

and the state has been transformed, the memories, enmities and alliances remain – and it seems, as Lubkemann argues, that the war, or at least the social dynamics that grew from it, have become a way of life for his informants.

One of the primary strengths of this book is the discussion of migration. The author specifically takes issue with a trend in studies of refugees and forced migration to see violence as a causal force that compels people to flee as an unplanned, instinctual reaction. As he points out, this does not explain why some people flee and others do not. Instead, the book focuses on migratory patterns of the Machazians for over a century, detailing the changing social dynamics that underpin migration and how these are embedded in generational and gendered struggles. Not only does this help to demonstrate who can move and who cannot, and why, but it also provides a fascinating discussion of successful and unsuccessful ways to legitimize social innovations in the existing cultural schema, points that go beyond debates relating specifically to forced migration and contribute directly to the vast existing literature of migration in southern Africa more generally.

Culture in Chaos is repetitive in places and suffers from occasional, exceedingly minor, factual errors. For example, the border post of Ressano Garcia is in the Maputo Province, not Gaza (p. 289) and Harry West's work examined the Mueda Plateau, Cabo Delgado – not Niassa (p. 164). These trifling complaints do not diminish the book in any way, however. Clear, insightful and original, it is a substantial contribution to Mozambican studies, with much to offer far wider audiences.

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doi:10.1017/S0001972013000168

UTE RÖSCHENTHALER, *Purchasing Culture: the dissemination of associations in the Cross River Region of Cameroon and Nigeria* (The Harriet Tubman Series on the African Diaspora). Trenton NJ and London: Africa World Press (pb \$49.95 – 1 59221 830 X). 2011, 593 pp.

Scholars have long been aware of the transactability of what are, in the broadest terms, religious associations in West Africa. They have, however, usually noted this characteristic as an aside rather than making the exchange of associations, and their consequential dissemination, a main focus of their research. The originality of Ute Röschenhaler's project was to take this further step and draw appropriate methodological implications from it. The resultant work is an extensive study of a region of south-eastern Nigeria and south-western Cameroon, predominantly populated by Ejagham peoples, that was undertaken in scores of villages where Röschenhaler has traced the circumstances under which associations were created, and then disseminated to neighbours and sold on elsewhere. These wider linkages take the study into Igboland in one direction and towards the Cameroonian Grassfields in the other. The findings are profusely illustrated, not only with numerous field photographs, but with helpful maps which summarize much of the information on diffusion that took place, predominantly between village elites, over more than three centuries. As in a clutch of relatively recent works on West Africa, the Atlantic slave trade is presented as a crucial spur to the transactability and early dissemination of particularly the kinds of association that were concerned with control over misfortunes.

The institutions under study are not wholly similar. Local terminology distinguishes *akum*, used of associations (as well as masks) that employ largely mundane means, from *ajom* that designates cult agencies, both their personnel and animated objects, including potions. As remarked by previous authors on West Africa, these terms may seem to outsiders to have a wide range of referents, including persons, things, powers and performances, but for practitioners these are parts of the same phenomenon appropriately brought within a single practice of naming. Hence, naming both reflects and reinforces the coherence of associational phenomena.

From her research in 81 Ejagham villages, Rösenthaler was able to record, in the senses above, 99 associations and 89 cult agencies; moreover local owners had innovated by combining facets of the institutions they possessed – and, doing so, created from them a yet more complex institutional landscape. All of this implies numerous complex histories of associations and their cultures which have had to be pieced together from a myriad of sources. Some associations were of notably wide distribution; for instance, the well-known *ekpe* or *ngbe* (leopard) society (the expansion of which is the subject of one chapter, while a later chapter examines the intra-village effect of *ekpe* becoming the dominant association). Other associations were more local in their range.

Rösenthaler's chapters provide case studies in different senses. She begins with a local study of a single village to demonstrate how cults have converged there over time in ways that can be reconstructed largely on the basis of local accounts. Other kinds of case studies involve a particular association or kind of association, for instance in the spread of warrior societies, examined in detail. A chapter devoted to women's associations is particularly welcome given the tendency for them to be eclipsed in studies of men's societies; Rösenthaler, by contrast, is able to provide detailed description. Other case studies are organized thematically or chronologically. For instance a suggestive and extended parallel is drawn between the contemporary transfer of 'intellectual property' and the transferral of knowledge concerning the performance of cults. Finally, the reformation of societies in the recent past is covered in a number of respects in relation to property rights, the length of initiation, and compatibility with urban life, as well as the predominance of Christian churches and the importance of neo-traditional leaders.

The chapters of this book are extensively referenced both to the extant published and archival record and to the author's interviews, which are reported in detail. Readers will need a good memory for detail, and a willingness to engage with particularities, but the same qualities make the book particularly interesting for readers from the region as well as for regional specialists. The author is to be thanked for making the work available in English to Nigerian readers, although the publishers might also have done their part by having a literary editor smooth the reading experience. The achievement of the project overall is to have provided both case studies of the complexity of cults in particular localities and, thanks to the variety of perspectives brought to bear on these materials, an understanding of the political, economic and symbolic values in play over a long period. *Purchasing Culture* is a serious and highly scholarly undertaking and will become an essential source for the ethnography and history of the Cross River, as well as a suggestive demonstration of the regional character of cults both before, during and since the colonial period.

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doi:10.1017/S000197201300017X