

The first chapter examines the power vacuum left on the southern coast of Gabon by the collapse of the Nkomi monarchy and the progressive loss by the Gabonese of their environment and natural riches. The rest of the book is organized around the main historical issues exposed by Garner's career. Chapter Two analyzes the rise of the animal trade across the Atlantic and big game hunting in the colonies. Chapter Three interrogates the uneasy battle that Garner fought to assert his old South masculinity against family failures and the disdain of scientists. He tried (and failed) to combine intellectual recognition with the gentlemanly protection of his pet apes, and of the bohemian feminist Simonton who he invited to Gabon in 1906. In Chapter Four, Rich moves to race and examines how Garner's representations of African Americans at home helped him, like many other white Americans, build a universalizing theory of white superiority in Africa. Chapter Five looks at Garner's relations with animals. Rich argues that keeping pets that they perceived to be tame, teachable, and compassionate helped white men to create a distance with Africans (accused of brutality against animals), while reflecting Social Darwinist theories. Chapter Six turns to the Gabonese responses to Garner and the technological objects he hoped would amaze and tame them. In fact, the Gabonese assimilated Garner's phonograph into existing ideas of spiritual agency and mobile power objects. Conversely, the chapter reveals that Garner underwent initiation in a healing cult (*mpago*) and attended *bwiti* ceremonies, the syncretic cult that was sweeping the work camps of central Gabon. Chapter Seven travels back to the US and the Bronx zoo to look at the depictions of apes and animal exhibits in the popular press.

Rich's book contributes to the history of equatorial Africa and colonialism, not only by recentring Garner's career in the local context, but by bringing Gabonese history back into the history of Atlantic exchanges. Although Rich does not devote much attention to Garner's central project, deciphering the speech of apes, he cogently argues that Garner's life shows the transatlantic dimensions of evolutionary ideas and of animal science. Because Garner worked at the periphery of multiple intellectual, scientific, and political currents that linked North America, Europe, and equatorial Africa, Rich also reveals how the major shifts affecting Gabonese communities at the time can be fruitfully examined through a transatlantic perspective.

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## MAPPING A VISUAL TRADITION

*Early Modern Dutch Prints of Africa.*

By Elizabeth A. Sutton.

Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2012. Pp. xvi + 276. \$104.95, hardback (ISBN 978-1-4094-3970-7).

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**Key Words:** Cartography, social sciences, sources, Western images of Africa.

Elizabeth Sutton's new book examines the visual culture of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century ethnology. Though her principal focus is Pieter de Marees's *Description and*

*Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea* (1602), the earliest illustrated Dutch account of West Africa, she devotes considerable attention to several additional and related topics. These include the career of de Marees's Amsterdam publisher, Cornelis Claesz (ca. 1551–1609); the latter's place in and contribution to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Dutch print culture; and the development of ethnology, natural science, and the discursive categories of race more generally. Her work thus considers ethnographic imagery as a visual counterpart to the comparatively well-studied fields of travel writing and cartography.

After an introductory chapter that surveys the historiography of early modern cross-cultural encounters, ethnography, and exoticism, the second chapter explores the contemporaneous development of Dutch print capitalism and overseas company imperialism, which Sutton nicely illustrates through a detailed account of Claesz's career, professional networks, and readers. Devoted to the description of the wider world, the latter emerges as a Dutch counterpart of Richard Hakluyt or Giovanni Battista Ramusio. The third chapter considers de Marees, his *Description*, and its engravings, offering speculations about the author's life and milieu and exploring his partnership with Claesz and his artists. The fourth and fifth chapters consider the engravings in de Marees's work as ethnological representations, focusing on their informative and entertaining dimensions and their contribution to the developing discourse on African societies and culture. The final two chapters examine the reverberations of the *Description*; the sixth considers cartographic imagery as a counterpart to ethnographic illustration, while the seventh explores the influence of the *Description* and its engravings on subsequent scholarship. A brief epilogue reflects upon the interface between entertainment and information.

The book's great strength is its nuanced exploration of the stylistic and thematic links between the engravings in the *Description* and Dutch visual culture and ethnology more generally. Blending formal analysis with intellectual and cultural history, Sutton convincingly demonstrates that the prints rehearse a transitional stage between analogic and classically informed ethnology, on the one hand, and an empirical, hyper-aggregative ethnology, on the other. As was typical of early modern African studies, orientalism, and proto-anthropology more generally, old and new ideas were incoherently intertwined, with fascinating results. Sutton convincingly demonstrates how the *Description's* engravings fused classical sources and precedents, humanist morality and ideals, Dutch subjectivity, and a pretension towards verisimilitude that corresponds to the textual turn towards eyewitness reportage. Sutton usefully terms this confusing array 'the tension between empiricism and the visual tradition' (p. 3).

Though Sutton conceptualizes the *Description* both as a product of Dutch culture and 'a document of African history' (p. 7), her primary interest is incontrovertibly the former, particularly in terms of what it reveals about Dutch culture and early modern book and art history. This is perfectly fine, but it may disappoint Africanists. One basic problem is the historicity of de Marees's account and its specific contribution to the development of early African studies. Though Sutton devotes considerable attention to subtle symbolism and visual rhetoric of the engravings, the actual contents of the text—which informed readers' understanding of the imagery, and which attracted later generations of European scholars interested in Africa—is essentially ignored. Thus her account of the *Description* and its legacy is partial, and it is difficult to appreciate its place in the

canon of early modern Africanist scholarship. Related to this problem is the question of the value and limitations of the *Description* as a primary source. It is perfectly reasonable to claim that the text and its accompanying images reflect the mental worlds of their creators more than the historical reality they purport to describe, but for a fifty chapter work devoted to the taxonomic description of ‘people, customs, zoology, and botany’, including an Akan vocabulary, such a claim requires some explanation. This lacunae is complicated by Sutton’s claim that Africanists have uncritically used this and other travelogues as simple sources of fact (p. 197), but this is clearly a positivist straw man belied by her own references (see also p. 17, n. 2, and p. 230, n. 22). It would be interesting to learn what facts the author of the *Description* chose to relate, and why, since these bear directly on the value and limitations of the text as a source. They surely informed how the *Description*’s readers understood its engravings.

Ultimately, this is a sound and truly interdisciplinary study of the cultural and intellectual underpinnings of an early and widely reprinted contribution to African ethnography. Scholars interested in the history of anthropology, Western images of Africa, and the visual culture of early modern imperialism will profit from reading it.

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## LAND TITLES AND POLITICAL ENTITLEMENT

*Land, Mobility, and Belonging in West Africa.*

By Carola Lentz.

Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013. Pp. xii+331. \$85, hardback (ISBN 978-0-253-00953-1); \$30, paperback (ISBN 978-0-253-00957-9).

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**Key Words:** West Africa, ethnicity, land, migration, ritual.

The developments of agricultural pioneer fronts, transhumance patterns, trade networks, clandestine flows, and migratory practices have contributed to depictions of Africa as a mobile continent. They have also challenged the very meaning of place and belonging. In a context of pronounced mobility, who can legitimately claim to be autochthonous? On what grounds should property rights be institutionalized? And how can spatially dispersed communities maintain social cohesion? *Land, Mobility, and Belonging in West Africa* addresses these issues in a masterly way. Building on the case of two agrarian societies in the Black Volta region, anthropologist Carola Lentz details how the tension that exists between the imperatives of mobility and the need for stable access to land constitutes a powerful driver of social change.

The book starts with a detailed analysis of migration-and-settlement narratives, which typically describe how a group of hunters or farmers migrated in search of a new settlement. Several attempts and various encounters with animals and earth deities are usually necessary before the group reaches a suitable uninhabited area. The clearance of the bush is