coastal West African ports—Elmina and Lagos—to provide a comparative context for the history of Ouidah (which technically was not a port, but operated more or less as one nevertheless). Challenges to and verifications of underinvestigated ideas in the economic history literature are interposed throughout this superbly written text.

As a social and cultural historian, I found Law's efforts to document the experiences of those enslaved and transported through Ouidah particularly admirable. His detailed discussion of Francisco Felix de Souza and the Brazilian community in Ouidah as it operated within both local and international political and economic networks is also very informative. By documenting the expansion and contraction of the town's districts, Law's study provides considerable insight into the history of Ouidah as a coherent yet constantly changing social, cultural, and political unit. I would have loved to have seen more on gender relations in Ouidah (a topic confined largely to the discussion of the roles of the enslaved and the evolving role of women and men in the palm oil trade). The religious history of the town is given fuller attention, largely in the context of Ouidah's residential and political history, but the book left me wanting still more, even of a speculative nature.

Despite these minor quibbles—which may have more to do with the limitations of the sources than with the author's choices—this is an excellent study that should be of great interest to those studying West African precolonial history, the history of the Atlantic slave trade, and premodern urban history.

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Leopold Scholtz. *Why the Boers Lost the War.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. xiv + 202. Maps. Bibliography. Index. $80.00. Cloth.

Even posing the question of why the Afrikaners (Boers) of the twin republics of the Transvaal and Orange Free State in South Africa lost the Anglo-Boer (or South African) War of 1899–1902 might seem unnecessary. After all, the mighty British Empire was—like the United States today—the sole superpower, and at first glance the Boers were simply no match for it. In an important essay that examines all aspects of the Boers' war effort, André Wessels has convincingly argued that the Boers lost the war the moment they handed their ultimatum to the British government on October 9, 1899 ("Afrikaners at War," in *The Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image*, edited by John Gooch [Frank Cass, 2000], 82). Boer resources and strategic expertise were simply not up to the contest. On the other hand, in the earlier war of 1880–81 between the Transvaal and Britain, the British had declined to fight on after suffering several minor military reverses and

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initiated a negotiated settlement. There was Boer hope in 1899 that this scenario might be repeated. It was not, and by early 1900 the Boers had comprehensively lost the conventional stage of the war. Yet their decision to adopt a guerrilla strategy so prolonged the war (with terrible consequences to civilians, both black and white) that the British generals pushed aside the politicians and agreed to a peace in 1902 that restored self-government to the Boers before the decade was out. The Boers might have lost the war, but their determined resistance won them the peace.

Leopold Scholtz's book does not offer any startling revisions to this generally accepted interpretation. Nevertheless, his approach is different from that of the general run of books on the military aspects of the Anglo-Boer War in that he deliberately considers both Boer and British strategic and operational planning "in the light of modern military science" (xiii). In this endeavor he is in the mode of military historians like Edmund Yorke who, in *Rorke's Drift 1879: Anatomy of an Epic Zulu War Siege* (Tempus Publishing, 2001), evaluated the conduct of the battle of Rorke's Drift in terms of modern military doctrine as laid down by the current British Army Hand Book. The result in both cases is a highly schematized and inflexible analysis that gives sufficient scope neither to the interface between strategy and policy, nor to social and ideological factors. Nor does Scholtz seem to have made much use of the many works in English that came out during the centenary of the war and added considerably to our understanding of the way the British waged it.

That said, Scholtz's book (which was first published in Afrikaans) will still be of considerable interest and value to English readers who are unfamiliar with the many primary and secondary sources in Afrikaans that form the basis of his study. And for those more versed in the many British histories of the war, it will also open a window onto a very different set of perspectives as Scholtz—himself unabashedly pro-Boer—explores the thinking behind the Boer conduct of the war and gives some insight into how it is still perceived in Afrikaner circles.

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Frederick Cooper. *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. xii + 327. Index. $19.95. Paper.

With what could be called his "state of colonial historiography address," Frederick Cooper offers historians, as well as other professionals in the humanities and social sciences, an invaluable handbook of methodology. Although roughly one-quarter of the book (chapters 2, 3, and 4) has been previously published elsewhere, the inclusion of these essays furthers Cooper's overall purpose. He challenges us to rethink the way we research