

critiques of everyday Malawians as they try to live their lives as moral beings in the face of poverty, corruption, and injustice.

*Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey*

DOROTHY L. HODGSON

## BIOGRAPHY AS HISTORY IN THE NORTHERN CAPE

doi:10.1017/S0021853712000618

*Luka Jantjie: Resistance Hero of the South African Frontier.* By KEVIN SHILLINGTON. London: Aldridge Press, 2011. Pp. xiv + 306. \$85, hardback (ISBN 978-0230338531).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, land tenure, resistance.

Kevin Shillington has long labored in the dry lands of the Northern Cape, producing, alongside other more scholarly works, texts accessible to broad audiences. In *Luka Jantjie* he returns to research begun more than two decades ago to explore the life history of a man who came of age in the tumultuous years of South Africa's mineral revolution. Born to a chiefly family in the 1830s when the Northern Cape was just coming within the orbit of missionaries and an expanding British empire, Jantjie became an early example of what Shillington describes as a modern man: a literate pioneer convert with a keen business acumen and an astute understanding of South Africa's rapidly changing economic and political world.

That world ultimately defeated Jantjie and his people. By hook or by crook, colonists acquired large amounts of land. The Kimberly diamond mines offered as many dangers as opportunities. Aggressive British and Boer expansion set new, narrower parameters within which leaders like Jantjie could maneuver. Violent conflict soon seemed inevitable. In the closing years of the nineteenth century, Jantjie took up his Winchester rifle. Within months Jantjie was dead, shot to the chest; he was then decapitated and his head boiled in a vat of water to become a war trophy.

This, then, is Shillington's narrative arc: the rise and demise of an African man in an industrializing South Africa. It is also the story of a closing frontier. The early chapters covering Jantjie's birth and coming of age describe a world fraught with danger, but also one of change and possibility as new people moved into the northern Cape and as the region entered the orbit of expanding colonial societies: British, Boer, and Griqua. Missionaries such as Robert Moffat played an important role in introducing not just Christianity but also ideas about clothing and personhood and technologies such as printing and irrigation. Shillington demonstrates how the world the missionaries and their converts made led to new sensibilities and possibilities just as the age of liberal empire was about to be eclipsed by one of jingoistic nationalism and racial intolerance.

The bulk of *Luka Jantjie* concentrates on the three decades from the opening of the diamond fields to Jantjie's death. Many of the issues discussed are well known to specialists: industrial demands on labor and resources such as wood and food, the fractious relationships among British, Boer, and Griqua, and the steady expansion of empire from the Cape Colony. More interesting is Shillington's exploration of the complex reworking of Batlhaping politics as Jantjie made claims to authority, land, and resources and emerged as a powerful chief (*kgosi*). Here Shillington's research shines as he offers the reader a sense of Jantjie grappling with the challenges facing him and his people.

Shifting alliances and rising conflict marked the years following the 1881 Pretoria Convention that ended British-Transvaal conflict and recognized (again) the

republic's sovereignty. The politics of land, including and perhaps especially that held within African-controlled areas, became ever more fraught as did the British administration of African territories. The last half of *Luka Jantjie* is devoted to the decade between the 1885–6 Land Commission and Jantjie's death. The commission restricted Africans to 'communal' lands while opening vast tracts to white colonists. In so doing, the commission definitively created a land crisis for Jantjie and his people and set African and British settler on a collision course.

The outbreak of rinderpest escalated an already deteriorating situation. During the war that finally settled conflicts that had been steadily mounting, Jantjie retreated to the mountains of the Langeberg where he was destitute, shivering in the hard winter, and outgunned. His defeat led not only to Jantjie's death and dismemberment but also to the rounding up of prisoners, women, and children. Their brutal treatment became a subject of newspaper reports and humanitarian protest.

Wonderfully researched and lavishly illustrated, at times *Luka Jantjie* seems caught between an aspiration to reach a broad popular audience and a commitment to academic scholarship. Specialists may find themselves frustrated, wondering about what is historiographically new: the work is conventionally structured and in the end offers little insight into thinking about topics such as biography in African history. General readers may become lost in the details, unable to keep track of the scores of characters that populate *Luka Jantjie*. Nevertheless for those committed to knowing the rococo details of Northern Cape history, *Luka Jantjie* is well worth the effort.

*Emory University*

CLIFTON CRAIS

## AN APPRECIATION OF URBANIZATION IN CENTRAL AFRICA

doi:10.1017/S002185371200062X

*Villes et organisation de l'espace en République démocratique du Congo.* By LEON DE SAINT-MOULIN. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010. Pp. 306. €29, paperback (ISBN 978-2-296-11999-4).

KEY WORDS: Democratic Republic of Congo, demography, urban.

Cet ouvrage recueille les articles que Léon de Saint-Moulin a consacrés à la démographie des villes de la République démocratique du Congo (RDC, anciennement Zaïre) entre 1969 et 1992. S'y ajoute un texte inédit qui fait le point sur le semis urbain congolais en 2010, de même que le texte non publié d'une conférence sur Kinshasa dans le temps long (2007). Mais ce dernier n'a pas la qualité des autres papiers rassemblés dans cet ouvrage. La première moitié du livre est dédiée à des études générales sur l'urbanisation du pays, la seconde à des études urbaines particulières. Fort logiquement, Kinshasa, une des plus grandes métropoles africaines avec ses 9.5 millions d'habitants (2010), occupe la plus grande part; ces papiers constituent d'ailleurs une mine d'informations sur les plans démographique, urbanistique, social et historique. Mais des contributions approchent également les cas de Kisangani, Bukavu et Kananga.

Le grand intérêt de ce livre est qu'il émane d'un témoin privilégié d'une période qui a correspondu à la transition urbaine de l'Afrique centrale. En 1970, la population urbaine du pays était de 20,7 pour cent; en 1984, elle était de 28,3 pour cent; en 2010, de 34 pour cent (selon des estimations scientifiques et non selon la