefs had on Christianity.

A bold and provocative historian, Sweet generally supports his conclusions with very revealing data. However, he sometimes presses the limits of his sources, connecting too many behaviors to a 'core African culture'. He is also too quick to label all acts he studies 'resistance against masters'. Same-sex relationships become struggles against 'riptides of Western gender ... norms' (p. 57) and a slave killing another with witchcraft a 'blow to the institution of slavery' (p. 171). Further, he does not emphasize that since Inquisitors were attracted to the 'abhorrent', what they recorded may not represent typical experiences. Male rape occurred, but was it necessarily one of 'many tools of pacification' that masters used (p. 74)? Slaves clearly conducted African rituals in Brazil, but does this indicate that many did not consider themselves devout Catholics? I suspect there were great variations in religious practices between 1441 and 1770 from Rio de Janeiro to Recife and Lisbon to Madeira, not to mention from Bissau to Ouida and El Mina to Luanda, differences that Sweet's records do not allow him to explore.

In sum, considering the difficulty of documenting the lives of slaves in this early period of Atlantic trade, Sweet's study is a true tour de force that will be revisited by scholars for many years to come. By placing Africa at the center of the American slave experience and demonstrating the complex connections between the continents, both of these books are invaluable additions to a growing revisionist scholarship that challenges many Americanist assumptions about slavery and the slave trade.

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WALTER HAWTHORNE

## AN ATLANTIC ODYSSEY FROM OLD CALABAR

doi:10.1017/S0021853705330817

*The Two Princes of Calabar: An Eighteenth-Century Atlantic Odyssey.* By RANDY J. SPARKS. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2004. Pp. 189. £14.95 (ISBN 0-674-01312-3).

KEY WORDS: African diaspora, Nigeria, slave trade, slave trade abolition.

The story of the Robin Johns of Old Calabar is a fascinating introduction to the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the second half of the eighteenth century. The two men were seized in the infamous ‘massacre’ at Old Calabar in 1767, in which British slave ships participated willingly in the dispute between two wards of Old Calabar – Old Town and Duke Town – for supremacy in the slave trade. Unlike many of their Old Town compatriots and relatives, the two men were not killed but taken to the Americas and sold into slavery, first in Dominica and then Virginia, before their good luck took them to Britain. Eventually they returned to Old Calabar, to rejoin their relatives and compatriots at Old Town in Calabar. Randy Sparks has uncovered a remarkable array of documentation in the telling of this story. Except perhaps for reservations discussed below, his account generally makes sense, and his Atlantic-wide approach is both refreshing and revealing. Perhaps one of the most important contributions of this book is the recognition that African history, at least for those parts of Africa involved in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, has to be examined from a broader perspective than is usually the case. There are clearly important documents relating to Africa to be found in the Americas and in Europe that can help to inform the study of the African past.

Sparks draws upon the correspondence of the Robin Johns and a sound read of the various events and episodes that followed the Mansfield decision in the Somerset case, which severely undermined the legitimacy of slavery in Britain, if not in its colonies and protectorates. He demonstrates clearly how the case of the Robin Johns fitted into this history and the progression in abolitionist thought towards the movement to abolish the slave trade. Certainly the interactions among the various figures who helped the Robin Johns in one way or another is a significant contribution to the study of the abolition movement. The book is an excellent introduction to the subject.

There are some weaknesses in the book that deserve comment. Sparks has a tendency to load his analysis with conceptual digressions that detract from the story, and are actually contradicted by his own evidence. His use of the term, ‘Atlantic creole’, an insight attributable to Ira Berlin, is surely overloaded. Were these men ‘creole’ in Old Calabar, a port where human sacrifice and the ekpe society were anything but ‘creole’? Sparks suggests as much, and then argues that the men were increasingly ‘creolized’ as they journeyed the Atlantic. Was Efik society really willing to adjust to the influences of Christianity, as Sparks argues, when in fact nobody other than the two Robin Johns had anything to do with Christianity until the 1840s, long after their saga ended? In fact they returned to Old Calabar in 1774 to help their ward at Old Town rejuvenate its position in the slave trade. The ekpe society, about which there is much documentation, demonstrates that power at Old Calabar had nothing to do with Christianity or anything that can be called ‘creole’.

Sparks’s account ends abruptly, suggesting a connection between the Robin Johns and the abolitionists who mounted the struggle to end the slave trade, when in fact their story shows clearly that they were not involved in that struggle but rather were really only trying to get home, any way they could. The letters of affection between the two men and their various mentors and sponsors in England, and particularly with John and Charles Wesley, are not unlike the letters between

other slave traders in Old Calabar and their business partners in Bristol and Liverpool. Sparks does not explore this contradiction or the subtleties of the association between Wesleyan Methodists and such abolitionists as Olaudah Equiano. Indeed the parallels and contrasts with Equiano are ignored, even though all three men came from the Bight of Biafra at roughly the same time and were in England at exactly the same time. Moreover, Equiano was also a Methodist, but surely one who was more sincere in his religion than the Robin Johns. It cannot be said the religion of the Efik willingly absorbed Christian views or any religious practices and ideas other than those that were determined by the slaving elite in Old Calabar itself, as Sparks claims without documentation. In fact, it is clear that the slaving hierarchy consciously selected what aspects of 'European', i.e. British, culture it wanted, which included language and writing, some aspects of material culture and little else. Old Calabar and its merchants were not 'Atlantic creoles'; they were good businessmen to a point, but not as good as those at nearby Bonny.

Despite these weaknesses, the study is provocative and fascinating. It is a good book to teach, and the research is mostly solid. One could wish for a bibliography and a less complicated system of annotation, but these constraints are probably the dictates of the publisher, not the author.

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PAUL E. LOVEJOY

## AFRICANS AND THE FIRST INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

doi:10.1017/S0021853705340813

*Africans and the Industrial Revolution in England: A Study in International Trade and Economic Development.* By JOSEPH E INIKORI. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Pp. xxi + 576. £55 (ISBN 0-521-81193-7); £20.99, paperback (ISBN 0-521-01079-9).

KEY WORDS: Economic, historiography, industrial, slave trade.

This is a landmark contribution by an African historian to the study of British and Atlantic economic history and indeed – given the global consequences of the precocious British (more than just English) industrialization – world history. Joseph Inikori's *magnum opus* has rather little to say about Africa itself (mostly in pp. 381–421, on British raw-material imports from, and manufactured exports to, West Africa). Despite – almost because of – this, it fully deserves the acclaim it has received from Africanists (including the Herskovits prize) for two reasons. First, it is a pioneering – and monumental – case of an African historian researching and writing about the history of other regions of the world just as non-African historians have worked on African history. Second, in so doing the book illuminates, with the most intense light yet shone on the subject, the roles of Africans in the economic origins of the industrial world. Specifically, Inikori revives and extends the argument that the industrial revolution was critically dependent on the labours of Africans and of peoples of African descent in the Americas. In this it engages fully with a formidable historiography and deploys massive empirical detail derived from a lifetime of research.

Eric Williams's famous thesis (*Capitalism and Slavery*, 1944) that the British industrial revolution was dependent on investments financed by the profits of slave trading in the Atlantic and slave-based production in the New World was



undermined by the next generation or more of research. This showed that less investment was required in industrializing Britain than previously thought, that the funds invested came primarily from domestic sources and that colonial and overseas trade was but a small fraction of British economic activity. In this context, Inikori's fundamental contribution to the historiography and theory of economic development is to argue, in an exceptionally systematic and well-documented fashion, for the importance of the demand side in industrialization. He shows in both quantitative and qualitative detail how British manufacturers benefited from the growth of markets on all sides of the Atlantic, and how specific demands from these markets inspired, in response, specific technological innovations in Britain. For example, he argues that the fact that British traders and products were subject to competition from rival Europeans in the West African trade (unlike in Britain's colonies) sharpened the commercial imperative for English textile producers, specifically of check cloths, to make the technical innovations necessary to come up with products that West African buyers would prefer to Indian textiles, which other Europeans would offer if the British stopped doing so (pp. 427–51). He also documents the growth of the supply of raw materials to the British economy, including – pending chemical discoveries – dyestuffs from western Africa, such as gum Senegal. According to his calculations, 'African peoples and their descendants produced the bulk of the raw materials imported into Great Britain from the Americas between 1784 and 1856' (p. 379).

It is not possible for a non-specialist in British economic history to pronounce confidently on the specifics of this debate, which anyway belong in other journals. Africanists will be interested to note, though, that Nuffield College, Oxford, devoted a special symposium to Inikori's book in 2003, to which they brought both the author and a range of leading British specialists on the industrial revolution. I was fortunate enough to be present. The responses of Professor Inikori's fellow experts on British industrialization, varied as they naturally were, reinforced what was evident from Nuffield's initiative itself: that Inikori's book is accepted in its field as a crucial contribution, stimulating to other specialists in a range of ways. Among the counter-arguments, the most important was perhaps one put forward by several speakers in different forms: that while it may be accepted that slavery and slave plantations resulted in major benefits for the British economy, to account for the industrial revolution one needs to explain why Britain was able to take advantage of cheap cotton and expanding Atlantic markets far more effectively than the other major European participants in the Atlantic slave trade, Portugal, France and the Netherlands. This in turn, these speakers argued, requires a focus on scientific discoveries and technological innovation, and on the growing efficiency of the domestic economy. The latter topics, however, have been high on the research agenda for many years. Inikori's book should at least help to ensure that they are not pursued to the neglect of the also indispensable roles of markets and raw materials, mobilized on an unprecedented scale through the proliferation and deepening of inter-continental maritime links – relations based, as Inikori underlines, on coercion and enslavement as well as on choice and innovation.

For economic historians of Africa, the book includes a succinct and incisive analysis of the obstacles, internal and external, to expanding export-commodity production on the African side of the Atlantic. Most of all, it encourages us to compare the African economies concerned with those on the other coasts of the Atlantic, south and north, over the whole early modern period.

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GARETH AUSTIN

## MALE ROYAL SLAVERY IN KANO

doi:10.1017/S002185370535081X

*Paradoxes of Power: The Kano 'Mamluks' and Male Royal Slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate, 1804–1903.* By SEAN STILWELL. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann, 2004. Pp. x+281. £45.99 (ISBN 0-325-0741-5); £16.99, paperback (ISBN 0-325-07410-7).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, precolonial, kingdoms and states, slavery.

This book attempts to unravel the 'paradoxes' of royal male slaves' power and to explain the nature, development and impact of royal slavery in Kano and the Sokoto Caliphate. It is divided into three parts, each of five chapters, beside the introduction and conclusion. The introduction sets out the goals of the book, the historical context, reassesses the debate on the institution of slavery in the area of the study and elsewhere, examines the sources and explains the organization of the book. Part one, 'The beginnings of royal slavery, 1804–1855', examines the emerging structures of the royal slavery system in Kano. Part two, 'The consolidation of a system, 1855–1893', examines the ways and manner by which the royal slavery system became rooted in the socio-political structures of the Kano emirate. Part three, 'The political crisis and resolution, 1893–1903', underpins the critical role with which the royal slavery system had come to play in the political direction of Kano emirate by the end of the Caliphate era.

The book demonstrates how the royal slaves, against the backdrop of slave-master and patron-client relations and operating within marginal social statuses (as 'servants' and 'outsiders', 'dishonoured' and 'kinless'), were able to renegotiate their statuses by acquiring power and social status as well as building kinship ties and households during the nineteenth century. Taking a compassionate position, the author attempts to balance the 'tension' between the scholars who take firm exception to the application of universal definitions of slavery in describing forms of servitude in African societies and those scholars who apply abstract universal definitions of slavery without reference to particular historical circumstances. While arguing that 'it is both possible and useful to define slavery broadly and comparatively', Stilwell empirically examines the nature and development of royal slavery in Kano in particular, and by extension in the Sokoto Caliphate in general.

This book, the outcome of almost a decade of research, is mainly based on Stilwell's Ph.D. dissertation, which was supervised by a great scholar in the subject-matter, Paul Lovejoy. Largely founded on extensive original research, it is shaped by very rich secondary sources and is certainly a major contribution to the study of slavery in one of the most important emirates in Hausaland. Stilwell's study provides remarkably good material for comparative study and analysis particularly within African and Islamic contexts. Specifically, he makes significant contributions to our understanding of the dynamics of slavery institutions in the Sokoto Caliphate. His study of male royal slavery, as a form of slavery, clearly establishes the 'fluidity' of slavery as a system in nineteenth-century Hausaland, as he outlines clearly the dialectical relationships between royal slaves and the emirship within a particular historical context.

However, while the critical role of male royal slavery in the political developments of Kano emirate during the nineteenth century is well established by Stilwell, his conclusion that 'royal slavery, as an institution, effectively governed and administered the Kano emirate' (p. 183) may be too simple and general. To assess the role and impact of royal slavery in Kano concretely, we would need to do so against the backdrop of the material conditions that sustained this political infrastructure in the Kano emirate in the first place. It seems to me that

an analysis of the impact of royal slavery within the context of the political economy of the emirate will be necessary before arriving at any general conclusion in this direction, and such a framework of analysis is not adequately provided in the study.

Similarly, Stilwell's earlier contention that the institution of royal slavery in Kano was 'part of a broader Caliphatewide phenomenon; over the course of 100 years an institutionalized royal slave system evolved in the most important emirates of the Sokoto Caliphate' (p. 1), must remain tentative until we have adequate empirical evidence from the other emirates (including the metropolis) to establish that in these areas royal slavery as an institutionalized form of slavery evolved and developed in the same form and with the same socio-political significance as it did in Kano.

The book is well presented. The language is standard, simple and very clear. In fact, there is clear fidelity of communication between the author and the readers. Some readers may find it inconvenient that certain key terms, such as *jihad* and *ulama* are not rendered in italics throughout the book, although they are included in the glossary of non-English words.

As a whole, the book is a remarkable contribution to the literature on social aspects of Islam, slavery and African social history. It is my considered opinion that it should be almost compulsory reading for students and teachers engaged in the study of this subject.

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KABIRU S. CHAFE

## A COMPARATIVE APPROACH TO THE END OF SLAVERY IN WEST AFRICA

doi:10.1017/S0021853705360816

*Slavery and Reform in West Africa: Toward Emancipation in Nineteenth-Century Senegal and the Gold Coast.* By TREVOR R. GETZ. Athens OH: Ohio University Press; Oxford: James Currey, 2004. Pp. xx + 257. No price given (ISBN 085255-444-3); paperback (ISBN 0-8214-1521).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, Senegal, colonial, slavery abolition.

I have often been skeptical about comparative subjects for Ph.D. theses. It is better to know one thing well before you start comparing. Trevor Getz resolves my doubts, weaving his way deftly through both the literature and the sources on slavery policy in Senegal and the Gold Coast during the nineteenth century. This is all the more impressive because during key periods, colonial governors and administrators were reticent to put on paper what they were doing or what they wanted to do. The book is an adaptation of a thesis submitted to the School of Oriental and African Studies. Getz not only compares the two colonies, but also compares and re-thinks much of the historiography, particularly the debates on slavery in the Gold Coast.

He starts off with a good but cautious chapter on the impact of the Atlantic trade. He then moves back and forth between the two colonies, starting with 'the crisis of abolition', which threatened the economic basis of both colonies. The two colonies are comparable because the colonial presence in each was small in the early nineteenth century, expanded slowly and was made difficult by the question of

policy towards slavery and the slave trade. In both, colonial administrators throughout the century were limited in the funds and staff available to them. In both, colonial administrations had to deal with the contradiction between the heavy involvement of rulers, chiefs and merchants in slave-ownership and the increasing pressures from abolitionist groups in the metropole. This meant that in both there was frequently an opposition between colonial ministers conscious of metropolitan opinion and colonial governors facing difficult local pressures. Both found similar answers to the same problems. Both were highly pragmatic. Both approved measures which conciliated domestic public opinion while not threatening the slave-owning groups they were allied to. Both denied runaway slaves access to colonial territories, where the law should have freed them. Both were afraid not only of alienating allies, but also of vagrancy and chaos within their domains. Both relied heavily on slave or freed slave soldiers, though the British shied away from actually buying slaves, preferring to recruit slaves already freed. Though Getz highlights some differences between Britain and France, he concludes that these were 'distinctions of scale and style rather than fundamentally different aims' (p. 191).

Getz stresses slave agency though he also accepts the assimilative approach to slavery associated with Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff. This is linked to his argument that the kinlessness associated with slavery made it difficult for those who did not remember an earlier home to leave. The vast majority of slaves stayed where they were because they had no place else to go. Those who left their masters usually found a new 'family' in the army, in the police, around mission stations or in Muslim religious communities like the Murids. Nevertheless, he argues convincingly that slave initiative produced change even though neither the administrators nor the slave-owners wanted it. Rather, the slaves were able to exploit changes in power relations to re-negotiate the nature of their servitude and gradually to empty slavery of much of its economic content.

Any differences I have with Getz are minor. Thus, for example he compares British policy after 1874 in the Gold Coast to French policy in Senegal after 1848. Though there were similarities, this is not a good comparison. Once the revolutionary enthusiasm of 1848 died down, French administrators were dealing with the imperial government of Napoleon III, who authorized actions by Governor Louis Faidherbe that the British were not willing to approve twenty years later. But by the mid-1870s, as Getz later elaborates, both metropolises were more sensitive to abolitionist pressures. Getz is correct, however, that in the 1880s and 1890s, the French allowed their governors more room for compromise with slave-owning elites than the British did. In part, this was the stronger influence of British abolitionists, in part, the tighter standards of accountability in the British Colonial Office. He argues that both colonial administrations attacked the slave trade toward the end of the century because it was more vulnerable than slavery itself and because anti-slavery literature focused on the harsh abuse of the trade. This is true, but the end of the trade was also the precondition to any economic growth. There are also a few minor factual errors. For example, he identifies Jauréguibery as commandant at Podor (p. 163) three years after he served as Governor. In general, Getz's argument is similar to mine. His analysis is persuasive. His synthesis of debates between MacSheffrey, Dumett, Johnson, Akurang-Parry and Parker is convincing. All in all, this is an excellent book.

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MARTIN A. KLEIN

## SLOW DEATH; STILL ALIVE

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*Slavery in the Twentieth Century: The Evolution of a Global Problem.* By SUZANNE MIERS. Walnut Creek CA: AltaMira Press, 2003. Pp. xx + 503. No price given (ISBN 0-7591-0339-9); paperback (ISBN 0-7591-0340-2).

KEY WORDS: Colonial, postcolonial, slavery.

Suzanne Miers addresses issues that most historians of the contemporary world would rather ignore. While slavery is of undoubted importance, especially in the Caribbean, Brazil and the southern USA, and more recently in the study of Africa and other parts of the world, the treatment of slavery in these areas is usually considered to be 'historical', i.e. before the twentieth century, and hence something of the past, whose legacy admittedly is much studied, but as if slavery no longer exists. In the African context, scholars have dealt with the topic in anthropological and historical perspective, including of course Miers herself, but few have addressed the ongoing contemporary significance as Miers does in *Slavery in the Twentieth Century*. As a result of this neglect, Miers's book reads a bit like an exposé; it is sometimes journalistic, but always scholarly. There is a burning commitment that underlies the book that perhaps reveals as much about the author as it does about the subject itself.

The study is based on extensive research in an impressive range of archives, a wide reading of the literature, and concentrated on a range of related topics. Miers's bibliography includes material from some twenty archives and repositories, as well as private papers and various interviews that she conducted. Although her earlier research focused on British efforts to suppress the slave trade and slavery, specifically with respect to Africa, this study encompasses much of the world. Her subtitle captures the theme of this study – the evolution of a global problem.

Despite a vast literature on the decline of slavery in the Americas and Europe and its confinement as an institution to Africa and Asia, with exceptions, the usual assumption is that slavery is something of the past. Miers shows otherwise, which raises questions of causation and explanation. First European countries agreed not to enslave each other, and then this was extended to their overseas dominions and the subjects therein. Muslims and Christians may massacre each other, spreading terror when possible, but they do not tend to enslave each other anymore. Nonetheless, slavery has persisted, indeed thrived in some contexts that relate to the differentials in power and authority and the demand for servile persons who can be exploited as profoundly as in more 'traditional' forms of slavery.

The book establishes forcefully that slavery is not just a history of enslaved Africans in the Americas, Africa and the Islamic world, although slavery was closely associated with all of these areas and therefore of direct relevance to the study of African, indeed world, history. Her work demonstrates that the time-frame for the study of slavery has to reach to the present; it does not stop as a result of laws and decrees in 1807 (the British Atlantic slave trade), 1834 (emancipation of slaves in British colonies, but not territories), 1865 (the end of the US Civil War), 1926 (emancipation of slaves in Sierra Leone) or any of a number of other dates that could be cited. In short, slavery has been an ongoing social, indeed criminal, activity (by international standards), which has managed to survive as a major world problem until the present. Miers's advocacy of the anti-slavery cause is openly acknowledged. This is a book that mixes solid historical scholarship with issues of public policy, with the intention of influencing that policy. Her work also has implications for the study of the

history of slavery and the relationship of that history to 'mainstream' African historiography.

The book is divided into 25 chapters, two-thirds covering *c.* 1900 to 1939, and consequently focused on the period when the League of Nations turned its attention to the slavery question and other forms of coerced labour. She examines the background and impact of the Temporary Slavery Commission of 1924 and the Slavery Convention of 1926, and does an admirable job of addressing specific problems, especially Ethiopia, Liberia, and the Muslim protectorates in the Middle East. Her study of the battle to sustain the League's Slavery Commission and to establish permanent mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on abuses of slavery and forced labour is useful. She places the international debate in the context of colonialism, in which more often than not these issues were an embarrassment, because of arrangements of accommodation with local rulers and slave owners, and hence led to efforts to suppress information or otherwise cover up abuses. As she demonstrates, the redefinition of slavery to include other forms of coercion had the effect of exposing how widespread slavery was, and ultimately forced most colonial regimes to confront abusive labour relationships.

Miers explores the crucial roles of Lord Frederick Lugard and Sir George Maxwell, whose involvement in slavery matters reveals the close association between colonial policy and efforts at reform. Lord Lugard is perhaps best known for his theories of 'indirect rule', which he attempted to implement when he was governor in Uganda and Nigeria. As is now well known, he was a leading proponent of 'legal status' abolition, in which the condition of slavery was no longer recognized in the courts, although allowed to continue, and provided the context for thinly disguised mechanisms that allowed the continuation of slavery for at least a generation into colonial rule. The result was a very 'slow death' for the institution, slavery not finally being abolished in Northern Nigeria until 1936 or in some Muslim countries until the 1960s and 1970s. Maxwell was a retired colonial official who had served in Malaya and who brought to the League a commitment to reform, a commitment that was not shared by delegates from France or Portugal, or indeed within the British colonial service. His efforts, and those of his colleagues, reveal the frustrations and limited success of these modern abolitionists.

The record of the United Nations on issues of slavery has also been mixed. Part of its story is related to the ongoing activities of the International Anti-Slavery Society and other NGO's worldwide. As Miers documents, despite the tremendous efforts to eradicate slavery, often with mixed results, the actual number of those who are enslaved, in one form or another, has increased dramatically in the past 100 years. These forms of slavery range from various types of forced labour, prostitution and marriage to the exploitation of children and migrant workers. While traditional definitions of slavery sometimes do not include these forms of coercion, the spread of these forms of controlling people against their will and against their interests certainly deserves careful study, and in historical perspective. Such study offers a new way to bring the underclasses, especially children and women, into the mainstream of historical research.

This will be a standard work on the subject of modern slavery for some time to come. Undoubtedly, there will be detailed studies of slavery in different contexts that are discussed in overview in this book, in which the voices of the enslaved will be brought out more forcefully, and which will examine patterns of resistance and accommodation that are suggested from comparison with earlier forms of slavery in the Americas, and indeed elsewhere. The cover of the paperback edition is penetrating; the sober faces of children with their deep, sad and fearful eyes reveal little hope for their futures. Beyond the institutional and political analysis that

characterizes Miers's study are other issues of social and economic history that require urgent research and careful study.

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## A HISTORY OF INEQUALITY IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY GHANA

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*Le strutture della disegualianza, Capi, appartenenza e gerarchia nel mondo akan dell'Africa Occidentale.* [*The Structure of Inequality: Chiefs, Belonging and Hierarchies in the West African World of the Akan*]. By STEFANO BONI. Milano: Franco Angeli, 2003. Pp. 303. €24, paperback (ISBN 88-464-4700-X).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, colonial, postcolonial, anthropology, chieftaincy, cultural, inequality, kinship, social.

Stefano Boni's book illustrates the dynamics of hierarchical structures and social inequalities in Sefwi society during the twentieth century. Between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century the territory of the Sefwi – which corresponds to Wiaso, Anhwiaso-Bekwi-Bibiani and Juabeso-Bia districts in the northern part of the western region of present-day Ghana – fell in the path of Asante expansion, paying homage to Asante sovereigns, and running the Asante administration for them in the southwestern part of their empire. But in 1887 the Sefwi kingdom broke away from the Asante influence by placing itself under British protection.

Compared to the Asante world – whose political and judicial systems were seriously compromised by colonialization – there was greater continuity in the Sefwi political and hierarchical structures, above all from the 1920s when the system of Indirect Rule in the Gold Coast was formalized in line with other British-controlled regions of Africa. The Sefwi elite managed to renegotiate their key positions in the political and economic structure at village and district level, which enabled them to keep control of land distribution in their territory during the twentieth century.

Boni's analysis is divided into three parts. Each illustrates a different aspect in the process leading to the construction of hierarchical relationships which marks Sefwi society out, constantly comparing the ethnography and history of the Sefwi with other areas in the Akan world. The first part discusses three shared and meaningful principles through which a number of hierarchical relations are organized in Sefwi society. Ancestry, gender and seniority structure everyday life along with Sefwi constructions of personhood and social roles. These same principles legitimize the subjects' subordination to and dependence on their chiefs. Boni defines ancestry, gender and seniority as 'local methods of attributing value to different relationships' (p. 25) which range from parenthood to land allocation and apprenticeship. His research thus places itself within the orbit of the more general interest shown by both British and American anthropology and by African history in the symbolic construction of social life during the past two decades.

The second part of the book examines the social codes through which the hierarchical distinctions have been expressed and reproduced in Sefwi society throughout the twentieth century. Boni illustrates the language of the relationships based on kinship, the terminology used for land ownership and, as time passed, the use that the chiefs and the elite made of religious beliefs in order to reinforce



their own authority. A section is dedicated to the arrangements and transactions involving food and drink as a context through which Sefwi social differences are made socially visible, and at the same time reproduced. Boni analyses events and episodes in Sefwi history when the socially subordinated groups actively sought to challenge their political and economic marginality. He also investigates how the Sefwi elite – principally represented by the village chiefs and by the district chiefs – stood up to these attempts at resistance and rebellion to re-establish their own supremacy.

The final part of Boni's study discusses the hierarchical organization at domestic and community level. The author makes widespread use of archival material to explore the patterns of permanence and change in the Sefwi social and political hierarchy, such as those relating to local political and economic developments. In particular, he turns to the records of land and marriage disputes in order to study landlord–tenant relationships as well as the conflicts characterizing domestic groups in the early twentieth century. There is a telling reconstruction of how the role and perception of the foreigner were changed through the development of cocoa farms and the monetization of agricultural production. While in nineteenth-century Sefwi society foreigners were not only welcome but also assimilated fairly easily, from the 1950s the Sefwi chiefs and elite transformed the principle of ancestry into an instrument used definitively to exclude foreigners from local politics, thus keeping them in a permanently subordinate position of uncertainty. Sefwi ethnicity and the power of the Sefwi hierarchy have both been reinforced as a consequence of this process. From an anthropological point of view the book is so organized that it makes an ethnographic and theoretical contribution to the debate on inequality and the social hierarchy. It is certainly of interest to readers who wish to broaden and deepen their knowledge of twentieth-century transformation in rural Africa in the colonial and postcolonial epochs.

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ALICE BELLAGAMBA

## A MAJOR STUDY OF A NEGLECTED RESISTANCE WAR

doi:10.1017/S0021853705390815

*West African Challenge to Empire: Culture and History in the Volta-Bani Anticolonial War.* By MAHIR SAUL and PATRICK ROYER. Oxford: James Currey Publishers; Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 2001. Pp. xiii + 404. £45 (ISBN 0-85255-474-5); £16.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-479-6).

KEY WORDS: West Africa, Burkina Faso, Mali, colonial, military, resistance.

Anthropologists Mahir Saul and Patrick Royer have written a remarkable history of a major yet undeservedly obscure colonial conflict, which they call 'the Volta-Bani anticolonial war'. For specialists in the history and culture of Francophone West Africa, this war is better known as the revolt against military conscription which occurred in the Niger bend in 1915–16. Based on extensive fieldwork and solid archival work in France, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast, this substantial study is accompanied by no less than 27 excellent maps that help general readers situate the war within the 100,000 square kilometres extending in Mali from San to the borders of Jenne, and in Burkina Faso from Koudougou as far south as Bobo-Dioulasso. This vast region included disparate

peoples, and cultures, as well as numerous languages within the Voltaic and Mande families. One reason for its obscurity was that the region lacked large African polities or states. Instead, old village leagues and alliances among segmentary societies formed the core of the rebellion. Though numerically a minority, Muslims played an important role in trade, were central figures in the larger towns and among the diffuse leadership of the revolt.

This rising is best understood as a primary resistance movement designed to end colonial abuses such as heavy taxation and especially forced recruitment, and for some, to drive away the French entirely. Given the thin veneer of French rule in this remote area, such a goal was not millenarian, although magic was an important element of cohesion among rebel groups. Also significant were symbolic efforts to erase the French presence: on the surface of roads built with forced labour, rebels planted millet.

The conflict was arguably the largest resistance movement anywhere in Africa between 1914 and 1918. The rebels mobilized as many as 20,000 soldiers at the height of the rebellion in 1916 and the French required 5,000 troops, mostly *tirailleurs*, to put out the firestorm among the 900,000 inhabitants touched by the resistance. African flintlocks were no match for French firepower and the toll on resistors was high; one battle near Bobo-Dioulasso in May 1916 left 2,000 dead.

The remoteness of the region and its colonial affiliation may help explain why this story has remained obscure especially to English-speaking readers. There is another and more compelling reason. Primary resistance movements and leaders have often taken pride of place in the history school books of postcolonial states. In Guinea, Sekou Touré even had a personal reason to embellish the memory of his ancestor Samori Touré. In eastern and southern Africa, Maji-Maji, Bambatha's rebellion and the rising of John Chilembwe have all been invoked as proud if unsuccessful movements of resistance against cruel but powerful colonial armies. In Burkina Faso, however, the people who had played the dominant role in the primary resistance were from the wrong part of the country, more closely associated with the Mande minorities in the western part of the country than with the majority Mossi of the old Ouagadougou and Yatenga empires in the centre and north. Indeed, not only did Mossi elites from these empires fight with the French to put down the Volta-Bani warriors, one of their own, Maurice Yaméogo, first president of the newly independent republic of Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), was not interested in embellishing the accomplishments of peoples who now supported his political opponents.

The disciplinary strengths of the authors are evident throughout what is essentially an anthropology of a unique resistance movement crossing lines of ethnicity and religion. Weaknesses in this book may also be a product of disciplinary orientation. Although the authors cite major studies of French Africa and the First World War, they treat the French side summarily and inaccurately. The unnamed Governor-General of French West Africa at the time is described as being 'panic stricken' (p. 24) over the rising, whereas in fact Joost van Vollenhoven, who was in charge, used the revolt as part of his campaign to end the heavy burden of military conscription. Also, Senegal's deputy Blaise Diagne, who as an energetic supporter of full African participation in France's war effort no doubt had strong opinions about the revolt, receives no mention.

These criticisms apart, this book is a welcome addition to the literature. Future textbook writers of modern African history would do very well to take notice.

## COUPLING RESPECTABILITY AND RESISTANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

doi:10.1017/S002185370540081X

*Respectability and Resistance: A History of Sophiatown.* By DAVID GOODHEW.  
Westport CN: Praeger, 2004. Pp. xxvi + 190. \$84.95 (ISBN 0-325-07100-4).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, urban, social.

In this adaptation of his Oxford Ph.D. thesis, David Goodhew has provided a highly readable account of politics and cultural values in Johannesburg's 'Western Areas', from the latter's origins to the 1950s. As such, Goodhew writes not only about Sophiatown, but also about the two less famous components of Western Areas, namely Western Native Township and Newclare. What is particularly novel and insightful about Goodhew's study, at least in the context of South African historiography of recent decades, is its emphasis on the intimate and complex relationship between respectability and resistance among black township residents.

As Goodhew reminds us, most 'revisionist' (largely neo-Marxist) historians of South Africa (writing from the 1970s onwards) found blacks who resisted (by whatever means) far more enticing and praiseworthy subjects than those who pursued respectability. He rightly points out that revisionists were generally suspicious of the respectable, found more glamour in the 'rough'. Respectability was seen by many revisionists as a petty bourgeois value which, at best, made its adherents unlikely would-be revolutionaries, and, at worst, made them vulnerable to co-option by the white supremacist state. Goodhew persuasively demonstrates, following here in the footsteps of Robert Ross's superbly nuanced study of the nineteenth-century Cape Colony, that respectability is worth studying. He goes rather further than Ross in suggesting that the desire for respectability among township dwellers in the past is not only 'worthy of respect', and of rescuing from "the enormous condescension" of (revisionist) historians, but also by stating that it offers hope for South Africa in the future.

Goodhew argues that the pursuit of respectability was not just a value confined to a petty bourgeois minority in the Western Areas, but was in fact the aspiration of the majority and, when found among members of the working class, was not 'false consciousness'. Respectability usually entailed, *inter alia*, belief in Christianity (so often unexplored in township studies of the last few decades), the view that education meant progress and the desire for effective measures to prevent crime. But in the context of South Africa in the first half of the twentieth century (and beyond), what township dwellers deemed criminal did not always coincide with government definitions. Thus pass offences, or illegal beer brewing, attracted little stigma, whereas violent assault (or the threat of it) was feared and condemned by Western Areas' residents. In contrast, policing seemingly operated on diametrically opposite principles, at least from the 1930s onwards.

Goodhew convincingly shows that, far from being polar opposites, respectability and resistance were inextricably intertwined for most residents, whether 'petty bourgeois' or 'working class'. This was true both at the level of the everyday, in the likes of the widow brewing beer illegally to fund her children's education, as well as during more overtly political occasions. Thus, for instance, this kind of resistance usually took the form of cross-class protests against attempts by the state to make the pursuit of respectability more difficult. The removal of Civic Guards, the imposition of Bantu education or the forced removals (and destruction of Sophiatown) are some prominent examples Goodhew relates for the 1950s.

There are a few problems with this thoughtful study. Most obviously it is strange to find no mention made of the extensive available material on

predominantly coloured communities (most famously District Six) that existed in Cape Town before their destruction under apartheid. Their essence was also (in so many ways) the pursuit of respectability. Indeed any comparison with a community elsewhere in South Africa, let alone other parts of Africa and beyond, is generally fleeting. Equally, Goodhew's exploration of respectability is, as he admits, limited: praiseworthy for its inclusion of the hitherto neglected area of religion, but leaving large gaps in other areas of popular culture. These include little discussion, for instance, of either material culture or domestic life. And one would have liked Goodhew to have included many more 'thick descriptions': the one that related a nativity play in 1949 that satirized a pass raid was wonderfully suggestive. Yet for his insightful coupling of respectability and resistance alone, Goodhew has made an important contribution to South African urban history.

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VIVIAN BICKFORD-SMITH

## AN ANTHROPOLOGIST OF AFRICA IN BRITAIN AND IN NAZI GERMANY

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*Leben und Werk Günter Wagners (1908–1952)*. By UDO MISCHKE. Gehen: Escher Verlag, 2002. Pp. 293. No price given (ISBN 3-932642-21-X).

KEY WORDS: Anthropology, colonial.

This book offers an absorbing story from the history of social anthropology, but may be most interesting (and exasperating) to historians of Germany. Following a German anthropologist through American and British academic institutions, including the fledgling International African Institute, in the 1930s, it offers valuable insights into the way institutions, personalities and research agendas shaped each other. The disturbing part begins with Wagner's voluntary return to Germany in 1938 and the author's willfully naïve, if not apologetic, account of his work for the Ministry of Propaganda, followed by use of his British contacts to evade the sanctions of 'de-nazification'.

Udo Mischke has gone after every scrap of information on his subject, making good use especially of university archives. Guenter Wagner began his studies under German professors of *Ethnologie*, moved on to work under Franz Boas at Columbia University and then switched to the newly founded International African Institute in London, under whose aegis he did research on the Luya of Western Kenya in 1934–8. During the late 1930s, he observed and apparently welcomed the rise of competition to the IAI in the shape of the Oxford anthropologists around Evans-Pritchard.

The focus on a German in these British institutions throws up some interesting perspectives: Mischke's reading of sources on the foundation of the IAI suggests that its conception as international was partly a means of letting German researchers have a slice of the action in Africa, at a time when the German government was making noises about wanting its colonies back.

Moreover, Wagner's transition from Boas to Malinowski, who had little good to say about Boas's emphasis on history and language, makes a neat example of how the influence of these two luminaries shaped the work of their junior, how their preferences and disagreements inspired or restrained his research. Quotes from

the correspondence and unpublished writing of the academics involved, such as Malinowski and Meyer Fortes, give a taste of a colourful period in British social anthropology.

Mischek, however, is better at depicting personalities and institutional networks than at recreating their debates. Although he references books such as Kuklick's study of the social history of British social anthropology, one never quite gets a sense of what, other than personalities, was at stake in the debates. The author seems to hold no views on whether or why these debates mattered or may still matter. His account of Wagner's attempts to mediate between functional and historical approaches remains similarly vague.

Which brings us to his refusal to have any views on the way his subject lived through the Third Reich. He states in his sleeve notes that he hopes to avoid 'one-sided attribution of guilt' and describes his approach as hermeneutic. But his hermeneutics comes down to a wide-eyed recitation of Wagner's own excuses.

Mischek well enough states the reasons why Wagner returned to Germany (fear of unemployment), took a job with a department of a rabidly racist government (again fear of unemployment) and then appealed to his contacts in Britain to help him quash his assessment as opportunist, *Mitlaeufer*, by the de-nazification commission (fear of having his fuel ration cut). He never asks why the many good reasons not to do these things, including Wagner's apparent dislike of Nazi ideology and government and the many atrocities already committed by this government before Wagner's return, did not prevail.

There is food for thought in the fact that Wagner's contemporaries and former colleagues in Britain wrote to the de-nazification office on his behalf, apparently condoning, from a short distance in time, something that now appears inexcusable. But Mischek does not tell us how much his former colleagues may have known about Wagner's actions in Nazi Germany.

Indignation at those who conform to an oppressive regime is cheap; a point worth keeping in mind also regarding African history. But denying their moral and personal failures is no alternative. Good (critical, not judgmental) biographies of Germans embroiled in the Third Reich have been written; one wishes that Mischek had consulted them.

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FELICITAS BECKER

## THE COLD WAR DIMENSION OF KENYAN DECOLONIZATION

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*Britain, Kenya and the Cold War: Imperial Defence, Colonial Security, and Decolonisation.* By DAVID A. PERCOX. London: Taurus Academic Studies, 2004.

Pp. vii + 252. £47.50 (ISBN 1-85043-460-3).

KEY WORDS: Kenya, decolonization, international relations, military.

The historical study of Kenya's decolonization, always a popular topic in African historiography, has reached a new stage. At the time that the transfer of power occurred, many commentators, especially those in the confidence of Kenya's settler population, saw the handing over of power to the black African majority as a betrayal of trust and a capitulation to the forces of darkness. In the view of a former British colonial governor, Patrick Renison, the man who was being

allowed to take the reins of power in 1963 was none other than the master mind of the brutal Mau Mau insurgency, Jomo Kenyatta, 'a leader to darkness and death'. It took only the matter of a few decades for this perspective to wear thin. It was set aside in favor of formulas that stressed the careful and coordinated bargain that shrewd British colonial authorities struck between moderate African nationalists, led by the man once detained as the engineer of Mau Mau, the same Jomo Kenyatta, and multinational corporations and it was enacted at the expense of extremists of the left, the Mau Mau rebels, and the right, recalcitrant British settlers. Now David Percox, drawing on newly accessible colonial records at the British Public Record Office and concentrating on defence and security issues, argues that the pathway to the transfer of power was far from the orderly one that recent historical studies have proposed. In fact, in Percox's view, the British, caught up in Cold War power politics, were still trying to prolong the handing over of power to African rulers right up to the very last moment.

The great virtue of this work is its scrupulous attention to security and military considerations. Cold War historians have tended to ignore tropical Africa on the grounds that countries south of the Sahara did not have the strategic importance of those in Europe, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. The Cold warriors, so the argument runs, did not regard these territories as shields against Soviet expansionism. Hence, sub-Saharan Africa did not qualify for anti-aggression pacts like NATO, the Baghdad pact and the SEATO alliance. But Percox demonstrates that while African territories were not folded in to Western military alliances, the strategic and military advantages to the West of countries like Kenya were never ignored. Especially, as the British scurried about to locate a more secure base than the one in the Suez canal region in Egypt, a constant irritant in Anglo-Egyptian relations, the British military men proposed Kenya as an alternative. Here the British could have large armed contingents at the ready.

Percox demonstrates that in the early 1950s, especially after the aborted invasion of Egypt in 1956 went badly awry, Kenya became a valid military option in Cold War politics and remained so all the way through the independence negotiations and beyond into Anglo-Kenyan relations after Kenya's independence. Here the author makes his most valuable contributions. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s British officials dealt with Kenya and its manifold racial and nationalist problems with an eye to ensuring the accessibility of a secure military foothold. But, as can be the case when a scholar has found a good insight, Percox carries his argument quite far. In his reading of the documents, Kenya's decolonization takes the form of a bargain between British cold warriors and 'moderate' African nationalists who see the advantage of a strong internal security apparatus, built up in the 1950s in the suppression of Mau Mau, and a firm military alliance with the British who, in fact, on two separate occasions intervened to keep the ruling party (KANU) in power. This heavy emphasis on defence and the Cold War passes lightly over other factors of considerable significance in the decolonization decisions, such as protecting important British and Western economic interests, trying to keep Jomo Kenyatta and the presumed Kenya nationalist radicals out of power and honoring obligations to European and Asian settlers. Much more realistic and persuasive are the author's earlier chapters where he describes British colonial officials and politicians at home as uncertain of the end point to colonial rule in Kenya and as men and women simply trying to muddle through.

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## YOUNG FALOLA

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*A Mouth Sweeter than Salt: An African Memoir.* By TOYIN FALOLA. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004. Pp. viii + 271. \$35 (ISBN 0-472-11401-8).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, memoirs, childhood, youth, social, cultural.

A memoir in the conventional genre this is not; it is rather more delightful than that. This is a cornucopia of stories told with the salt of irony and the mouth of wisdom as the master teller makes certain that 'A story must be factual, not imagined, and must capture the drama of places and faces' (p. 138). So while this work certainly is a literary masterwork to be enjoyed for its own sake, it is not just literature: it also recreates people and things past.

Despite its deceiving appearance though this definitely is an African Memoir: a memoir about growing up in Ibadan and gradually discovering the world, a memoir of the social history of the city of Ibadan between 1953 and 1966, and above all a memoir about the acquisition of identity. The main plot line tells us of the various metamorphoses the hero undergoes gradually to emerge as the Yoruba teenager known as Toyin Falola. The tale opens with the intricacies of dating births and with naming to create an early identity. Then follow the praises of Ibadan, the soil in which the forebears flourished, Ibadan, the metropolis that engenders violent behavior and raises ambiguity to an art. Next, the nine-year-old is first lost to a fascination with trains and then recovered which makes clear that he is no ordinary child but rather the dreaded sort of aberration called *emere*. In the next chapter the hero discovers who his true mother is and learns more about names while he is moved to an entirely different part of the city as the result of an inheritance. There he learns about the politics and tensions of polygamy and is steeped in family history while in the following installment he turns into a real Yoruba. Then he meets Leku the herbalist, the most dramatic personage in the book, who initiates him into he knows not what. Next the boy leaves the city for the village where his mother's father is a pastor and witnesses the kind of political injustice that would later involve him in a major rural revolt. An interval about the seasonal pleasures of various cults follows before the book concludes with the struggle for legal redress by the pastor during which the hero acquires the final touches to his identity (269–70).

But all along this highway of the main tale there are many diversions. Here the story bursts into exuberant poetry or song, there little stories seep in to explain contexts or feelings, further along one stumbles on engrossing panoramas conjured up by mere association of images or ideas, and all of this is cunningly put in its place so as to evoke the planned drama of places and faces, a kaleidoscope of the society and culture that nurtured the young Falola. All this is mesmerizing, especially to those who know Yoruba culture and society mainly through the prism of learned studies. It is mesmerizing in that all the familiar ethnographic themes emerge but at unexpected turns in the tale and within novel settings that completely alter their meanings, and turn a pallid frozen ethnographic ghost into a vibrant social history bursting with life.

This really is a literary masterpiece. But why does this reviewer also recommend it as a please-read-this book to readers of this journal? In the memoirs of their colleagues, historians usually seek to find the wellsprings of their contributions to historiography. They will find these here and that is reason enough to recommend the book. But beyond that this work teaches us something more essential. It tells us by example what the advantage is to study one's own society and culture and therefore implicitly how necessary it is for others to overcome their deficiencies in this matter. That this can be done to a very large degree is shown by the example of



many a distinguished foreign historian. To achieve this, it is essential to acquire personal experience by living in the field. Yet because this experience will always be limited and somewhat artificial, it is also essential to internalize the contents of all those pallid ethnographic descriptions historians now despise and to relate these to one's field experience. Hence the value of ethnographies may well be an unexpected lesson from one who shows how to overcome them.

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## PEUPLEMENT, RELATIONS INTERETHNIQUES ET IDENTITÉS

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*Histoire du peuplement et relations interethniques au Burkina Faso.* Dir. RICHARD KUBA, CAROLA LENTZ et CLAUDE NURUKYOR SOMDA. Paris: Karthala, 2003. Pp. 296. €25 (ISBN 284586-4950).

KEY WORDS: Burkina Faso, precolonial, colonial, postcolonial, anthropology, land tenure, settlement histories.

La publication de cet ouvrage collectif ne pourra manquer d'être considérée comme marquant une étape significative dans le développement des connaissances sur le Burkina Faso, il est vrai préparée de longue date par des recherches de terrain et des publications *ad hoc*. Le propos général de ce volume, qui a pour une part un caractère anthologique, est énoncé dans son titre même avec la mise en évidence des deux objectifs majeurs indissociables que sont *l'histoire du peuplement* et l'analyse des *relations interethniques*, propres à susciter des approches relevant de plusieurs disciplines aux perspectives convergentes: sciences de la nature, anthropologie, histoire, sciences économiques et politiques. Au nombre de quatorze, les contributions sont précédées, sous la signature de Richard Kuba et Carola Lentz, carte des régions étudiées à l'appui, d'une 'Introduction' parfaitement en situation.

Il est particulièrement bien venu que cette série de textes s'ouvre sur un article de Pierre Claver Hienn consacré à l'histoire du découpage administratif du Burkina de 1919 à 2001, dans la mesure, notamment, où l'on a, avec les systèmes successifs de partition et de dénomination de l'espace, des cadres qui ne peuvent manquer d'inter-agir avec les découpages dits 'ethniques' dans le contexte des identifications régionales et locales. On doit à Mark Breusers un important ouvrage (1999) sur le monde rural du Moogo, envisagé à partir du cas du Sanmatenga (nord-est du pays moaga), dont l'auteur reprend des conclusions présentées quatre années plus tôt, qui concernent la 'dynamique foncière' dans laquelle sont engagés Moose et Peuls en matière de dévolution des droits sur la terre et de mobilité sociale intervenant à l'appui d'une économie de subsistance en crise. Nous restons dans le Sanmatenga avec le texte de Sabine Luning sur 'Les chefs de terre à Maane'. L'analyse des faits d'organisation de l'espace, de représentation relative à la sacralité de la 'terre', de tenure foncière coutumière et de mobilité sociale orientée vers la diversification de l'accès aux ressources agraires était déjà au fondement de la problématique d'ensemble de l'auteur dans son ouvrage de 1997, dont la publication exclusive en néerlandais ne rend que plus précieux le présent article. Avant ou après la conquête coloniale, les migrations intérieures vers les zones à bonne vocation agricole et à faible emprise démographique ont été systématiquement au départ de conflits fonciers dont le surgissement apparemment

anecdotique cachait en vérité l'émergence d'affrontements de longue haleine d'ordre 'ethnique'. L'installation de migrants en quelque lieu que ce soit se traduit évidemment par le risque de réduction de la superficie moyenne des terres cultivables par exploitation à l'intérieur d'un parcellaire, dont il serait vain de chercher à reconstruire une image archaïque renvoyant à un horizon historique intangible: l' 'autochtonie' n'est jamais que relative. Cependant, la détention d'une fonction, d'un sanctuaire, d'un autel, d'un mythe fondateur, d'un rituel, peut valoir preuve d'une ancienneté d'installation indépassable. Mais augmentons l'intensité des phénomènes d'établissement et de diversification 'ethnique' des nouvelles implantations: nous obtiendrons à la fois une tendance à l'obsolescence des institutions emblématiques de la dite autochtonie et une pression exercée par les nouveaux venus en faveur d'une modification de la donne réputée 'traditionnelle'. Dans ce registre, Jean-Pierre Jacob a conduit une minutieuse enquête en pays winye ou ko (le Gwendege) qui porte sur un bel exemple de conflit 'moderne' dont la visée, pour des migrants de souche récente, est d'obtenir non pas une disparition de l'emprise de la coutume, mais son *aggiornamento*. La première partie de l'ouvrage s'achève sur une très stimulante étude de Katja Werthmann portant sur les sites aurifères (principalement exploités par des Moose) d'une petite région du sud-ouest, où est née vers la fin des années 70 une sorte de Wild West africain, propice à l'apparition de conflits coutumiers, de violences, d'actes de banditisme, mais aussi de démarches rituelles de conciliation avec la 'terre'.

Dans la deuxième partie, 'Les relations interethniques', est abordée d'entrée de jeu la question fondamentale de l'autochtonie par Lentz. Nous avons là une étude bien documentée et problématisée, dans laquelle l'inter- et la pan-ethnicité font l'objet d'une analyse serrée et convaincante pour autant qu'il est bien clair qu'autochtonie et allochtonie ne s'opposent dans le contexte mis en place – celui des compétitions économiques et politiques d'aujourd'hui – qu'aléatoirement ou empiriquement et non structurellement. A cet égard, l'excellent passage en revue des problèmes qui nous est présenté n'est pas exclusif d'une réflexion sur l'usage que les sociétés africaines font de la notion d'autochtonie dans leurs constructions mytho-historiques, en étroite relation avec leur système de croyance et leur activité rituelle. Il a été amplement montré que l'opposition entre 'anciens occupants' et 'nouveaux arrivés' n'est pas nécessairement une opposition de nature historique. Pour prendre un cas bien connu, l'immersion des Kurumba (pl.) du Lurum dans le monde moaga transforme l'*ayo kurumdo* (sg.), qui est un 'chef', en un 'maître de la terre' (titre qu'il faut préférer à 'chef de terre'), tandis que le représentant des supposés 'vrais' premiers occupants ou *asendesa* disparaît de l'horizon institutionnel d'une formation sociale ayant une profondeur constante de deux niveaux. En conclusion (provisoire): l'Afrique, au moins celle étudiée ici, nous offre l'exemple – épisodes violents compris – d'une mise en œuvre relativement efficace de mécanismes d'ajustements inter-ethniques, qu'il appartient à une coutume elle aussi ajustable, de ratifier, où l'on rencontre le propos de Kuba sur les Puguli du sud-ouest du Burkina. Avec le chapitre qu'Andrea Reikat consacre aux Bisa du sud-est du Burkina, nous quittons le monde gur pour le monde mande ou plus précisément 'mande-sud' (terminologie d'André Prost), étudié *in situ* par Andreas Dafinger et Reikat en 1996, par Dafinger en 2000. Pour aller directement au résultat, le lecteur pourra s'étonner que la très bonne connaissance que Reikat ne peut manquer d'avoir du terrain et de la littérature nous laisse un peu sur notre faim face à un univers riche, si l'on peut ainsi dire, en problèmes cruciaux d'ordre environnemental, épidémiologique, linguistique, ethnique, institutionnel, mytho-historique et historique. On en arrive à Youssouf Diallo, à qui l'on doit notamment l'excellent ouvrage qu'est *Les Fulbe du Boobola: Genèse et évolution de l'Etat de Barani (Burkina Faso)* (1997). En prenant la route du sud à la suite des Peuls

de Barani (nord-ouest du Burkina), Youssouf Diallo nous transporte dans le sud-ouest, chez les Komono de la région multi-‘ethnique’ de Banfora et plus largement de la zone de prépondérance de Kong. L’essor de la culture de la canne à sucre (plusieurs milliers d’hectares) a profondément transformé cette région à partir de la fin des années 60 et intensifié une mobilité sociale rurale qui touche notamment les Peuls. Diallo a tout particulièrement étudié les conflits ayant opposé agriculteurs et pasteurs, qui ont eu pour théâtre la petite région de Mangodara, localité située au sud-est de Banfora. Mais là encore, les protagonistes, nous dit Diallo, ‘ont réussi [...] à établir des relations fondées sur la complémentarité des activités agricoles et pastorales’.

On en vient à la troisième partie : ‘Histoire et construction des identités’. Notons en passant que les co-directeurs de l’ouvrage ont eu le souci de concevoir le plan de leur livre comme un cheminement thématique et méthodologique cohérent. Christoph Pelzer nous parle de la ‘nomadisation’ du sahel, comprenons : de la transformation progressive sur le long terme (1500–1900) d’un peuplement majoritaire ou au moins significatif de paysans sédentaires en un peuplement – peul et touareg – nomade et/ou semi-nomade, la sédentarité agricole ne subsistant principalement que comme une caractéristique du statut servile en milieu pastoral hors les poches sédentaires résiduelles sonray et kurumba (excellente bibliographie s’inscrivant dans le sillage de Henrich Barth). Nous restons dans le sahel avec Claude Nurukeyor Somda, qui traite des calamités naturelles dans le Liptako au XXe siècle. L’auteur identifie notamment six grandes famines sahéliennes : 1917, 1931, 1954, 1958, 1967 (et années suivantes jusqu’en 1977), qui, comme celles du XIXe siècle, portent un nom dans chacune des deux ou trois langues concernées, à commencer par le fulfulde de l’Udalan et du Liptako. L’affirmation identitaire relève d’un dispositif dont le rendement symbolique est parfois d’autant plus vivace que la réalité sociale dont elle est censée rendre compte tend vers une situation létale, entre atonie historique et brouillage ‘ethnique’ du présent. Sten Hagberg analyse le cas des Tiefo (ouest du Burkina), qui sont confrontés à une crise d’identité annonciatrice de leur disparition, par la perte de l’usage de leur langue au bénéfice du dyula (environ un millier de locuteurs pour une population de l’ordre de 12,000 à 15,000 individus) et le gommage d’un passé où l’on rencontre des figures célèbres dans l’Ouest, telles que le chef Tiefo Amoro ou la princesse dyula Guimbé Ouattara. Ce qui est remarquable, c’est que les Tiefo tentent de réagir à la condition qui leur est faite, comme le montre la création d’une Association de développement Tiefo Amoro dont on aimerait savoir qu’elle peut être son audience. Quoi qu’il en soit, on a compris que le remarquable article de Hagberg a une portée qui dépasse de beaucoup le cas des Tiefo. L’article de Moustapha Gomgnimbou traite des Kasena du sud-ouest du Burkina et du Nord-Ghana, le propos de l’auteur étant de reconstituer le cheminement de la recherche historique sur cette population, dont la mobilité a certainement appauvri la mémoire collective. En tout cas, à en juger par les résultats convaincants de l’enquête sur le village Kaya-Navio conduite par Ludovic Kibora, les Kasena sont encore loin d’avoir dit le dernier mot sur leur organisation sociale et leur vie culturelle.

Voici un livre qui mérite tous les éloges ; bien conçu par ses éditeurs intellectuels, riche d’informations, ouvert à la réflexion anthropologique et sociologique sur le Burkina d’aujourd’hui, associant auteurs burkinabé et européens : du très beau travail.

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## THE POWER OF PRAETORIAN SOCIAL MEMORY

doi:10.1017/S0021853705450811

*Lineages of State Fragility: Rural Civil Society in Guinea-Bissau.* By JOSHUA B. FORREST. Athens OH: Ohio University Press; Oxford: James Currey Ltd., 2003. Pp. xiv + 312. \$49.45 (ISBN 0-8214-1490-9); no price given, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-496-6).

KEY WORDS: Guinea-Bissau, colonial, independence wars, civil society, rural, state.

This book is a thought-provoking analysis of the social, political and economic sources of the weakness of the state in precolonial and colonial Guinea-Bissau. Using primary sources as well as secondary sources, Forrest examines the relationship between state fragility and local resistance to foreign occupation. He argues that rural civil societal development historically inhibited the development of a strong state. The state's weakness is in part related to 'Portugal's own relative underdevelopment and low level of industrialization' (p. 1). More significantly, Forrest demonstrates how local rural people fought valiantly to maintain a say in how they would be governed. 'Political penetration and social domination were in effect "blocked" – by the emergence of vibrant, adaptive, locally embedded social institutions located outside the administrative rubric of the national government and its appointees' (p. 9). Focusing on this dynamic struggle, Forrest manages to unearth the roots of the contemporary crisis of the state.

Historical and anthropological works by several specialists, this reviewer included, provide the basis for much of his discussion of the precolonial period. Many political scientists rely on anthropology and history to make sense of their materials. Few of them, however, are as enthusiastic as Forrest about really doing interdisciplinary research. He analyzes inter-societal relationships before the Portuguese began their conquest and occupation. His focus is on the period after the Berlin Conference (1884–5) when Portugal embarked on its attempts to prove 'effective occupation' and 'pacify' the local people. He shows how people's 'ethnic flexibility' operated with various groups forming alliances to prevent military occupation. These kinds of alliances within rural civil society pre-dated the military encounters with the Portuguese: the 'same communities that displayed strong, ethnically based attachments to certain territorial locales commonly decided to forego ethnic exclusivity in exchange for interethnic alliances when they were faced with external challenges' (p. 15). Rather than the memory of resistance, Forrest emphasizes the importance of a praetorian social memory: 'the determination of certain communities to retain their local autonomy, reflecting a many-centuries-long social history of community based self-rulership that rural Africans have been willing to fight and die to retain' (p. 19). Forrest examines Mandinka and Fulbe communities, as well as lesser studied groups such as the Balanta, Biaffada and Banhun. He shows that the complexities of the relationships between these groups help to explain why local resistance to colonial occupation was so successful.

Numerous scholars have discussed the impact of European colonialism on local polities. Forrest approaches his material from the opposite vantage point – his concern is to show how local societies affected the nature of colonial rule. He challenges René Pélissier and Peter Karibe Mendy who have written about popular resistance from a military perspective. Forrest wants to understand how local communities determined the way the colonial and postcolonial state looked. He examines the Portuguese military occupation, discussing both major and minor battles, and shows how contested the occupation was over time. Forrest offers specific examples of Biaffada–Fulbe–Mandinka alliances, as well as Balanta–Papel

and Balanta–Soninké–Mandinka collaboration, proving that this resistance was multiethnic. These alliances across ethnic and religious lines challenged Portuguese beliefs about rural civil society and ‘created unending crises for colonial authorities’ (p. 103).

The chapters on the colonial period offer new information for scholars interested in understanding Portuguese colonial rule. Forrest shows that the colonial state was built on violence: ‘brute force was used to repress acts that appeared to represent antistate activity’, reflecting ‘bureaucratic frustration at colonial administrators’ inability to wield a more comprehensive domination over rural civil society’ (p. 129). The Portuguese never managed to reorganize social structures. Rather, local people continued to determine the way society functioned. Forrest concludes that ‘political structures reflected a widening rejection of appointed chiefs; landholding arrangements were agreed upon by local actors [not] state officials ... ; and socioreligious systems of authority and social organization were strengthened [to avoid] state institutions’ (p. 143). Additional details on the nature of colonial rule would strengthen this section. The lack of detail probably reflects Forrest’s inability to access colonial records in Guinea-Bissau.

Forrest’s analysis of the successful national liberation struggle led by the PAIGC (1963–74) is compelling. Many scholars who began working on Guinea-Bissau in the 1970s were interested in the PAIGC’s visionary leader, Amilcar Cabral. We knew that we needed to understand the history of the area in order to comprehend the liberation struggle. Forrest shows how the praetorian social memory remained strong during the liberation struggle. He argues that political and economic issues were more critical than ethnic differences. This conclusion challenges earlier scholars who focused on ethnicity. Forrest believes that inter-ethnic alliances continued to play a significant role in this war, as they had in earlier colonial conflicts. The section on the independence period is less developed than the earlier ones. Again, this may reflect a lack of access to sources, both primary documents and oral sources. But Forrest has produced a valuable work on this forgotten part of West Africa. He raises interesting questions about the relationship between the past and the present that should help scholars make sense of the contemporary crisis.

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JOYE BOWMAN

## THE SERER AND THE STATE IN THE EVOLUTION OF LAND TENURE

doi:10.1017/S0021853705460818

*The State Must Be Our Master of Fire: How Peasants Craft Culturally Sustainable Development in Senegal.* By DENNIS C. GALVAN. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004. Pp. xiv + 317. £38.95/\$60 (ISBN 0-520-22778-6); £15.95/\$24.95, paperback (ISBN 0-520-23591-6).

KEY WORDS: Senegal, postcolonial, credit, land tenure, peasants, state.

Dennis Galvan’s study of peasant–state relations in the Siin region of Senegal focuses on land tenure reform since the colonial period as a crucial example of ‘institutional syncretism’, examining how Serer peasants rework institutions imposed by the state in an effort to bring them in line with evolving conceptions of ‘tradition’. Galvan’s book makes an important contribution to the study of state–society relations in Senegal and will be of equal interest to social scientists and historians. His conceptual framework brings culture into the analysis of

state–society relations. Historians will be particularly interested in the way Galvan's excellent fieldwork allows him to make an innovative contribution to the postcolonial history of Senegal through his study of land reform in the Njafaj region of Siin.

Galvan divides his study into two parts. The first part of the book develops Galvan's model of 'institutional syncretism', introduces the Serer and the region of Njafaj and explores changes in land tenure through a study of the practice of land-pawning (*taille*), an example of institutional syncretism that emerged in the colonial period. The second half of the book discusses the history of land tenure in the postcolonial period by examining the impact of two major government reforms, the 1964 National Domain Law and the 1972 Rural Council Law. Both were 'high modernist' state projects that tried to impose a particular vision of land tenure on peasant communities. They provoked conflicts and led to the abandonment of systems of land management that had legitimacy in the eyes of peasants. The failure of state reforms is only one thread of Galvan's analysis: equally important is the ongoing process of syncretism from below, which reworks imposed institutions.

Galvan's argument for the importance of culture and tradition can be seen most clearly in Serer attitudes toward the state, captured in two quasi-proverbial expressions, 'The state must be our master of fire' and 'The king has come – everything is ruined'. Both have their historical roots in peasant relations with the Siin monarchy, which was legitimate in so far as it respected the Serer custodians of the land, the 'masters of fire' or *laman*. They were elders of the matrilineage that founded a village, rain priests and managers of the land tenure system. At the same time the monarchy was seen as an alien, intrusive power that ruined social relations and caused the rains to fail. These same dicta apply to the colonial and postcolonial states. When the state allows syncretism to rework imposed institutions it has the possibility of being legitimized as the new 'master of fire'. When it imposes alien laws and institutions, which has been the norm, it is vilified as a reincarnation of the worst aspects of the precolonial monarchy. Galvan argues throughout his book that deeply held notions of 'tradition' (*cosaan* in Serer), however reworked and idealized, are an independent variable in Serer attitudes toward the state and land tenure reform, in that they cannot be accounted for by explanations that examine only status, wealth, age, gender or religion.

Galvan's concept of 'institutional syncretism' appears most clearly in his presentation of land pawning. Land pawning was a syncretistic response to colonial efforts to promote freehold tenure, seen as essential to cash cropping. Land pawning allowed a landowner to lend a field to someone else in exchange for cash (the land could be reclaimed by repaying the loan), without affecting Serer notions that land was inalienable and without dissolving the custodianship of the *laman*, which had spiritual and well as material dimensions. Land was partially commoditized and pawning facilitated cash cropping, but the process stopped far short of freehold tenure. The 1964 National Domain Law swept away this syncretistic form of pawning through a provision that granted ownership to anyone who had cultivated a field for more than two years. The takeover of fields under the provisions of the new law led to bitter recriminations, divorces (as retaliations against family groups) and other conflicts. While the 1972 Rural Council Law in theory reopened the possibility of local influence in interpreting tenure law, state officials ordered rural councils to follow the dictates of Dakar. The cumulative effect was to destroy the power of the *laman* and other customary authorities. Land pawning continued, with pawns limited to two years to prevent the seizure of fields. As a result, fallow periods were abandoned, land was over-farmed and ecological conditions deteriorated. Galvan notes that some rural councils persist

in using 'traditional' norms and beliefs to settle disputes, defying the spirit of their orders from Dakar, but in general the king has come and everything is ruined.

There are some questionable arguments in chapter 3 on the sociology of Njafaj. Galvan generalizes the notion of 'caste' to all social groups, unlike most recent research. More problematic is the social group he calls the Serer 'customary aristocracy', made up of *laman* (masters of fire) and *yal bakh* (masters of the axe), the greater and lesser custodians of the land. If these positions are inherited matrilineally within large clans on the basis of clan membership, age and mystical powers, the *laman* are title-holders, not a distinct social group. Perhaps these positions have come under the control of narrower descent groups in the Siin, but it is impossible to tell from the evidence provided.

Galvan's book is filled with fascinating case studies of conflict, based on his excellent field research. This book is the best study of the Serer in English by a social scientist. It should find a wide readership among historians and social scientists interested in peasant–state relations.

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JAMES SEARING

## PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL ECONOMY AND THE BANDA REGIME

doi:10.1017/S0021853705470814

*Malawi's First Republic: An Economic and Political Analysis.* By HARVEY J. SINDIMA. Lanham MD: University Press of America, 2002. Pp. xv + 260. £29 (ISBN 0-7618-2332-8).

KEY WORDS: Malawi, postcolonial, philosophy, politics.

Harvey Sindima's earlier books have addressed theological and philosophical problems in Africa's historical and political processes. *Malawi's First Republic* represents a bold step into the substance of political economy, amassing an impressive range of statistical detail and critical analysis. Three of its eleven chapters examine Malawi's missionary and colonial past. These chapters analyse in commendable detail early settler politics, colonial land policies and Britain's reluctance to recognize Malawi as its protectorate. 'Malawi was a child that Britain never wanted' (p. 34), Sindima concludes, giving an historical context for the impoverishment and inequality that came to define the first republic. Data gleaned from government and World Bank reports provide detail on various aspects of the economy and the education and health-care systems. Sindima also has the patience to take the reader through the development strategies of the first republic. His theoretical inspiration, drawn from the dependence framework of the 1970s, leads him to emphasize Malawi's 'satellite position' (p. 67) in the world economy and East–West geopolitics. Predictably, the main Malawian agent in this rather inexorable scheme is Kamuzu Banda, but the chapters on the rise of nationalism and the first republic's political system present a wider cast of personalities than were allowed for in the regime's own accounts of history. Towards the end, Sindima offers an overview of the transition to political pluralism, followed by a philosophical chapter on the challenges of development in Africa.

The Cabinet Crisis of 1964 receives detailed attention as a formative moment in Banda's ascension to virtually unlimited power. Cases recovered from the regime's darkest years, less often presented in previous studies, are particularly striking. Gwanda Chakuamba, who continued in national politics after the democratic



transition, appeared at an annual convention of the Malawi Congress Party in 1973 with a mob of Young Pioneers, determined to beat up dissenters. Sindima follows the aftermath of these attacks to the sad fate of Chief Mwase, one of the proto-nationalists. Revisionist history can also reveal the sheer absurdity of dictatorship, such as a death sentence unleashed on an eleven-year-old boy, or a detention order given for a two-year-old toddler. Sindima alludes to an especially urgent task for revisionist history when he reflects on the scale of politically motivated detentions and persecutions. While much is known about the tribulations of high-profile poets and politicians, other histories remain unwritten, tributes to those ordinary Malawians whose names, as Sindima notes, 'never appeared in Amnesty International and Africa Watch reports' (p. 204).

This book answers a demand for fresh perspectives on the country's modern history. Its impact is impeded not only by poor copy-editing but also by Sindima's lack of attention to the revival of historical and social research in and on Malawi during the 1990s. Out of the eight studies listed under general references that were published in the 1990s, five are Sindima's own philosophical and theological treatises. Nor is he detained by doubts over the accuracy of the reports and documents he quotes as his sources. While clearly also based on personal experience and anecdotal evidence, the book's claim to primary research is confined to correspondence with just one expatriate officer. More generally, one wonders whether the time for overviews of the Banda regime has passed. Various under-researched issues emerge in this book, from the involvement of the political class in banking and financial institutions to the subtle tensions between the political and bureaucratic elites. It remains to be seen how studies on such specific themes would qualify narratives in overviews like *Malawi's First Republic*.

While the bulk of the book consists in copious statistical and historical detail, its last chapter returns the reader to the philosopher's armchair. Sindima's objective is to rethink development in Malawi, but his discussion is peculiarly out of tune with the rest of the book. After descriptions of how labour migration and taxation have shaped rural Malawi, the notion of 'traditional society' (p. 238) is an anachronism. Sindima's desire to think beyond liberalism is shared by many other contemporary scholars, but critical to such a project is how 'indigenous values' (p. 239) are defined, and by whom. Two Chichewa concepts emerge to determine the 'organising logic' (p. 240) of Malawian culture, leaving the reader to wonder about the source of Sindima's authoritative definition, not to mention the problems involved in forcing cultural and religious complexity into a neat formula. How is, in this historical context, the philosopher's detachment from primary research different from the elitism that this study of political economy criticises so acutely?

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HARRI ENGLUND

## GENDER AND NATIONALISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

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*Workers and Warriors: Masculinity and the Struggle for Nation in South Africa.*

By THEMBISA WAETJEN. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004. Pp. vii + 158.

\$30 (ISBN 0-252-02908-9).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, gender, masculinity, nationalism.

The struggle between Zulu nationalism and African nationalism, between Inkatha and the United Democratic Front/African National Congress, between

traditionalism and modernity has dominated analyses of KwaZulu-Natal for the last twenty years. Thembisa Waetjen reexamines the recent history of the region, reviews the literature and comes up with a compelling explanation for Inkatha's brand of politics which significantly expands our understanding of the region's history.

Waetjen's point of entry is the concept of masculinity. Noting that gendered analyses of nationalism have tended to focus on examples where patriarchy and nationalism were mutually reinforcing, she takes the example of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha movement to explore the relationship of gender and nationalism in a case where a particular nationalism did not prevail.

Set against the backdrop of the transition to democracy in South Africa in the 1980s and 1990s, Waetjen discusses the challenges which Inkatha, as the ruling homeland-based political party, faced in trying to secure its credibility and legitimacy in KwaZulu-Natal. In this period it faced the challenge of the UDF and ANC. Inkatha's support base was primarily rural while the UDF and ANC could count on an urban following. Waetjen addresses this well-recognized feature of the region's politics by foregrounding the importance of masculinity. Inkatha, she argues, faced a problem of gaining and maintaining the support of different gendered constituencies. It sought to secure support by addressing Zulu men as both warriors and workers. As warriors, Zulu men were reminded of their glorious martial past while as workers they were urged to be responsible employees who would benefit by the restoration of domestic authority which was being undermined by unemployment and, during the 1980s, by the political rise of the youth.

The book is an extended analysis of how Inkatha's ideologues – primarily Chief Buthelezi himself – addressed potential supporters. Speeches are analysed in some depth to show how Inkatha appealed to various constituencies – youth, women and men (rural and urban) – with a mix of ethnic communitarianism and liberal democracy. Women are offered the opportunity of participating in politics and of entering public spaces (including the marketplace). They are also validated as mothers who have the responsibility of keeping the family together and disciplining the youth. The youth are called upon to respect their elders and are scolded for being irresponsible children (when they boycott schooling and refuse to heed Inkatha's calls to return to school and to listen to their parents). Rural men are reminded of their Zuluness while men in the urban areas who were responding to opportunities to join trades unions and the mass democratic movement, were told that these organizations were undermining and denigrating Zulu identity.

This is a short and accessible book. It is well produced and easy to read. It has a useful index as well as a number of photographs which strengthen the text. It is presently only available in hardcover and at \$30 will possibly be beyond the means of the many gender, history and political studies university students in South Africa who should read it.

*Workers and Warriors* makes a significant contribution to debates about gender and nationalism. Apart from engaging impressively with the secondary literature on KwaZulu-Natal it contributes to debates that find prominence in postcolonial studies and feminism. Waetjen's grasp of theory is good and she bravely confronts politically sensitive issues. Nationalism is not a reflex of men's interests nor is patriarchy and the subordination of women automatically reinforced by nationalism. Waetjen shows that men are not a homogeneous group, that women's interests shift and that political messages have a gendered component that needs to be analysed in order to understand how tensions are managed. In explaining why Inkatha and its Zulu nationalist messages failed ultimately to secure a majority

(in the 2004 elections the ANC wrested control of the KwaZulu-Natal Parliament from Inkatha) she shows how support is gained and lost, how there is no neat link between material interest and political allegiance and how national and global forces limit the possibilities for parties attempting to mobilize nationally, using narrow ethnic messages.

In Waetjen's helpful personal preface she describes how, in 1979–80 she spent a year with her family on a mission station near Pietermaritzburg. This experience lends authenticity to her handling of events in KwaZulu-Natal and so it is somewhat surprising that this book has very little to say about the common people. The book's research base is comprised of Inkatha speeches and so we do not learn how people on the street and in rural villages made sense of being Zulu. We only have a distant feel of how Inkatha messages resonated with its intended supporters.

And there is one further curiosity which is being debated elsewhere in Africa. As Margrethe Silberschmidt put it in the context of East Africa, 'Are men the weaker sex in Africa'?<sup>1</sup> Waetjen does not enter this debate nor does she consider what gender positions men occupy in the transforming socio-economic landscape of South Africa. Are African men available for mobilization in the interests of gender justice? Or are they clinging to male privilege? Do they accept the gender messages of the ANC which stress gender equity or do they still long for the return of patriarchal power, domestic respect and a job in South Africa's most populous and one of its poorest provinces?

Waetjen's book is excellent. It has deepened understanding of the region's politics, added a missing gender dimension and laid the foundations for further fruitful debates which will be relevant beyond the boundaries of KwaZulu-Natal.

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ROBERT MORRELL

## CHARISMATIC CHRISTIANITY AND 'MODERNITY' IN GHANA

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*Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy.* By PAUL GIFFORD. London: C. Hurst, 2004. Pp. xv + 216. £45 (ISBN 1-85065-718-1); £16.50, paperback (ISBN 1-85065-718-X).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, postcolonial, African modernities, Christianity.

This book follows up some of the issues outlined in Gifford's *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (Bloomington, 1998), which analyses the dynamics between African Independent, mainline Catholic and Protestant, Pentecostal churches in four countries. The present publication explores Ghanaian Pentecostalism's religious vision in detail. Gifford seeks to establish what this new Christianity is and to discuss its socio-political effects in relation to modernization. Cautioning against undue generalizations, Gifford offers an amazingly rich study, featuring the Prophet Elisha Salifu Amoako, renowned for attributing mishap to witchcraft, demons and the Devil, on one side, and the charismatic teacher Mensa Otabil, famous for his determined attempt to modify African culture so as to

<sup>1</sup> M. Silberschmidt, 'Have men become the weaker sex? Changing life situations in the Kisii district, Kenya', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 30 (1992), 237–53.

facilitate development, on the other. While these two leaders at the opposite ends of the charismatic spectrum seem to have little in common, Gifford highlights significant family resemblances shared by the figures in between, such as Nicholas Duncan-Williams, Charles Agyin Asare, Dag Heward-Mills and other stars in Ghana's charismatic scene. As charismatic churches are not based on longstanding doctrinal and liturgical traditions, but belong to the founder and leader, they are easily and quickly adjusted to new trends. This makes charismatic Christianity highly dynamic, impossible to pin down in fixed categories and only to be grasped, as the book shows convincingly, through a focus on the leaders and their messages.

Chapters 1 and 2 introduce the political and religious contexts in which charismatic Christianity evolves. In particular, charismatic Christianity makes ample use of mass media in broadcasting the message and assuming a public role. Chapter 3 focuses on its emphasis on success, and argues that the prosperity gospel is an integral part of Ghana's charismatic revival. Addressing the question of deliverance, chapter 4 shows that casting out African spirits and demons holds a central place in all churches in the charismatic spectrum (certainly for the prophet Salifu, but also in Otabil's International Central Gospel Church, Otabil's reservations regarding the prominence of occult matters notwithstanding). Contrary to what is often assumed, charismatic Christianity still thrives on indigenous understandings of evil forces as causes of misfortune, and thus has much more in common with earlier African Independent Churches than more superficial observers imagine. Offering insight into Otabil's preaching and thinking, chapter 5 underscores the appeal of his approach, which differs significantly from that of other charismatic leaders in that it stresses the need for hard work and rational analysis over praying for miracles, and from that of orthodox churches and neo-traditionalists in that it calls for a radical change of African culture over cherishing the nation's cultural heritage. All these chapters offer a marvellous account of charismatic Christianity from an insider's perspective.

The remaining chapters and the conclusion switch gears and discuss the economic (chapter 6) and political (chapter 7) 'effects' of charismatic Christianity. Gifford argues that charismatic Christianity, with the exception of Otabil, fails to introduce a new work ethic, but rather induces consumerism. Far from offering a Protestant ethic stressing innerworldly asceticism and deferral of gratification (Max Weber), Ghanaian Pentecostalism appears as 'a functional equivalent of medieval Catholicism' (p. 159). Gifford is equally critical about its political role, arguing that charismatic churches (again with the exception of Otabil) surf along with mainstream political culture (characterized by a focus on success and the Big Man syndrome) and hence fail to 'reform the political system in any meaningful sense' (p. 190). Therefore he is not convinced that 'Ghana's new Christianity leads naturally to many of the benefits sometimes suggested' (p. 196), and concludes that 'the claim that charismatic churches of themselves or as such must be fostering socio-political reform has not been proved' (p. 197).

Unfortunately Gifford does not explicate against whom in particular he develops this argument. These churches certainly do not conform to the Weberian view of seventeenth-century Calvinist Protestantism or propound the disenchantment of the world in favour of 'development' (as defined by NEPAD). While it is possible to measure the achievements of these churches against the yardstick of 'modernization', the question is whether this approach is adequate to generate new insights into the appeal and achievements of charismatic Christianity. Intimating that contemporary charismatics are closer to medieval Catholicism than Weberian ideal type Calvinism, Gifford seems to suggest that they fall back behind the achievements of the Reformation, and are too backward to meet the requirements of modernity. But should the Weberian perspective at all be used as a blue print

for this entirely different context, in which capitalism is already in place for more than a century? Ghana was tied to 'the modern world' at least since the era of nineteenth-century mission activity (rather than being made to join as late as the 1980s through Structural Adjustment Programs, as Gifford states [p. 190]). In my view, Gifford's perspective on modernization, as entailing a rational worldview bereft of magical superstitions, is problematic in that it seems to confound the levels of ideology and history. The point of recent discussions about modernity and modernization in Africa and the West is to dismiss a normative attitude towards modernization, in the light of which Africa never lives up to the ideal, in favour of a critical, historical and ethnographic analysis of modernity's attractions and (more often) disappointments. On the basis of the truly fascinating data presented in this book one could also argue that charismatic Christianity signals a new phase in Ghana's encounters with modernity and development. Eagerly adopting new mass media made accessible through democratization and liberalization, searching for new religious styles and modes of spirituality and developing new forms of binding people and generating charisma, these churches could also be viewed as mirroring the shortcomings of the project of modernization and demanding a more sophisticated analytical framework that rethinks the relationship between Protestantism and modernity in Africa. To me, this is the real challenge offered by this book.

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BIRGIT MEYER

## SHORTER NOTICES

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*West Africa: An Introduction to its History, Civilization and Contemporary Situation.* By EUGENE L. MENDONSA. Durham NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2002. Pp. 660. \$50, paperback (ISBN 0-89089-649-6).

KEY WORDS: West Africa, teaching texts.

In the preface to this massive book, Mendonsa indicates that his aim is to tell a story of the clash of two civilizations, one African, the other European. He asserts that the first civilization has been compromised by contact with Europe, but still survives through the customs and values of the people of West Africa. He sees the second civilization as a global giant, overwhelming the world at present. This is the materially based civilization of the western world. Mendonsa laments that the story is full of racism, conflict, slavery, exploitation and domination by European culture. He adds that he cannot write about the end of the story because it is being written by history.

There are 19 chapters. Chapter 1 treats geography, environment and language. Chapter 2 considers tradition, civic culture and kinship. Chapter 3 discusses religion. Chapters 4–7 examine economic and political institutions, art, music and society. Chapters 8–11 offer a narrative of the early history of West Africa, the great states and Islam, the arrival of the Europeans and slavery. Chapters 12–15 cover the history of resistance to Europe, colonialism and the independence movement. Chapters 16–18 examine the postcolonial era, with chapters on the Economic Community of West African States, and development. Chapter 19 concludes.

From the details given in this book, there is no doubt that the author has done intensive research. He supplies some new information and provides a wide coverage of West Africa from ancient to contemporary times. There are impressive illustrations and a glossary. From my own teaching and research experience, I find this book very useful. Still, the author does make a number of sweeping statements which ought to be corrected or put in a proper context. For example, the section on slavery needs to take more account of oral sources.

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*Archives of Empire*. Volume II. *The Scramble for Africa*. Edited by BARBARA HARLOW and MIA CARTER. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2003. Pp. xix + 821. £87 (ISBN 0-8223-3152-7); £26.50, paperback (ISBN 0-8223-3189-6).  
KEY WORDS: Imperialism, racism.

This thoughtful and interesting collection of primary materials offers much to students and teachers alike. It is organized in four sections: 'The Berlin Conference 1885: making/mapping history'; 'The body politic: rationalizing race'; 'The political corps'; and 'Crises of empire', the last covering Gordon at Khartoum, the Anglo-Boer War and the Congo. The introductions to these sections are succinct, clear and pertinent. The 'Body politic' section presents texts that trace emergent theories of race through the nineteenth century. These are seen as part of the prospectus of imperialism, its ratification, rationalization and unreasonableness, from the anti-slavery campaigners to the Social Darwinists. The 'Political corps' section includes missionaries, explorers and administrators. The interaction of political economy and capitalism emerges throughout as important. Writers included range from Hegel to Kipling, Haggard to Rhodes, Mary Kingsley to Matthew Arnold, Herbert Spencer to Winston Churchill. Hegel is included because he excluded Africa from all existing historical processes. Harlow argues that Hegel helps explain the cultural grounds for a narrative of development that would 'overdetermine' Europe's imperial attitudes and policies. Maps and illustrations are also included, for example the illustrations accompanying James Redfield's account of comparative physiognomy. The juxtaposing of contributions is skilful. Thus, Frederick Lugard and Mary Kingsley are brought together to provide a telling counterpoint. Both believed in the scientific administration of empire rather than in the preceding era's aggressive militarism. As the editors note, their writings contain stereotypical and traditional racial and imperialist attitudes, but also reflect the reformist energies and experimental philosophies of the then modern agents of empire. The Boer War section illustrates the range and nature of the debate, and does so in an effective fashion. The voices include John MacBride of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and also those concerned with the treatment of the prisoners. This is part of a four-volume collection, the others entitled *From the Company to the Canal*, *The Great Game* and *Jubilee*. The only useful addition to this book would have been more on the views of Britain's rivals and opponents, both in order to provide a comparative dimension and to help address the competitive action–reaction account of imperialism. This is a first-rate work that deserves widespread adoption.

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*The Steamer Parish: The Rise and Fall of Missionary Medicine on an African Frontier.* By CHARLES M. GOOD JR. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004. Pp. xx + 487. £21/\$30 (ISBN 0-226-30282-2).

KEY WORDS: Malawi, colonial, missions.

This is a remarkable study of the medical agenda and activities of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) along the shores of Lake Malawi and its hinterland between the mid-1880s, when the mission's head station on Likoma island first became operational, and 1964, the year of Malawi's independence. Even though the author's stated intention is to offer a counterbalance to the 'often-shrill critiques of medical missions that began to emerge in liberal and critical studies in the 1970s' (p. 2), *The Steamer Parish* is no latter-day panegyric, for the limitations and contradictions of the UMCA's medical project lie at the very centre of the narrative.

The resolve to enter the terrain of public health care was undoubtedly the fruit of Christian compassion and piety. But its gestation was painfully slow and not entirely free from instrumental considerations. In the early years – and certainly until the appointment of Dr. Robert Howard, the first full-time medical officer for the UMCA Diocese of Nyasaland, in 1899 – the provision of medical facilities to Africans was hampered by a 'lingering ambivalence ... about the relative importance of healing and evangelism' (p. 128). And well into the twentieth century, most missionaries continued to regard medical work as a mere 'tool for evangelisation' rather than as 'part of [their] mandate' (p. 8). Moreover, far from being ideologically neutral, missionary biomedicine was imbued with eurocentric assumptions, the fragility of which Good brings out admirably. Contrary to missionary expectations, 'medical pluralism' was almost invariably the outcome of the confrontation between African and western therapeutic systems; it became 'a defining feature of the medico-religious frontier in colonial and postcolonial Africa' (p. 287). These ideological constraints – coupled with chronic budgetary difficulties – had more than a little to do with the UMCA's persistent inability to train a sufficient number of African medical assistants and dispensers.

What the book lacks in theoretical sophistication is more than made up for by its author's self-confessed empiricism. Enlivened by numerous biographical profiles of individual missionaries – such as the 'Apostle of the Lake', William Percival Johnson, an ascetic maverick who spent the best part of his fifty-two years of active service (1876–1928) aboard the *S. S. Charles Janson* and the *S. S. Chauncy Maples* – and drawing upon a painstaking reading of archival records and missionary journals, *The Steamer Parish* makes an important contribution to our understanding of the origins of the contemporary crisis of public health care systems in Central Africa. The impression of thoroughness conveyed by the book, however, is partly tempered by a series of surprising bibliographical oversights (John McCracken's classic study of Livingstonia mission, in particular, should not have been ignored by the author). The volume is also somewhat overwritten, and this reviewer felt at times that a number of unnecessary repetitions might have been omitted to make room for one or more comparative sections. The Diocese of Nyasaland consisted of a far-flung string of lake-side missions, hospitals and schools served by steamer ships. Was the 'nautical strategy' adopted by the UMCA (and the problematical 'technological dependency' which it brought in its wake) unique among missionary societies in Central Africa? After more than 500 pages readers are left none the wiser.

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*African Posters: A Catalogue of the Poster Collection in the Basler Afrika Bibliographien.* By GIORGIO MIESCHER and DAG HENRICHSEN. Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2004. Pp. 301. CHF 85 (ISBN 3-905141-82-5).

KEY WORDS: Southern Africa, apartheid, arts, decolonization, popular culture.

It is difficult to do justice to this beautiful and deeply moving book, which, strictly speaking, is no more than a catalogue of the poster collection held by Basler Afrika Bibliographien (BAB), also known as the Namibia Resource Centre – Southern Africa Library in Basel, Switzerland. The collection, of nearly one thousand posters is centred on Southern Africa and Namibia in particular, although there is also a substantial amount of material relating to West Africa and the Horn. Thankfully there are still institutions that are prepared to invest in the compilation, production and printing of gems such as *African Posters*, which BAB hopes will lead to the ‘further engagement with posters as a part of African visual history’ (p. 5).

The catalogue has been divided into eight thematic chapters, each with a short introductory text that sketches the historical context, the selection and the organization of the posters presented. Over 900 full colour reproductions are magnificently presented, and grouped within chapters dealing successively with: liberation movements and exile; solidarity and anti-apartheid; elections; nation building; awareness and health; economy; knowledge, information, belief; and leisure and pleasure.

Deeply moving are the posters of struggle in the 1970s and 1980s in countries as diverse as Angola, Eritrea, Namibia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Posters that bear within them the joy, hope and the firm belief in a better and attainable future. At the same time, with the benefit of hindsight and changed attitudes towards ‘power that comes from the barrel of a gun’, many of the posters are troubling in their glorification of the armed struggle, weapons and violence. A poster of the Zimbabwe African National Union of 1978 is, quite frankly, chilling and prescient with its exhortation, ‘Correct ideological education, permanent armed struggle and work ... these three, forever!’ (p. 46). None the less, although the work covers much more than merely posters of the struggle, I choose to see the catalogue as a fitting monument to the many who died for a better world, amongst them the people who worked for the Medu Art Collective in Gaborone Botswana (pp. 21, 75, 135).<sup>1</sup>

There will be those who will seek to criticize this work by claiming that it is nothing more than a jumbled collection of printed public images. It is true that it is very difficult, not to say impossible, systematically to collect and collate the posters of Africa in a manner that would be acceptable to all the many and varied wishes of academia. However, it cannot be denied that without the efforts of Miescher and Henrichsen scholars would be so much the poorer. Quite simply this book is the perfect gift for each and every contemporary Africanist.

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JAN-BART GEWALD

<sup>1</sup> On 14 June 1985 the South African Defence Force launched an attack on the homes and offices of members of the South African Exile community in Gaborone, Botswana. Medu Art, which had been set up by South African exiles, was specifically targeted.