

## REVIEWS

### LONGEVITY AND VARIETY OF AFRICA'S URBAN EXPERIENCE

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702218228

*Africa's Urban Past*. Edited by DAVID M. ANDERSON and RICHARD RATHBONE. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann; Oxford: James Currey, 2000. Pp. x + 310. \$65 (ISBN 0-325-00221-5); \$24.95, paperback (ISBN 0-325-00220-7).  
KEY WORDS: Urban.

In their insightful introduction to this valuable collection, the editors observe that historians have tended to regard cities as characteristic of Africa's future, not its past: mostly colonial creations and 'the epitome of modernization'. Such assumptions were adopted from the work of urban sociologists of the 1950s and 1960s who were the first to take a scholarly interest in African cities as both unit and subject of analysis. But they have been underscored by the dramatic pace of urbanization that has transformed the continent over the past century, making cities 'the shape of things to come'.

Before yesterday town life was the norm for only a minority of Africans but that does not mean that its distinctive patterns are solely the products of recent history. One of the editors' two main goals is to highlight the historical depth of Africa's urban experience, a goal flagged by the introduction's thumbnail survey of several millennia of urban history and accomplished by the eight substantive chapters (out of seventeen) devoted to pre-colonial cities. Regretably, only three of these deal with cases from the era, before the trans-Atlantic slave trade, when the urban communities in question were not profoundly shaped by global processes dominated by the North Atlantic. But rather than an editorial lapse, this imbalance should be seen as a confirmation of the editors' general critique of the literature. Their second goal is to encourage consideration of how an understanding of the processes that have shaped and transformed specific African cities might illuminate a broader understanding of such processes elsewhere in the continent and the world.

Both concerns are admirably addressed in the first of the substantive chapters, Roderick McIntosh's stimulating overview of two decades of archaeological research at Jenne-jeno and the other 'clustered cities' of the Middle Niger. This and the other chapters in the book's first half – divided into sections on the archaeology of ancient cities, on urban transformations during the eras of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and legitimate trade, and on colonial economic history – together yield a good picture of the variety of Africa's urban experience. Whereas Jenne-jeno consisted of a dispersed agglomeration of specialized settlements whose activities were coordinated with neither elaborate stratification nor a centralized state, David Phillipson's chapter on Aksum describes a compact city inhabited almost exclusively by political and commercial elites, with producers relegated to the far outskirts. John Thornton describes the symbolic centre of Kongo royal ritual, which remained fixed over several centuries despite the vicissitudes of the kingdom's fortunes; R. Reid and H. Medard describe Buganda's equally symbolic but peripatetic centres of royal power. Robin Law charts Ouidah's transition from a centre of the slave trade, when it was dependent on the patronage of the Dahomean state, to a centre of palm-oil production during the succeeding era, when its mercantile elite chafed at continued Dahomean control.

Thomas Spear's chapter on Arusha describes colonial rulers' chronic inability to impose their vision of 'modern' urbanism on citizens who insisted on farming within the town precincts, whereas Bill Freund's chapter on Durban analyses the tight urban control typical of the 'racial Fordism' of the South African economic regime.

The four chapters in Part Four (three on the Gold Coast) examine how towns served as sites of cultural brokerage, where diverse people interacted and in the process created new, specifically urban identities. These chapters, like Law's discussion of the formation of Ouidah's globally heterogeneous elite, demonstrate that such processes were not simply a phenomenon of colonial and post-colonial 'modernity'. Moreover, the most prominent towns in this section, Tunis and Accra, were simultaneously colonial capitals and long-established urban centres, both in their physical space and the political philosophies that shaped them (the same might also be said of Zanzibar, the subject of a later chapter), and the analyses offered here subvert conventional distinctions between the 'traditional' city and the 'colonial' one.

These chapters include some of the book's most thought-provoking. Julia Clancy-Smith examines the impact of European 'subsistence immigration' – fugitives and landless peasants from Malta, Sicily and elsewhere on the Mediterranean's northern littoral – who came to Tunis in the mid-nineteenth century hoping to remake their lives. This influx challenged pre-existing codes of civilized urban life in several ways (Clancy-Smith focuses on control of women), prompting Ottoman and Arab rulers to tighten municipal regulation and surveillance. The story is thus a neat switch on the picture of colonial urban control most familiar to historians of sub-Saharan Africa. John Parker's splendid chapter on mortuary ritual traces conflicts between two opposing visions of the urban order in early colonial Accra. Like their counterparts in Arusha, Accra's British rulers believed 'traditional' customs belonged in the countryside, not in what they hoped to make a modern colonial town. But several of these customs were central to how Accra's Ga inhabitants defined public space, including the boundaries between civilized urbanity and boorish rusticity. Emmanuel Akyeampong describes the conflicts that ensued when Ghanaian women responded to the opportunities of accumulation opened by colonial and post-colonial urbanization. Strictly speaking, his chapter, like several others, is not a study of urbanism as promised by the editors, but is rather a species of what they call, quoting H. J. Dyos, 'passing through' the city, that is, an analysis of processes that happen to have been concentrated there. Yet one suspects that had Akyeampong taken more space, he might have made an argument for the central role of entrepreneurial women in the creation of popular urban culture, perhaps similar in some ways to the literature on shebeen culture in southern Africa. Instead, he uses the products of that culture as evidence, with skill and panache.

The book's final section, entitled 'The politics of urban order', asks how, in the editors' words, the urban environment has been 'controlled' and 'regulated' in the twentieth century. Such language once again reflects the literature's colonial and post-colonial focus, with its assumption of an interventionist state. Three of these four chapters share that focus, although William Bissell's analysis of town planning in colonial and contemporary Zanzibar reminds us of the often comic disparity between colonial officers' ambitions and what they actually accomplished. But, defined less restrictively, 'the politics of urban order' has figured in many of the preceding chapters. The volume began with McIntosh's suggestion that such politics might arise and flourish in the absence of a state. It concludes with a startling chapter on post-colonial Brazzaville in which Florence Bernault suggests the obverse: that a politics of urban order might survive the collapse of the state and even, in a sense, substitute for it.

A brief notice can only suggest the highlights of such a rich collection. The volume suffers from a paucity of maps, and two or three chapters are marred by inexcusably obscure language. But that is not a bad ratio for an academic book nowadays, which is one more reason to be grateful.

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JONATHON GLASSMAN

### PERTINENCE OF LIBERAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702228224

*South Africa. A Modern History.* By RODNEY DAVENPORT and CHRISTOPHER SAUNDERS. Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 5th edition, 2000. Pp. xxx + 807.

£77.50 (ISBN 0-333-79222-X); £25.95, paperback (ISBN 0-333-79223-8).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, general, political.

The very fact that this book is now in its fifth edition, and that this journal feels it worthwhile to review it again, should speak for itself. It is a monumental work of scholarship which, following its initial publication in 1977, rapidly established itself as the successor to Eric Walker's *A History of Southern Africa* (1957). It has been carefully and conscientiously revised on four subsequent occasions and any publisher would be proud to have the book on their list.

The differences between the fourth and fifth editions fall under three headings. The first is historiographical and relates to the assimilation of new writing on topics such as the *mfecane*, the origins of the Anglo-Boer war and the ANC in exile. The second is structural: part 3 has been turned from two chapters to three in order to deal more thoroughly with the 'Mandela decade', the transfer of power, the first democratic elections of 1994 and 1999 and resulting socioeconomic changes, and the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. These chapters are among the more cautious in the book. For a more forthright assessment of the present political situation, readers may wish to turn to Tom Lodge's *South African Politics since 1994* (Cape Town, 1999). The third change from the last edition is that Christopher Saunders now shares authorship with Rodney Davenport.

There are obvious criticisms that could be made of this book, many of which stem from frustrations with the liberal historiographical tradition in which it is so firmly rooted. The emphasis on institutions and politics cannot but be at the expense of economic processes and social structures, and their relationship to the distribution and exercise of power. Cultural, economic and political themes are not always as fully integrated as some would like. Roughly two-thirds of the space is taken up by what has happened in the last hundred years, and the amount of detail (especially in relation to 'high' politics) occasionally threatens to overwhelm the non-specialist reader. But – and the 'but' is very important here – on each score there are equally obvious defences. The best textbooks tend to be historiographically biased; otherwise they lack a sense of direction and purpose. Moreover, this book is not only based on a huge amount of reading and research: it also displays sensitivity to a wide range of historical traditions. The superb bibliographies at the end show familiarity with the works of Afrikaner as well as English-speaking historians, and recent developments in African history are equally well signposted. Neither is this just a textbook: it is a standard work of reference, which will be used by many inside and outside academe. In that sense the detail is often desirable: many readers will want to refer to it for 'the facts'.

The liberal school's concern for human agency, and its confidence in the power of individuals to mould their own environments, would seem particularly pertinent

to South Africa's present situation. As Desmond Tutu's sobering foreword to the book reminds us, the suffering of apartheid ultimately arose from deep-seated racist beliefs: some people in South Africa (who made the laws) convinced themselves that they were more human than others (for whom those laws were made). Racism was thus the responsibility of individuals, and should not be explained away by other social forces. This emphasis on individual responsibility is no less germane to the future. In view of the widely discussed dangers of one-party rule, and the blurring of boundaries between the ANC and the state, it is vital that the organs of democracy – community-based organisations, trade unions, municipal organisations – be kept alive in this part of the world. This, in turn, requires active and energetic citizenship and a strong sense of civic responsibility. If ever liberal historiography had something to say to South Africa, it is surely today. For this reason alone, the new edition of this book is much to be welcomed.

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ANDREW THOMPSON

### EUROPEAN ACCOUNTS OF THE WESTERN SUDAN

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702238220

*The Negroland Revisited: Discovery and Invention of the Sudanese Middle Ages.* By PEKKA MASONEN. Helsinki: Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, 2000. Pp. 599. Price not given, paperback (ISBN 951-41-0886-8).

KEY WORDS: Western Africa, exploration/travel, historiography.

As the sub-title indicates, this is neither an old-fashioned study of the 'discovery' of Africa nor a postmodern essay on the 'invention' of The Other. Instead, the author leads us through the long and often exciting story of how European thinking (knowledge, imagination and fantasy) about the West Sudan has changed over a period of eight centuries, from the *Chanson de Roland* to the twentieth century. Nor is it merely the time-scale that makes this a virtuoso piece of scholarship: besides discussing the relevance of particular Arabic sources, Masonen draws adeptly upon an impressive range of literature written in Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Latin, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish. Maps and tables enhance the clarity of the argument.

In the introduction, which is rather too apologetic, we are promised 'a miniature library' (p. 57). This is indeed what we are given – not a series of summaries, but a scholar's companion which will be indispensable to anyone working on this region. Each geographical work claiming to provide information on the Western Sudan is discussed in turn, highlighting the problems it raises: might it conceivably contain a grain of truth? Which sources did the author use? What kind of stereotypes did he inherit? Masonen's caution ('We cannot rule out the possibility ...', 'We do not know ...') is exemplary.

Proceeding chronologically, the book begins by discussing the place of ancient Ghana and Mali in the medieval European imagination, showing that amid the fantastic notions which Europeans derived from Arabic sources (gold-digging ants, a branch of the Nile flowing into the Atlantic) it may be possible to detect evidence, for example for the hypothesis that Ghana was not destroyed in the thirteenth century (p. 111). There follows a chapter on the *Descobrimento*, arguing that Portuguese authors contributed little to knowledge of the Western Sudan but prevented elements of medieval cartography from falling into oblivion. Chapter 4 deals with Leo Africanus and Marmol. The author did not know Dietrich Rauchenberger's edition of the former (1999), but himself makes a useful

contribution to the debates on how much Leo knew, what he meant by ‘Ghinea’ and what influence he had. Next come the explorers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and the armchair geographers who interpreted their findings. Masonen shows how the ‘Oriental Renaissance’ and improved access to Arabic texts made it possible to recognise that (some) Africans had a history and to ‘start constructing the historical geography of Sudanic Africa’ (p. 283).

Masonen’s hero is William Desborough Cooley, whose *The Negroland of the Arabs Examined* (1841) is presented as the key publication in establishing the modern historiography of Sudanic Africa. Cooley’s method (‘rectification of sources’) and his focus on the history of Black Africans made possible a shift from the centuries-old ‘Leonine’ paradigm. Masonen criticises Cooley’s hypotheses, yet emphasises that, given the available sources, they were sound. Cooley and his rival Heinrich Barth, who brought back unknown historiographical sources from Africa and whose work (1857–8) built upon Cooley’s ideas, represent ‘the golden age in the [European] historiography of Western Africa’ (p. 530).

By contrast, colonial conquest opened the field to the ‘creative imagination’ of (predominantly French) colonial officials and others who were, despite their enthusiasm for aspects of the West Sudan’s past, victims of the dominant ideology of colonial rule. Foremost among these was Maurice Delafosse, whose *Haut-Sénégal-Niger* (1912) continued to influence historians (not least in Africa itself) well into the 1970s. Ironically, it was partly the willingness of Delafosse and his contemporaries to grant validity to oral traditions (the Wagadu legend and Sunjata epic had both been ‘discovered’ in the 1880s) that enabled them to argue in favour of an external origin for Sudanic civilization. Further irony lies in the fact that the myth of a medieval ‘university’ in Timbuktu, today popular among Afrocentrists, was created by writers such as Lady (‘Mrs’) Lugard, steeped in colonial thinking. Masonen does not, alas, comment on present-day historians who seek to refloat the diffusionist theories upon which Palmer, Delafosse and others founded.

It would have been possible to write a shorter book. Masonen rightly goes to considerable lengths to understand *why*, for example, Delafosse believed things which today seem ridiculous. But – as he warns in the introduction – he also seizes every opportunity to add supplementary information on matters which are not central to his argument, for instance on the latest state of archaeological research.

Inevitably in a work of such breadth there are a few weaknesses in detail, mainly relating to other parts of Africa (the Gold Coast, Angola, Ethiopia). But in general this is a *tour de force* and should have a salutary impact on the way we Europeans continue to ‘discover and invent’ Africa and its history.

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ADAM JONES

## RELIGION IN THE DIASPORA

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702248227

*A Refuge in Thunder. Candomblé and Alternative Spaces of Blackness.* By RACHEL E. HARDING. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000.

Pp. xix + 251. \$26 (ISBN 0-253-33705-4).

KEY WORDS: Diaspora, religion.

Rachel Harding’s book is a significant and pioneering contribution to the history of Candomblé, the religious institution created by Africans and their descendants in Bahia (Brazil), in the late colonial and imperial period. With the exception of a few authors like Bastide, the nineteenth-century formative process of Candomblé has been very poorly studied until recently, and most of what was known has relied

on oral traditions. This is the first study based on written sources to address the matter in a comprehensive and interpretative way. One of the most valuable aspects of Harding's research was the identification of 95 documents (in the police correspondence housed in the Arquivo Público do Estado da Bahia) from the period 1800–88, which describe events related to Candomblé (nine of them transcribed in the Appendix). These constitute her main source material.

The first two introductory chapters focus on general issues of rural plantation slavery and urban life and work in the city of Salvador (capital of Bahia), where Candomblé developed strong roots. Harding further explores the social organization of Bahian society, and the significance of categories such as race, ethnicity and legal status. Chapter 3 begins the examination of 'Afro-Brazilian religious orientations' by looking at Candomblé's antecedents such as the *calundu* and the *bolsas de mandinga*, using Pietz's theory of fetish to interpret the meaning of these religious practices. Chapter 4 analyzes the multi-ethnic matrix from which Candomblé emerged, including the African religious traditions of the Congo-Angola, Aja-Fon, Yoruba, Haussa and Tapa, as well as influences from Amerindian practices and Catholicism. The 'Nagô-centric' academic studies that have privileged the Yoruba tradition are also discussed, while the author emphasizes the idea of a 'Pan-African' synthesis and a relative continuity between Candomblé and previous colonial African-derived religious practices.

Chapter 5 is a quantitative analysis of data from the police correspondence outlining trends in the development and social composition of the religious institution. While the majority of Candomblé participants were female, its leadership was largely male and African-born, until by the late nineteenth century Creole women became predominant. Harding provides some explanation for this gender shift and stresses the 'pan-black' character of ritual congregations. Chapter 6 profiles several case-studies of freed African religious leaders, examining among other things the connections between healing and cultivation of *axé* (life force) in their activities. Chapter 7 focuses on a variety of social networks, like black Catholic brotherhoods, *quilombos* and the urban labour system of *ganho*, which were instrumental for the support of Candomblé. Chapter 8 is 'an interpretative essay based in the idea of Candomblé as *feitico*, a means to the transformative engagement of the experience of blackness in Brazil from an experience of signified subalterity to an alternative construction of personal and collective identity' (p. xix). The final chapter discusses political and ideological developments derived from the abolition of slavery and 'the continuing role of Candomblé as a space for alternative black being in the late empire and early republic'.

The last two quotes somehow synthesize Harding's overall interpretative angle. Her main idea is that Candomblé emerged as 'a response to enslavement and resistance to dehumanization' (p. 1). She emphasizes the 'communion/community; refuge/resistance and healing/redress' nature of Candomblé, as a means to create an alternative sense of black identity under the oppression of slavery. Although those were undoubtedly important factors in the formative process of Candomblé, one could question whether they were the only or most critical ones. The police correspondence, as well as other sources like the journal *O Alabama* (1863–71) – unfortunately not considered by Harding – show that Candomblé, despite its predominant African leadership and black participant base, was a resource for an increasingly mixed-race clientele, including mulattos and even whites, belonging to all social and legal statuses (slaves, freed and freeborn). Candomblé does not seem to have developed merely as a 'refuge' for subjugated and enslaved blacks, or as a closed exclusivist 'space of blackness', but it seems to have also used a socially inclusive strategy that is still operative today, accepting and taking in individuals of all colours and social backgrounds. In fact, it was precisely this openness and expansive social dynamic that, in moments of difficulty

or repression, permitted its religious leaders to negotiate and to secure their 'space'.

Despite this criticism which suggests the possibility of a less 'Afro-centric' interpretation of Candomblé, Harding's *A Refuge in Thunder* is definitely a very rich source of new data, and a very well written and readable book for anybody interested in Candomblé, Afro-American religion or African diaspora studies. A Portuguese translation would surely be welcome among the Bahian religious community too.

*Bahia*

L. NICOLAU

### ITALIAN MEMOIR OF 1850S LAGOS

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702258223

*Memoirs of Giambattista Scala: Consul of His Italian Majesty in Lagos in Guinea (1862)*. Translated by BRENDA PACKMAN and edited by ROBERT SMITH. Oxford: Oxford University Press for The British Academy, 2000. Pp. xxvii + 155. £27.50 (ISBN 0-19-726204-X).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, exploration/travel, slavery/slave trade, imperialism.

The author of this informative memoir, Giambattista Scala, spent seven years as a merchant and then Sardinian consul in Lagos and Abeokuta from 1852 to 1859. Scala was one of few foreign residents aside from British government officials and missionaries to witness and write about the waning days of the Atlantic slave trade, the transition to the legitimate traffic in palm produce and events preceding the cession of Lagos to Britain in 1861.

It was a stormy period with strong personalities, and Scala's gift was his ability to capture the human qualities and intrigues of some of the key figures of the times. As it happened, Scala arrived in Lagos soon after British forces had attacked the city in an effort to end the slave trade. The assault caused many able-bodied residents to flee to neighboring communities, and in describing these events and the return to normalcy Scala concentrated on some of the characters involved in the attack and its aftermath.

Two of these central figures are given chapter-length coverage. The beautiful and powerful Madame Tinubu was a slave trader who dominated kings, bankrolled their military operations, and conspired with a German missionary to oust a man she had earlier supported. He was the famed Kosoko, one of Lagos' most recalcitrant royals – a soft-spoken man of majestic bearing and uncommon strength, and a prime target of the British attack that laid waste the city. Kosoko was a man of contradictions. He committed acts of unspeakable violence, but at the same time commanded a large and loyal following. He gained the respect of Europeans yet he resisted their authority and refused to give up the slave trade, an act which may have saved his throne.

As for his own commercial activities, Scala was engaged in importing and exporting palm oil and cotton. He later expanded this trade to Abeokuta where jealous attacks on his factories destroyed large segments of his productive capacity. Although he rebuilt his business, it was not an easy time, for he was also in Abeokuta during an enemy attack in which thousands of Dahomean troops, both men and women, were massacred and huge numbers of captives taken as slaves. Scala's description of the event and the Abeokutan authorities' decision to withhold harsh punishment provides one of his most penetrating insights into the thinking of the people around him.

With respect to daily life, Scala provides a *pot pourri* of detail concerning ritual, marriage and material conditions. He clearly admired the attractiveness of the local

people and many of their customs, particularly military deportment. He also wrote that, despite their continuation of domestic slavery after the overseas trade was abolished, residents allowed slaves to work for themselves as well as their masters in what he believed was a more humanitarian form of this institution than elsewhere.

The author was born in 1817 into a seafaring family and by the age of 12 had joined his father's ship sailing between Genoa and Brazil, with several trips to West Africa in the 1840s. Thanks to the research of Professor G. B. Brignardello who published a pamphlet on his life in 1892, we know Scala sailed to Lagos in his thirty-fourth year in a brig filled with trade goods. Throughout his five years in what would become Africa's largest city, and 18 months in Abeokuta, the author was seen by missionaries as energetic, intelligent and moral. As a reward for 'introducing Civil Industry into Guinea', Scala was rewarded with a silver medal given to him by King Victor Emmanuel II (p. xvii).

We owe the English publication of Scala's memoirs to the late James Packman, Deputy Librarian at the University of Ibadan, who discovered the original Italian publication; Brenda Packman, who translated it into English; and Dr Robert S. Smith, who wrote a careful and informative introduction to the volume and has provided a wealth of notes throughout the manuscript. Smith is the foremost expert on this period of Lagos' history having written *The Lagos Consulate* (London and Berkeley, 1978) and his remarks on Scala's writings are an invaluable aid to interpreting the text, correcting its inaccuracies and placing it in the appropriate context of the times.

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SANDRA T. BARNES

## URBAN HISTORY

DOI: 10.1017/S002185370226822X

*Making the Town: Ga State and Society in Early Colonial Accra.* By JOHN PARKER.

Portsmouth NH, Oxford and Cape Town: Heinemann, James Currey and David Philip Publishers, 2000. Pp. xxxiii + 264. \$65.00 (ISBN 0-325-00191-XI); \$25.00, paperback (ISBN 0-325-00190-1).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, urban.

In the early eighteenth century when the Dutch slave trader, William Bosman, described the coastal communities of the Gold Coast he purposely picked the more isolated Axim rather than Elmina, the centre of Dutch trade on the coast, where he lived off and on for fourteen years. What he described as these 'confused and perplexed ... hardly to be comprehended' coastal communities of the Gold Coast littoral, neither totally European nor fully African, have continued to represent an unsettling enigma both to observers and scholars. John Parker's book, a significantly revised version of his PhD thesis, bucks this trend in a particularly elegant and penetrating historical treatment of what was to become one of the most 'confused and perplexed' of all these coastal communities. Unlike Margaret Field, the pioneering figure in modern Ga scholarship, who carried out much of her research in Tema which was an isolated fishing village, 'free from what she perceived as the contaminating urban influences of colonial Accra', John Parker plunges right into the centre of this urban world made up of three townships, or *majii* (p. xxvii). It was a world shaped by changing economic forces, shifting political relations with powerful African neighbours and the presence of European trading companies operating from forts and castles in its midst.



The study focuses primarily on the town's 'politics from the 1860s to the 1920s, and in particular the ways in which Ga political action shaped Accra's transition from pre-colonial city state to colonial city' (p. xvii). However, as he points out, the Ga have a long history of urbanism. He begins by tracing the story from the emergence of the coastal-based Ga state in the late seventeenth century to the eve of the consolidation of British colonial rule in the 1860s and 1870s. His two main concerns are to show that in spite of considerable change there was a striking amount of continuity between the pre-colonial and the colonial past, and that Ga townspeople played an active role in shaping the 'reconfiguration' of their own urban space. By so doing he challenges what has been the more typical approach to the study of African urban environments that has seen modern African cities as either 'essentially' European colonial creations or indigenously African. Parker replaces the focus on 'detrribalization' or 'retribalization' – with its heavily male emphasis – that has characterized much of this 'essentialist' scholarship with a much more gender-conscious approach. Migration into Kinka, Nleshi and Osu, the communities that comprised the centre of the Ga urban world, has always been a feature of their past, but significantly, by colonial times, women considerably outnumbered men. Women were more than wives, daughters, concubines and prostitutes. They played important roles in the urban economy and the political lives of their communities. There was both a public and a private dimension to this contribution, for 'just as both men and women made Accra, so men and women made its constituent households' (p. xxiv).

By at first looking at the original settlement of the three *majii* that were to make up the Accra social formation, we get an understanding of the town's 'internal architecture' that has been something of a mystery to those who have focused only on the twentieth century. These settlements were divided into eleven *akutsei*, and by the nineteenth century they were associated with the European castle and forts in their midst. Kinka and its four *akutsei* was also known as Ussher Town and Nleshi with its three *akutsei* as James Town. Osu, which developed around the Danish castle, was divided into four *akutsei*. This unsettled and fluid environment was initially characterized by the existence of three competing authority systems: there was the chiefly hierarchy, a military hierarchy and a priestly order. Akan influence was particularly important in shaping the development of the chiefly and military hierarchies. Defending the town came to define who was true Ga (*ganyo krom*), and served the important role of incorporating outsiders, even slaves, as full members of their *akutsei*, while the influence of European culture served to create a Euro-African merchant elite who were closely linked to the traditional hierarchies but also in competition with them in the exercise of authority.

The emergence of the British as the exclusive colonial power on the Gold Coast in the 1860s and 1870s, and the relocation of the colony's capital to Accra in 1877 inevitably created tensions between colonial officials and African authority. The abolition of slavery, the challenge that British courts posed to traditional institutions, town planning, an influx of migrants and the erosion of the Ga's middleman role by expatriate commerce at the end of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century all contributed to Accra's emergence as a colonial town. Nevertheless, Parker argues Accra 'remained very much an African town in character ... due to the continuing vigor of Ga urban culture' (p. 196). He demonstrates how much this was so by integrating the spate of stool disputes and struggles over the ownership of land that characterized this phase of the town's history into its overall political and cultural life.

The juxtaposing of the traditional with the modern in such seemingly incongruous settings as colonial courts has contributed to what Parker points to as the belief that urban settings like Accra were somehow not the 'real' Africa (p. xxiv). By completing his study at the end of what he describes as the 'early colonial

period', Parker escapes having to deal with the full implications of this bias. He does so less awkwardly than David Kimble, who ended his magisterial study of the rise of Gold Coast nationalism abruptly in 1928. Perhaps this belies Parker's own lingering ambiguity towards what he describes as the 'high-colonial' period when it is no longer possible to see Christianity's impact on Accra's 'hard drinking' Euro-African elite as purely nominal (p. 65). Nevertheless, by indicating how much continuity there was between the past and the colonial period, he will force historians to look beyond the excessive focus on the development of nationalism that has characterized approaches to the colonial past in general.

*Making the Town* sets the bar high for those who would follow in its footsteps. Parker diligently mines the considerable body of material that exists for this period, often an embarrassment of riches in contrast to even such heavily researched areas as the Akan hinterland. Most innovatively, he copiously illustrates his text with the underutilized photographic collection of the Basel Mission Archive in Switzerland.

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ROGER GOCKING

## TRAVELLERS' ACCOUNTS OF ETHIOPIA AND KENYA

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702278226

*Ethiopia Through Russian Eyes: Country in Transition, 1896–1898*. By ALEXANDER BULATOVICH. Edited and translated by RICHARD SELTZER. Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 2000. Pp. xi + 420. £19.99, paperback (ISBN 1-56902-117-1).

*Over Land and Sea: Memoir of an Austrian Rear Admiral's Life in Europe and Africa, 1857–1909*. By LUDWIG RITTER VON HOHNEL. Edited by RONALD E. COONS, PASCAL JAMES IMPERATO and J. WINTHROP ALDRICH. New York: Holmes and Meier, 2000. Pp. xxvi + 358. £35 (ISBN 0-8419-1390-0).

KEY WORDS: Ethiopia, Kenya, exploration/travel.

These two books have been, in publishing terms, a long time coming. Ludwig Ritter von Hohnel, whose memoirs deal with a varied and itinerant career stretching between the 1870s and the First World War, committed his narrative to paper in the course of the 1920s in the hope of generating some much-needed income: only now, almost sixty years after his death, has he found a publisher, not to mention a team of editors. Similarly, Alexander Bulatovich's descriptions of travel in Ethiopia during the 1890s had long been available only to readers of Russian. It has finally been translated into English by Richard Seltzer, who also adds some editorial notation. The main interest of these works to readers of this journal lies in von Hohnel's expeditions to Kenya in 1886–9 and 1892–4, as well as his later diplomatic mission to Ethiopia in 1905; and in Bulatovich's attachment to Menelik's army and exploration of large parts of southern Ethiopia in the years following the emperor's victory at Adwa.

Anyone who reads travellers' accounts, either for pleasure or as primary source material, will be aware that the value of such texts varies widely, even after one makes the customary allowance for the racial and cultural prejudice of the time. Von Hohnel's narrative in particular demonstrates that interesting lives do not necessarily make interesting books. While the insights he provides into the state of the Austro-Hungarian navy in the late nineteenth century are of some interest, much of his text is fairly monotonous, though it reads pleasantly enough. He comes across as a somewhat colourless, though not dislikeable, chap who saw much of the world from various vessels and in different ranks, but who spends a considerable amount of time worrying about money. An exception to this general rule, however,

is to be found in Chapter 11: this, arguably the most interesting part of his narrative, deals with his trip to the nascent town of Addis Ababa in 1905. There is much of interest here concerning the diplomatic and commercial expatriate community which had been growing since Europe's acceptance of Ethiopia following the latter's victory over the Italians almost ten years earlier; and there are also some useful observations more generally on the nature of Menelik's government at a time when the Emperor was clearly ageing and the empire was strenuously trying to modernize itself. Von Hohnel himself is not particularly impressed by Ethiopia's economic prospects – and indeed annoys a German delegation by bluntly saying so – but his narrative remains interesting and informative nonetheless. Overall the editors have done a thorough job, with plenty of footnotes, cross-references and biographical sketches, although non-readers of German may be overawed by the enormous amount of literature in that language presented in the 'Notes' section. It is important to note that von Hohnel's earlier, and indeed more significant, travels in East Africa in the late 1880s are only relatively briefly described in this book. Of considerably greater value is his original account, *Discovery of Lakes Rudolf and Stephanie: A Narrative of Count Samuel Teleki's Exploring and Hunting Expedition in Eastern Equatorial Africa in 1887 and 1888*, published in two volumes by Longmans, Green & Co in 1894.

Bulatovich's text is altogether a different affair. A Russian cavalry officer, Alexander Bulatovich was in Ethiopia first with the Medical Detachment of the Russian Red Cross and then as official envoy to Menelik's court, in which capacity he travelled with the Ethiopian army to the south. The text itself actually comprises two books – the first dealing with an expedition in central and southern Ethiopia in 1896–7, the second with his attachment to Menelik's army in south-western Ethiopia in 1897–8. These were originally published separately, but have now been brought together in a single volume – and an extraordinarily rich one at that. Bulatovich's narrative combines scientific clarity with obvious, but never undisciplined, passion; he has much to say about politics, religion, the army, the economy and countless other aspects of 'Abyssinian' life at the end of the nineteenth century.

His observations of the peoples on the receiving end of Ethiopian expansionism, especially to the west and south, are as sympathetic and as free from the prejudices of the day as one can hope to find, while his witness to the nature of that expansionism is invaluable. His attention to detail – from political relations, to personal histories, to trade and prices, to terrain – recalls that of his near-contemporary slightly further south, Emin Pasha.

This is, in sum, an exciting addition to the body of primary sources available to western historians and anthropologists dealing with the Ethiopian region in the late nineteenth century, though hardly 'new' to Russian scholars; Red Sea Press is to be commended for bringing it to the attention of a new generation. This reviewer's only serious complaints relate to the lack of maps, which would have been a helpful visual guide to Bulatovich's often pioneering movements; and to the slightly confusing editorial style. There are in fact three sets of footnotes, namely those of Bulatovich himself, of the translator Seltzer, and of Professor Isidor Katsnelson, who produced annotated editions of the original texts in Moscow in 1971. Considerable concentration is required to follow and assess the cross-references. Yet these are relatively minor criticisms, for the translated text is strong enough to stand virtually unaided, and Bulatovich is thus able, at last, to speak for himself to a new and wider audience, which can only benefit as a result.

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RICHARD REID

## EXPATRIATES OUT OF THEIR AFRICAN CONTEXTS

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702288222

*Quest for the Jade Sea: Colonial Competition Around an East African Lake.* By PASCAL JAMES IMPERATO. Boulder: Westview, 1998. Pp. xvi+332. No price given (ISBN 0-8133-2791-1), £17.99, paperback (ISBN 0-8133-2792-X).

*Lost Lion of Empire: The Life of 'Cape-to-Cairo' Grogan.* By EDWARD PAICE. London: HarperCollins, 2001. Pp. xv+470. £19.99 (ISBN 0-00-257003-3).

KEY WORDS: Eastern Africa, exploration/travel, imperialism.

Imperato's work deals with Europeans and Americans who undertook long and physically taxing expeditions to the Great Lakes, in particular Lake Rudolf – the 'Jade Sea'. Imperato examines their motivations, which usually boiled down to mapping Africa for science, extending imperial claims or shooting large mammals. The Jade Sea attracted the attention of white geographers intent on defining its boundaries and source, and later of imperialists from France, Italy, Britain and Ethiopia caught up in regional competitions over land and power. With its geographical mysteries solved and imperial boundaries set, European interest in Lake Edwards declined rapidly; indeed the lake itself has shrunk dramatically from its levels a century ago.

Imperato's book is primarily a chronicle rather than a history proper. The strengths of the work are the biographies of the explorers, how the expeditions were outfitted and other basic, factual information. In this regard, it can serve as an excellent reference work. Often, however, the details overwhelm the reader: is it necessary to know that A. D. Smith's parents lived 'at 226 South 21st Street in Philadelphia' (p. 105)? On the African side, in contrast, details are wanting. Aside from Ethiopia's imperial strategies we are told little about the African context. Rinderpest, small pox and pleuropneumonia are each mentioned but once and, along with 'livestock' and 'cattle', all absent from the index. Despite the considerable secondary literature on East African porters, Imperato offers virtually no background on the hundreds of men engaged by the explorers' caravans. Indeed, porters tend to be invisible except when being flogged or shot for desertion or theft. Granted, Imperato is writing a history of the white travellers, not of African porters. Yet whether or not the explorers achieved their goals depended on the Africans who guided them and carried their scientific equipment, or misguided them and absconded with their gear. We need to know more about the histories of these African men if we wish better to understand the European men at the centre of the story.

More disturbingly, the reader is struck by the numerous instances when the author uncritically presents primary evidence. Imperato quotes Austro-Hungarian traveller Teleki: 'The sultan is sitting in front of me playing with his penis ... If [Africans] want to be friendly toward somebody, they rub their chin and run their fingers through their pelvic hair' (p. 62). Imperato offers up this passage without comment, giving one the impression that he accepts the veracity of Teleki's report. This is bad history and, moreover, dredges up for the general reader stereotypes of Africans' abnormal sexuality.

Paice has tackled the biography of one of the more colorful Britons who would call Kenya their home. Ewart Grogan, born in Britain in 1874, first reached Africa when he signed up for Rhodes' war against the Ndebele. Infected by Rhodes' grand imperial dreams, and consumed by an adventuresome spirit, Grogan set off in 1898 to hunt and explore his way straight across Africa (hence the appellation 'Cape-to-Cairo'). He later moved to Kenya, where, into the 1930s, he stood out as a leader of the white settlers, and bombarded the government with criticism until his death in 1967. When not involved in vocal disputes with the Colonial Office and

the Kenya administration over the future of the colony, Grogan expended tremendous amounts of time and money in a variety of business schemes – developing the port at Mombasa and planting huge fields in the arid Taveta region, to name only two. Paice has given us a thorough biography of Grogan, one especially welcome given his central position in settlerdom.

Yet Paice, like Imperato, gives over too few pages to Africans. One wonders how a biography of a white settler can be written without a detailed look at the Africans around him. Paice passes over matters of migrant labour and squatters – without which there can be no Kenya history. When broader African issues finally force their way into the story they seem out of place. So, having been given no information on land alienation and overcrowding of the reserves, the reader is surprised to learn that land was among the causes of Mau Mau. In a bit of an understatement, Paice eventually notes that ‘in the White Highlands and the Kikuyu reserve land was an important issue’ (p. 396). African labour and land were central to settler politics and economy, and cannot be ignored in a biography of a leading settler politician and employer.

Like Imperato, Paice often fails to interrogate his evidence. More than once we are treated to Grogan’s tales of the Manyema people who were, according to Grogan, cannibals. Paice dutifully passes along this nugget to his readers, taking Grogan’s statements as fact. Similarly, Paice ignores the vast historiography on Mau Mau, instead relying solely on a 1955 treatise by a white settler. Not surprisingly, then, Paice’s characterization of Mau Mau is very much old school: there were ‘Anti-European, anti-Christian oaths involving horrific sexual rituals’ while ‘the barbarity of [Mau Mau] attack ... almost defied description’ (p. 396). This requires no comment.

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BRETT SHADLE

## COLONIAL BOUNDARIES

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702298229

*Deutsche Kolonialgrenzen in Afrika: Historisch-geographische Untersuchungen ausgewählter Grenzräume von Deutsch-Südwestafrika und Deutsch-Ostafrika [German Colonial Borders in Afrika: Historical and Geographical Studies of Selected Border Areas of German Southwest and East Africa].* By IMRE JOSEF DEMHARDT. Hildesheim, Zürich and New York: Georg Olms, 1997. Pp. 603. DM 118, paperback (ISBN 3-487-10506-3).

KEY WORDS: Colonial, diplomatic relations/diplomacy

‘A boundary is much more than a line on a map. Boundary-making [is] not a science of lines but of regions’.<sup>1</sup> With this statement, Imre Josef Demhardt opens the preface to his book, originally a 1995 PhD thesis in geography from the University of Frankfurt/Main. However, his book does not live up to the expectations raised by the quotation.

Demhardt focuses on the technical and administrative procedures around the creation and demarcation of boundaries of German colonies in Africa between the 1880s and 1914. He describes, with much documentary detail, the political conflicts between Germany and other colonial powers arising from these boundaries. However, Demhardt writes little about the ways these boundaries may have

<sup>1</sup> Stephen B. Jones, *Boundary-Making. Handbook for Statesmen, Treaty Editors and Boundary Commissioners* (Washington, 1945), 54.

been influenced by their regional context, or about their impact upon the regions they divide. Furthermore, there is little attempt systematically to generalise his observations or put them into perspective – for example, by discussing socio-economic and political issues, and the problems raised by these boundaries for the population and the countries involved.

Demhardt starts by explaining the methods applied for boundary-making and demarcation in the years around 1900. His concept of a boundary's 'quality' is largely technical, based on criteria such as precision and ease of demarcation. Afterwards, Demhardt conducts a number of case studies, covering a range of different boundary types. For Namibia, he looks at the Penguin Islands in the Atlantic, and at its northern boundary towards Angola; two other chapters study Tanzania's southern boundaries with Mozambique and Malawi. The German colonial border in Africa that has produced most political conflict in recent years – the Bakassi peninsula in the Cameroon – Nigerian borderland – is not among Demhardt's case studies.

Much of the story Demhardt tells is about conflict and negotiation between the European powers during the 'scramble' and their attempts to refine the rather imprecise boundary definitions in the decades that followed. African actors rarely appear in this account, except for his chapter on Northern Namibia, and there is no systematic analysis of the reactions of African societies towards the new and artificial boundaries. Demhardt remains vague about the character of boundaries and border areas which existed among precolonial African polities, not going beyond the acknowledgement that those boundaries were very different from the straight lines imposed by colonialism. Overall, the book remains a colonial administrative history, with extensive quotations from colonial administrative files. The colonial powers, Demhardt shows, were eager to implement the western principle of a boundary line. Given the technical difficulties of demarcation, however, they had a *laissez faire* attitude as to the boundaries' details and were always prepared to renegotiate among themselves. By contrast, Demhardt argues, border rigidity only emerged in the post-independence era – but there is little evidence presented to prove this point.

To end this review on a more positive note: the massive amount of empirical evidence from archives and contemporary published reports which Demhardt provides could be useful as source material to specialised researchers who are interested in the history and anthropology of the border areas he studies (at least to those of us who are prepared, and able, to disassemble a book of about 600 pages, not indexed, in the German language). The book contains detailed technical information about practices of colonial boundary-demarcation and cartography that is useful for historians not trained in geography. Furthermore, it provides a wide array of geographic, ethnographic and historical detail, especially regarding the history of colonial occupation, in the respective border areas. Finally, a number of 'small stories' are contained that certainly are worth telling in their own right, even though they may appear marginal in the wider context of Africa's social or political history – such as Demhardt's account of the 'gold rush' among European and American trading firms for the guano deposits on the Penguin Islands in the 1840s.

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AXEL HARNEIT-SIEVERS

## MALAWIAN SOLDIERS IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702308223

*The Chivaya War: Malawians and the First World War.* By MELVIN E. PAGE.

Boulder: Westview Press, 1999. Pp. xvi + 276. £44.95 (ISBN 0-8133-1234-5).

KEY WORDS: Malawi, military.

This book has been a long time coming. Until very recently, most of the scholarly work on the African military experience in colonial armies dated back to the colonial era. Melvin Page's excellent series of articles on the impact of the First World War on colonial Nyasaland (modern Malawi) were an important exception. Now we finally have the full work that produced these pioneering studies. The book began as Page's 1977 doctoral dissertation. It is essentially a cross between a dissertation-based first monograph and a serious historical study by a veteran Africanist.

The book's greatest strength is the truly impressive body of fieldwork on which it rests. Page and his African research assistants interviewed several hundred Malawian ex-servicemen and civilians (he does not give exact figures) in the early 1970s. Much of his success came from the Malawian army's full support and co-operation in the project. Page followed up this original oral research with additional interviews in the early 1990s. He thus had both the luxury of speaking with African veterans of the First World War (a very scarce commodity these days) and an extra twenty years to put their stories in context. This rich vein of oral history provides an in-depth and intimate account of how the First World War influenced nearly every aspect of daily life in colonial Nyasaland.

Page's stated goal in *The Chivaya War* is to write a history of the Great War for the Malawian public, and he has largely succeeded in producing an accessible narrative. Arguing that Nyasaland became a focal point of the Anglo-German rivalry, Page traces how common Africans were drawn into a larger global conflict. British colonial authorities recruited and conscripted over 200,000 Malawians as infantrymen in the King's African Rifles (the East African colonial army) and as porters in the Carrier Corps, known locally as Tengtenga. Over one quarter of the 9,000 African soldiers in the Nyasaland KAR battalions became casualties in the ensuing four-year-struggle to conquer German East Africa. Africans in the Carrier Corps suffered even greater losses. These African soldiers and carriers are the heroes of *The Chivaya War*. Page takes us through their enlistment, training, daily hardships, combat experiences, resistance to military discipline and finally their less than triumphant return home after the war was over.

Yet the book also pays careful attention to how the conflict influenced the lives of the civilian population of Nyasaland. In a chapter entitled 'The Hungry War' Page analyzes how the military's mass recruiting and conscription campaign disrupted food production and the rhythms of daily life. He does a particularly good job of puncturing the colonial myth that the war benefited African women. Rather than growing fat and lazy on their absent husbands' military savings, they struggled to mobilize enough labour to ensure regular harvests.

Page also assesses the overall impact of the war on Nyasaland. He makes a useful contribution to the ongoing debate about the political consequences of African military service by noting that ex-servicemen played only a small role in the African political associations that sprang up after the war. Equally interesting is his discussion of how soldiers who managed to save their wages became a class of *nouveau riche* in sections of the country that had been weakened by the colonial government's demands for men and taxes. In the northern province, ex-servicemen used their money to buy cattle in order to marry into more established families. Page's assertion that the Great War was Malawi's first 'national experience' is less

convincing. Although Africans throughout the protectorate found themselves drawn into the conflict, the book offers little evidence that they emerged from the war with a greater national sense of themselves as Malawians.

Page also has occasional difficulty contextualizing his rich oral sources. Although his final chapter compares the East African fighting to the conflict's other theatres, he could have gone further in analyzing the wartime experiences of his informants. He makes extensive use of colonial narratives and archives but tends to lay official colonial sources and individual African memories side-by-side rather than intertwining them. For example, his African informants' recollections of their service can be summarized neatly under the heading 'war is hell'. Their complaints about conscription, bad rations, brutal discipline, unpaid pensions and a general lack of official gratitude were common to many African and European veterans of the conflict. Not surprisingly, Page's informants claim to have been the toughest and bravest soldiers in the entire King's African Rifles. Ex-servicemen throughout history have made similar boasts. Page cites colonial sources to support these claims but does not offer an explanation for why Malawians made such good soldiers. His equation of military service with labour migration suggests an answer to this question, but the book would be stronger if he deepened the dialogue between his African and European sources.

These are minor problems. On the whole, *The Chivaya War* makes an important contribution to our understanding of colonial African military service and the impact of the global conflict on a specific African colony. This fine narrative account of Malawians in the Great War will interest both students of Africa and the people of Malawi themselves.

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TIMOTHY H. PARSONS

## PROPHECY, RESISTANCE, REBURIAL

DOI: 10.1017/S002185370231822X

*African Apocalypse: The Story of Nontetha Nkwenkwe, a Twentieth-Century South African Prophet.* By ROBERT E. EDGAR and HILARY SAPIRE. Athens: Ohio, University Center for International Studies, 2000; Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1999. Pp. xxvi + 190. \$20.00 (ISBN 0-89680-208-6); £19.50 paperback (ISBN 1-86814-337-6).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, Christianity, resistance/rebellion, gender, health, biography.

It's not every day that a historian seeking to satisfy his curiosity and desire for justice finds himself fulfilling a prophecy from the 1920s, but so it was with American Bob Edgar. Nontetha Nkwenkwe, whose remains he and co-author Hilary Sapire managed to trace and get exhumed from an unmarked pauper's grave in Pretoria over sixty years after she died in Weskoppies mental hospital, had always told her disciples, 'Look to the Americans. They will help you one day'! Orchestrated by enthusiastic black heritage officials liaising with church and family, Nontetha's solemn reburial back home in 1998 illustrated the rich pageant which is the new South Africa, not least because the choir honouring the Xhosa Christian prophetess came from the Joe Slovo Secondary School, named for the Jewish Communist guerrilla hero, while the archaeologist who exhumed her was an Afrikaner from the University of Pretoria. Historians rarely get to pay their debts to informants quite so fully – using science to rectify an injustice perpetrated by science.



This brilliant little book (there are only 127 pages of text) is as much about the positive and negative mythologizing of an incarcerated person and the hopes and fears with which an invisible absentee is symbolically invested – a phenomenon with which Mandela familiarized the world – as it is about Nontetha herself. Indeed, the middle-aged, widowed, illiterate prophetess (who spoke no English) presented particular difficulties for the historian. She wrote nothing of her message down and preached for only three or four years before being arrested for sedition (now she sounds like Jesus ...). While a portrait of her likeness was commissioned for the book, most of the twenty photographs included are of asylums or of followers at the exhumation and reburial. But the authors admit the limitations of their sources. Edgar first gathered oral recollections from church members in the 1970s, when researching the notorious 1921 police massacre of some 200 'Israelites' at Bulhoek, a hundred miles north of Nontetha's home. It was her misfortune repeatedly to be linked with the Bulhoek debacle in the minds of security-conscious officials who feared yet another awkward encounter with an independent African church, here firing up believers for judgement day with a potentially subversive message about the need for moral reform and African unity, or *umanyano*.

Although Edgar and Sapire duck the question of whether or not Nontetha was actually mad (while suggesting ways in which the overcrowded, unhealthy, ineptly-run asylums might have contributed to eventually unhinging her, and arguing that, anyway, the mad can still be the voice of history), her disciples never accepted the verdict. Nontetha's magnetic appeal was confirmed by the 600-mile pilgrimage of church members (on foot, over several weeks) to see her in Pretoria, after the state had most unusually transferred her there from Fort Beaufort asylum in the hope of extinguishing her following. A second pilgrimage was stymied en route and again resulted in prison sentences for pass violations and trespass. Some loyal disciples – with women the most virulent resisters – had already served terms with hard labour for refusing to disobey the prophetess and kill locusts as the state ordered. Some lost heart – 'I thought I was going to heaven, but I went to jail instead' (p. 32).

How reassuring that earlier research may find its time for publication has finally come. Not only were certain files now open, but South African politics and historiography have moved on dramatically, which has enabled a richer contextualization of this relatively obscure figure. Pooling resources means Edgar's personal interviews and familiarity with Ciskeian religious and political history are complemented by Sapire's attention to the social history of psychiatry and the particular ways in which Nontetha's femaleness shaped the course of events. Her confinement in two mental hospitals seems for a start to have been due to her gender – a less 'caring', less 'medical', option would have been imprisonment, meted out in 1921, the authors might have noted, to her famous Congolese contemporary, the prophet Simon Kimbangu. Rousing similar fears of social disturbance, he was kept in jail till his death in the 1950s. (Another fascinating unremarked Christian echo from across the continent is of Nontetha's call to preach in the wake of miraculous deliverance from the devastating flu epidemic: some important praying or 'aladura' churches among the Yoruba started after the same 1918 health crisis.)

Though the authors are good on the way Nontetha drew on both Xhosa and Christian legacies in her message and style of 'call', and highlight intriguing continuities with Ntsikana and Dwane, further religious questions remain. For instance, how far did psychiatrists priding themselves on 'modern, scientific' approaches find themselves baffled by religious fervour in general? After all, they did have a sub-category of 'Paranoiacs' labelled 'Prophets, saints and mystics' (p. 133). And what about female preaching as a sign of lunacy in itself – might that not

be a predictable response by men from a western church culture, which at that stage gave virtually no legitimacy to women who felt divinely led to preach to male political leaders in mixed gatherings (as did Nontetha – whose name means ‘someone who speaks a lot’)? And what do her followers believe now? How does their worship proceed today, beyond its evident (and widely shared) reliance on the oral fervour of praying, preaching and hymn-singing?

Students should find this short book, with its riveting and poignant human story, particularly accessible, but all those interested in African rural resistance, popular responses to Christianity, gender history, colonial asylums and the interface between conflicting medical systems will read it with profit.

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DEBORAH GAITSKELL

### MODELS AND OUTCOMES OF THE DECLINE OF SLAVERY

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702328226

*After Slavery: Emancipation and its Discontents.* Edited by HOWARD TEMPERLEY.  
London and Portland: Frank Cass, 2000. Pp. 320. £45 (ISBN 0-7146-5022-6);  
£17.50, paperback (ISBN 0-7146-8079-6).

KEY WORDS: Slavery, slavery abolition.

These studies originally appeared as a special issue of *Slavery and Abolition* (2000), also published by Frank Cass. They deal with the movements to abolish slavery, the process of emancipation itself and its results for the ex-slaves and other groups involved.

A range of areas are covered, including parts of the Americas, Africa and Asia. Of particular interest to students of Africa is Suzanne Miers’ chapter, ‘Slavery to freedom in Sub-Saharan Africa: expectations and reality’, which concentrates on emancipation in British possessions. This gives a very useful summary of events in these areas and research on them. It provides an interesting discussion of the differences between the ‘colonial’ (New World) and ‘protectorate’ (Indian) models of abolition (pp. 238, 242) and the use of and departure from the Indian model in Africa. The author points out that we need to know more about the process of renegotiation of terms of service between ex-slaves and owners, and more about the life stories of various types of slaves in order to find out their various expectations of ‘freedom’ and how far these were met.

David Seddon contributes a chapter on slavery in Saharan Africa, pointing out the continuance of slavery in countries of the Saharan region even after independence. It would have been interesting to learn more about present-day slavery in Sudan, and also more about the point of view of the slaves and ex-slaves generally, if such material is available. Howard Temperley’s chapter on the settlers in Liberia discusses the colonists’ American attitudes, their assumption of their own superiority to the local African populations and their similarities to colonizers elsewhere.

Other chapters deal with Haiti; resistance to apprenticeship in the Caribbean; freedmen and indentured labourers in the Caribbean, Cuba and Puerto Rico; the delegalization of slavery in India; the British abolitionists’ expectations; the Aborigines’ Protection Society; ex-slaves’ reactions to emancipation in Richmond, Virginia; and memories of emancipation in the U.S.A. fifty years after the Civil War.

In his concluding chapter, ‘Comparative approaches to the ending of slavery’,

Seymour Drescher discusses the expectations of various groups and the disappointment felt, not only by ex-slaves but also by others, with the outcome of emancipation. He draws a comparison with similar disappointments felt with regard to other reforms or social changes.

All in all, this volume contains a number of studies that are useful for students of Africa and the end of slavery. Although the volume covers a range of areas, there are some notable omissions and some unevenness of focus. Although the collection concentrates on the Americas, there is no chapter on Brazil. Africa is represented by one area study and one general survey, while the Americas are represented by a series of detailed case studies. There is a neglect of Asia, except for India. Some chapters focus on groups that agitated for abolition, some on the process of abolition itself and some on the ex-slaves. It is clear from this volume that further research on the expectations, decisions and activities of the ex-slaves and their descendants is urgently needed.

*Bridge Station, Niagara Falls*

ANN O'HEAR

### SLAVERY AND AFTER IN ILORIN

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702338222

*Power Relations in Nigeria: Ilorin Slaves and their Successors.* By ANN O'HEAR.

Rochester NY: University of Rochester Press, 1997. Pp. xiv + 338. £42.00 (ISBN 1-878822-86-1).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, slavery, slavery abolition.

This book is a study of slavery and its heritage in the metropolitan districts of the Ilorin Emirate. O'Hear starts with a description of slavery in nineteenth century Ilorin. As a frontier state within the Sokoto caliphate, Ilorin was the centre of large-scale enslavement and slave-based production, though its role was limited in the second half of the century by the development of more powerful neighbours in Nupe and Ibadan. The area around the city of Ilorin was primarily inhabited by slaves, who worked on large plantations. Some slave holdings numbered in the thousands. When the British captured Ilorin in 1897, there was a brief period of massive slave flight, but with no British garrison in Ilorin, the emirate elite quickly reasserted its control of rural areas. The establishment of tighter British control after 1900 reinforced the control of the elite over both slaves and free peasants. The slave trade and warfare were ended, but the focusing of authority in the emirs and district heads made slave flight or resistance difficult and facilitated demands for exorbitant tribute, taxes and gifts throughout the colonial period.

Though O'Hear structures her account around the themes of resistance and accommodation, there does not seem to have been much resistance until local government reforms of the 1950s opened up the possibility of local politics. O'Hear argues that indirect rule, by strengthening the control of the ruling elite over agricultural producers, united them. The only form of resistance she describes for the inter-war years was a resistance to Islamic conversion, but by the 1950's, the peasantry was overwhelmingly Muslim. In the most vivid chapter in the book, she describes the emergence of a radical party called the Ilorin Talaka Parapo. The ITP linked itself to the Action Group and briefly prevailed in local elections, but was then brutally suppressed by the Northern Peoples Congress.

There is much that is valuable in this study, and yet, in some ways, it is disappointing. It is based on a thesis defended at Birmingham in 1983. Though O'Hear has read and cites much of what has been written during the intervening years, she does not fully use it. On the nineteenth century, her data is poor and she

has not adequately resolved the contradictions between different oral informants and the occasional European visitor. There are also questions on which I would have liked more precision. She tells us that a slave worked a half-day for his or her master, but what was a half day? Further west, half-day meant working till early afternoon prayer at about 2 pm. That was a long half. She implies some kind of progression to a situation where slaves worked on their own, but does not define the different stages or try to figure out how frequent this progression was. I have reservations too about her idea that non-conversion was resistance. There may be an element of truth in that, but elsewhere slaves often demanded to be accepted as Muslims, and Islam could be a liberating ideology.

O'Hear devotes little attention to structures. The emirs are only briefly mentioned, and tend to be incorporated in general references to the elite or the ruling class. There is brief reference to, but no discussion of, the emir's slaves. There seems to be discrimination against largely slave villages in the provision of education and other services, but data is limited. She describes the Ilorin Talaka Parapo and the bitter conflicts of the period between 1956 and 1960, but there is no description of how the party was formed, who its leaders were and exactly what were its ties to the Action Group. She has a brief epilogue in which she suggests that the most effective forms of resistance were refusal to pay taxes and out-migration. The latter in particular could have used a fuller discussion. All in all, this is a valuable work because it looks at an area and at questions which have not been fully explored, but it leaves many questions unanswered.

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MARTIN A. KLEIN

## CHRISTIANITY AND THE YORUBA

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702348229

*Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. By J. D. Y. PEEL. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000. Pp. xi + 420. £35.50 (ISBN 0-253-33794-1).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, Christianity, missions.

This brilliant book makes fascinating reading. It is destined to become one of the most important books ever written on the Yoruba, although it contains many issues to disagree with. The book actually does more than its advertised title promises: it covers the broad terrain of the Yoruba during the nineteenth century, touching on the major issues of war, religious change and Anglo-Yoruba relations. With any work conceived on such a broad canvass, we encounter the chemistry of old and new issues, ideas, and data, and Peel offers a context that is occasionally larger than his specific object of study. The strength lies in his extensive use of missionary sources to construct a dense narrative, organized both thematically and chronologically to present a learned and comprehensive history of Christianity among the Yoruba during the nineteenth century. The evidence is creatively used to affirm a number of leading ideas and conclusions on the spread of Christianity in its early years and the various changes that accompanied the new religion, as well as to introduce a long list of compelling and innovative ideas on cultural interactions and modernity.

Not only do we have a book that introduces readers to the Yoruba, but also one that profoundly raises numerous conceptual issues. A grandiose picture emerges in the study of Christianity, although Peel is careful not to impose too much theoretical burden on his dense empirical data. The writing style is so sophisticated and seductive that even when the rich empirical data are not saying something new, one enjoys it nevertheless.

The narrative begins with what has become conventional: the wars and confusion that gripped the Yoruba in the first half of the nineteenth century. Chapters 3 and 4 are devoted to this, but the data do not change the established conclusions in the literature, only re-affirm them. The sub-text is that disaster formed the bedrock of the introduction and spread of Christianity. Peel repackages established scholarship and adds fresh data to link the Yoruba wars with the missionary project: many enslaved people were early converts; pioneer missionary entrepreneurs were involved in the wars; and Samuel Johnson, the leading historian of the era, was a product of missionary education. One fascinating project would be a comparative history with some other African groups where the preceding historical context was different, and an evaluation of the differences in the outcome.

Thereafter, the narrative shifts in Chapter 4 to yet another conventional approach: the analysis of the indigenous religion that preceded Christianity, and how the new religion had to face a long established set of religious practices. The erudition in this chapter lies not in the worn-out clichés of cultural contact, but in how Peel successfully shows the impact of Yoruba ideas about power, status, cults and other beliefs and practices on the interpretation of Christian messages in ways favourable to them. The chapter also makes connections between religion and politics, and how expectations of power and material benefits affected the understanding of what the missionaries were doing. The essence of this dense narrative, I think, is that the Yoruba were neither powerless nor intellectually empty in their encounter with the missionaries and Christianity. A possible follow-up study is to compare the differences that indigenous religious practices in other African groups had on the penetration of Christianity.

From Chapters 5 to 7 the book moves squarely to the elaboration of missionary activities in all their ramifications. All the variables play out: power politics, technology, leadership, rivalry with the older religion of Islam and others that enabled a new religion to spread and assert itself. If Chapter 5 lays out the foundational structures for establishing presence and political impact in the Yoruba landscape, chapter six turns to the analysis of how theological messages sought to change and adapt Yoruba social values in such a way that the Yoruba were able both to accept and question. Chapter 7 is devoted to Islam, the other religion that the missionaries had to confront – here we see both competition and clever borrowing from already established Islamic ideas and words that were useful in translating the Christian messages. In a chapter that offers new areas for further investigation, he brilliantly concludes that '[W]here the internal critics of Yoruba Islam were most anxious to upgrade its Islamic credentials, the most persistent demand on Yoruba Christianity has been to prove its African one'.

The focus of the book changes in Chapters 8 and 9 to the success of the missionaries in winning their first set of converts. Chapter 8 explains why a minority of Yoruba converted to Christianity. Chapter 9 analyzes the 'kind of Christians they became'. Regarding conversion, the thrust of Peel's argument lies in the linkage between power and religion – the Yoruba wanted to gain from the benefits of writing, technology and healing, all of which the missionaries were able to give – but his rather elastic definition and interpretation of power might indeed have shocked many of the converts who stressed non-elitist notions of survival and egalitarianism.

In addition, he analyzes the non-instrumental appeals of culture and ethical teaching, and the rewards of belonging to a religious community. By 1890, Christianity was only the religion of a minority of Yoruba; thereafter, the process of its becoming a mass religion unfolded. As Chapter 9 shows, the Yoruba themselves were creative in transforming their new inheritance by becoming more evangelical, more spiritual and more aggressive in spreading the religion.

What, then, does the adoption of Christianity mean and bring to the Yoruba? Peel attempts to answer this question in Chapter 10, paying attention to a number of well-known issues such as how Christianity instigated a new cultural nationalism, how it defined Yorubanness and how it created a new elite with a new notion of progress and the tendency toward the emergence of what can be called Yoruba Christianity.

Chapter 10 would have been most effective in closing this outstanding book. However, Peel abandons the historian in himself and turns to his other discipline of sociology to link the past to the present, though without the careful methodology and solid data that inform the rest of the book. Thus, he ends with the weakest chapter, hurriedly putting forth ideas that require greater elaboration and data. He overstates his case by putting Christianity at the centre of the major actions and activities of the modern Yoruba. His attempt to underscore the dominant role of Christianity among the modern Yoruba by contrasting Wole Soyinka's 'atheism' with the vibrancy of born-again Christians presents a fragmented reality; meanwhile, Islam, the powerful survival of tradition, the changes of the colonial era that made Christianity a mass religion and the rising poverty since the 1980s that has partly propelled religious militancy all retreat into the background from the analysis.

If the dead could rise and read, Yoruba pioneer missionaries would slaughter a cow to honour J. D. Y. Peel while the Muslims and traditionalists, in the spirit of the religious tolerance of the age, would partake in the celebration. He presents the pioneer Yoruba missionary agents as great visionaries, talented workers and patient chroniclers of their time, and he equally presents the early converts as astute, discriminating and sincere. By the close of the nineteenth century, both the agents and the converts were looking toward a greater future, empowered by education and values that lifted their spirits. Resurrection, as these pioneers would realize, is not necessarily blissful: the Yoruba they would see – facing a cultural void and debased values – would shock them sufficiently to abandon the celebration and rush back to heaven. The encounter with Christianity, in spite of what Peel says, is certainly not enough to understand the Yoruba in modern Nigeria in an age of aggressive globalism.

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TOYIN FALOLA

## VIVACITY OF YORUBA CHIEFTAINCY

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702358225

*Nigerian Chiefs: Traditional Power in Modern Politics, 1890s–1990s.* By OLUFEMI VAUGHAN. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2000. Pp. v + 293. £55.00 (ISBN 1-58046-040-2).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, chieftaincy.

For several decades scholars working upon Africa managed to convince themselves that chieftaincy was definitely in decline. Chiefs, many of us believed, were at best rather colourful relics of an intriguing past; at worst they were beacons of reaction, a corporate antithesis of development and progress. And because they were doomed *and* conservative they did not often merit the kind of detailed study which we were to devote to nationalists; in any case they were now being elbowed aside by the conjoined forces of modernization and nationalism, and working on such a subject was almost necrophilic.

While the end of chieftaincy was a conclusion that many nationalists wished for, it was not a fate that many less audible Africans would have predicted. Lots of rural

Africans would have argued that chiefs had been around for a long time and that although the nationalist era was tough for them, it was far too early to write their collective obituary. The nationalist era is, for most of Africa, a matter of memory and myth; a generation and more after those great days, chiefs are not merely still around but seem to be exercising more rather than less authority.

Olufemi Vaughan's study of Yoruba chiefs is a brave undertaking. Yorubaland is a very extensive cultural zone that incorporates a large number of strikingly different chieftaincies. If the geographical sweep is courageous, the temporal span is even more adventurous for it covers a century which for well-rehearsed reasons might prove to have been an unusually turbulent one in the *longue durée* of West African history.

Vaughan is concerned with charting the sheer vivacity of Yoruba chieftaincy over a hundred years during which colonialism gradually created a new polity and in which nationalists and then soldiers captured and then re-fashioned the state. He argues that chiefs, in their dealings with those who commanded the state, the region and the district, were more often than not empowered by their deep social roots. They were imbricated in the hectic processes that transformed Nigeria in the twentieth century. Chieftaincies were not only involved in the struggles that constituted the essential mechanisms for rapid stratification but were often the physical location of those struggles. Western Nigerian chiefs, heirs of long traditions of adaptation, mutation and opportunism, were unusually impressive exponents of the art of survival rather than being victims of modernization, doomed to extinction because of their inflexible attachment to antique ways. This should not surprise anyone but, as Professor Vaughan argues with conviction, chiefly institutions in Africa have been the most prominent victims of over-literal assumptions about 'tradition' and 'modernity'. He shows that Yoruba chiefs were profoundly involved in the particular forms that modernization was to take in western Nigeria just as they were closely associated with the ultimately successful political challenge to colonial rule. In a vigorous section Vaughan rounds on some of the delusions that have accompanied simple-minded readings of the 'invention of tradition' proposition.

Vaughan illustrates his arguments with lively material drawn from twenty Yoruba chieftaincies. The sources for these reconstructions are set out in his endnotes and bibliography. But for the period after 1960 it is notable that he cites only secondary and published official sources such as Assembly Debates. Without a discussion of sources one can only infer that Nigeria's archives constrict a scholar such as Vaughan to access to the colonial period alone. This must raise some concern in a work that very admirably seeks to cover the development of a major theme up to the final decade of the twentieth century; this is, after all, the best part of forty years after Nigeria's independence and more than eighty years since its internal self-government. As work on Nigeria's modern history expands, as one hopes it might in the welcome, promised liberalization of the post-Abacha period, it would be both ironic and tragic if its national archives were to remain the archives of colonial Nigeria.

Professor Vaughan's book is especially welcome in that it makes a major contribution to the historiography of modern Nigeria whose thinness does little to suggest the historical significance of Africa's largest modern state. Just as one welcomes an addition to that rather slight corpus, one must also recognize that at this price few will be able to afford to buy it.

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RICHARD RATHBONE

## REVISIONISM?

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702368221

*Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe: A Social History of the Hwesa People, c. 1870s–1990s.* By DAVID J. MAXWELL. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999. Pp. xii + 291. £29.95 (ISBN 0-7486-1129-0); £14.95, paperback (ISBN 0-7486-1130-4).

KEY WORDS: Zimbabwe, chieftaincy, missions, colonial, post-colonial.

The doctoral dissertation on which this book is very largely based won the Audrey Richards Prize awarded by the African Studies Association of the United Kingdom for the best African Studies thesis of 1994–96, and one can see why. There are many good things about this study of the Hwesa people of north-east Zimbabwe, notably a subtle analysis of how Christian missions in the area took local form. Close attention is paid to the ways in which African responses to missionisation influenced its nature. The past role and present significance of local chieftainship is also illuminated.

Taking issue with those interpretations which have dismissed chiefs as colonial stooges, David Maxwell argues that the contemporary importance of chieftaincy in Zimbabwe can only be understood if the religious sources of chiefly power are investigated and the historical role played by chiefs in the invention of tradition, the imagination of ethnicity and the defence of parochial interests against central government intervention are explored. Indeed, these latter concerns are presently paramount. While local cultural idioms were always an important means by which Hwesa people conceptualized social and political change, such idioms are now more localized than at any time in the past forty years. ‘Whereas, in the past, they were deployed in a territory-wide religious movement of popular mobilization during the liberation war’, concludes Maxwell, ‘they are now involved in a local ethnically based struggle’.

Yet valuable as these particular findings undoubtedly are in qualifying the unwarranted generalizations unfortunately so characteristic of Terence Ranger’s work on the neighbouring district of Makoni, other aspects of *Christians and Chiefs* are much less satisfactory. In the first place, the period before 1950 receives relatively little attention; indeed about half the book concentrates on the liberation struggles of the 1970s and their aftermath. Secondly and more importantly, its treatment of social history is confined to religion and politics. Virtually everything else is ignored. Gender relations receive a look in, but the dynamics of social differentiation and economic matters are passed over in silence. Labour migration, whether at the point of production or in its rural ramifications, is barely discussed. So cursory and slapdash is the coverage of developments in the wider political economy that *Christians and Chiefs* manages to get wrong the month in which UDI was declared, even as it attributes the illegal parting of the way from Britain to the Rhodesia Front, as opposed to the better known Rhodesian Front. When such elementary facts are garbled, the reliability of the more esoteric data on which the study turns must immediately become questionable. Certainly some of the book’s overall findings are more than a little laboured. Hwesa chiefs and their allies, we are told, ‘consistently responded to the exigencies of the day ... The strategies they ... pursued [were those] of yielding the best chances of their dynasty’s political survival’. Well, yes. This less than earth-shattering conclusion is not something that would surprise anyone who has read Beach or Holleman or even Weinrich. Nor is reconsideration of ‘the dichotomies: collaboration and resistance, modernity and tradition’ quite so recent a phenomenon as *Christians and Chiefs* would have its readers believe. Nearly thirty years ago, the complex relationship between those who collaborated and those who resisted in colonial Zimbabwe,



never mind elsewhere, was examined in *African Affairs* by Charles van Onselen.

One final point needs making. There are moments when *Christians and Chiefs* reads more like an affectionate memoir than a scholarly analysis. This is hardly surprising. David Maxwell lived and worked in the area initially as a teacher and latterly as a researcher, off and on, for almost ten years. By his own admission, he greatly enjoyed the experience. The ensuing empathy which developed between the author and those local people with whom he became friendly, resulted in privileged access to some sections of Hwesa society, as well as a number of important insights into their experiences. But when 'my tribe' intersects with the conservative sentiments of political correctness, as it occasionally does in this monograph, the results can be problematic, to say the least. That the last word in *Christians and Chiefs* should go to a chief rather than a colonial official seems obvious to the author. Why either should be privileged over the voices of ordinary men and women is not explained.

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IAN PHIMISTER

## COLONIAL MEDICINE

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702378228

*Frontiers of Medicine in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1899–1940.* By HEATHER BELL.

Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999. Pp. xiv + 261. £45.00 (ISBN 0-19-820749-2).

KEY WORDS: Sudan, medicine, colonial.

Heather Bell's stimulating study of the introduction of colonial medicine into the Sudan in the early decades of the twentieth century makes a significant contribution to Sudanese studies, to colonial studies and to the history of medicine. As much about politics as about science, it adds to our understanding of differing colonial practices throughout the British Empire. At the same time it provides insight into the epidemiology of various diseases in northern Africa in the first half of the twentieth century, and shows how these were in part shaped by the global dissemination of science. Yet, as Bell asserts, colonial medicine was 'far from being a subsidiary of metropolitan medicine ... [D]octors and scientists working in the colonies generated their own scientific knowledge and propagated their own medical discourses' (p. 2). Different colonialisms produced, *inter alia*, different approaches to disease control (p. 195). At the same time, 'medical knowledge reflected, reinforced, even created images of different social and racial groups as strong or weak, diseased or healthy, susceptible or resistant to infection (p. 92). Medicine clearly reinforced and reproduced the local colonial political economy and social hierarchies.

A revision of Bell's 1996 doctoral dissertation at Oxford University, *Frontiers of Medicine* draws on records from Sudan and Britain (notably the Sudan archive in Durham), as well as recent revisionist history and anthropological theory. Although it is about colonial medicine from one particular period in one particular outpost of the British Empire, it raises ongoing questions about medical practice, colonialism and local versus metropolitan constructions of knowledge. While doctors under the Sudanese condominium may have enjoyed higher prestige than elsewhere in the colonial world, Bell shows that they too were constrained by chronic under-funding, political weakness and insecurity, personal rivalries, and local social and cultural prejudices. Medical choices were thus the result of a complex interplay of factors.

The focus of Bell's study is medicine rather than health or disease (p. 16), and western or clinical healing rather than indigenous therapeutic options, which she

acknowledges are varied and significant but does not pursue further. Topics that are addressed include an overview of the condominium medical administration, the historical organization of medical research in Sudan (primarily northern Sudan) and attempts to control diseases such as sleeping sickness, yellow fever, malaria and schistosomiasis, the topics of successive chapters.

The relationship between medicine and politics weaves throughout the text. 'Medicine could be used for genuine humanitarian purposes; it could also be a "tool of empire" and an instrument for social control' (p. 7). The opposite could also be true: 'to dismiss doctors reductively as the handmaiden of colonialism or capitalism ignores the more complex, and interesting, reality' (p. 10). A second premise is that colonial medicine was 'centrally concerned with boundaries and frontiers of all kinds, real and imagined' (p. 3). Medical knowledge ordered knowledge of both the physical and social environment (p. 5), and differences between medical and non-medical, as well as within medicine itself, were all 'constructed, contested and policed' by those practitioners who guarded medicine's professional prestige (p. 6). What thus emerges is 'a spatial understanding of disease, and an emphasis on the need to protect territory, rather than particular individuals, from infection' (p. 128) at a time when both physical and scientific boundaries in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan were being expanded considerably. These reflected developments within the country, as well as more globally, and within medicine itself.

Bell's account is thoughtful, well researched and likely to provoke lively discussion from historians and scientists. The text is well written and accessible to a wide audience. One chapter, however, that fits somewhat uneasily into the broader discussion is that on midwifery (Chapter 7). In colonial Sudan midwifery was clearly more a political than a medical domain because of the practice of female circumcision. Here it was marginalized on grounds of class and gender as well as the perspectives of the medical profession. Bell's discussion of the Wolff sisters, who set up the first school of midwifery, highlights the marginality of western as well as Sudanese women during this period, and also the insidious class constructions that beset the very small medical community. One only regrets that she was not able to develop these ideas more fully throughout the book.

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SUSAN KENYON

## SOCIAL HISTORY OF MEDICAL PRACTICE

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702388224

*A Colonial Lexicon: Of Birth Ritual, Medicalization and Mobility in the Congo.*

By NANCY ROSE HUNT. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999. Pp. xix + 475. £40 (ISBN 0-8223-2366-4); £13.95, paperback (ISBN 0-8223-2366-4).

KEY WORDS: Zaïre (Congo Democratic Republic), colonial, medicine, missions.

This book is a groundbreaking contribution to the emerging historiography of colonial medicine. Ironically, perhaps, it may be even more important for how it contributes to our understanding of the more developed historiography of Christian missions in Africa. With dedicated attention to the way mission life has been lived, talked about, written about and remembered, Nancy Hunt has provided an unusually vivid exploration of the intricacies of colonialism.

Hunt combines history and ethnography in exploring the social milieu of British Baptist missionaries in the Congo. She is interested in local knowledges of medical practice, understood not as traditions distinct from cosmopolitan medicine but rather as fused in a complex network of overlapping cultural influences. The social

life of medical practice in this depiction is more syncretist than pluralist. The medicalization of birth registered in the subtitle is an important theme, but it is not described as a linear process, nor is it walled off from other aspects of the region's social, cultural and medical history. The descriptions of life in and around the mission are thick, evoking intimate details and everyday dramas in ways that are often missed by researchers whose agenda is more explicitly devoted to missionaries or conversion.

The chapters are not strictly chronological, but focus instead on what might be called clusters of meaning. In early chapters, Hunt analyzes *libeli*, a male initiation ceremony, which provides clues to ideas about fertility in the early history of the mission. Much of the subsequent discussion explores the multiple cultural resonances surrounding technologies and artefacts, such as airplanes, bicycles or surgical instruments. Hunt also focuses much of her attention on what she calls 'middles', mission-educated Africans of modest social standing who move among multiple cultural worlds, sometimes serving as cultural translators. These figures, Hunt contends, are crucial to understanding colonialism because of their intermediary role. Hunt is resolutely resistant to binary descriptions of colonial experiences, and argues that even a phrase like 'colonial encounter' can imply a simplified image of a stark dichotomy between Europeans and Africans.

Hunt argues convincingly that the medicalization of birth cannot be understood except in relation to larger social changes and practices. The converse also proves true. *A Colonial Lexicon* is remarkably successful in showing how a microhistorical study can raise, and respond to, the largest questions about colonialism in Africa.

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JONATHAN SADOWSKY

## BRITISH BUSINESS AND GHANAIAN INDEPENDENCE

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702398220

*The Business of Decolonization: British Business Strategies in the Gold Coast.* By SARAH STOCKWELL. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000. Pp. v + 265. No price given (ISBN 0-19-820848-0).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, decolonization, European/American businesses.

The opening of European, African, and Asian archives for the post-Second World War era has elevated the end of empire to the top of the research agenda of many scholars of contemporary history. New opportunities to answer large historical questions abound. How influential were the nationalist movements and the nationalist leaders in bringing about political independence? What role did the United States play in ending European empires? What place did entrenched business groups occupy in the transfer of power? This last question intrigues Sarah Stockwell, and it is hard to imagine a more satisfactory case-study than the one that she has executed to determine the place of British business in the decolonization narrative of the Gold Coast after 1945.

The Gold Coast, as everyone is aware, was Britain's premier colony in Africa, the pathway to independence for which – while rocky at times – was relatively non-violent and consensual. It was also an important colony for major British business groups. It had a robust export–import trade dominated by British firms, especially the large Lever Brothers subsidiary, the United Africa Company (UAC). It was also the world's leading exporter of cocoa, the revenues for which were on a steep ascent after the Second World War, fuelling economic growth and inspiring dreams of economic prosperity for everyday Gold Coasters. Last, but far from least, the colony had an important mining industry, also dominated by British business interests. It would thus stand to reason that the British business groups

involved in the Gold Coast would be active participants in the debates over the political fortunes of the country. Nor were the rising Gold Coast nationalists, led by Africa's most visible nationalist at the time, Kwame Nkrumah, likely to ignore the place of foreign business in their calculations of the Gold Coast's political and economic future.

The author's comprehensive and judicious use of source materials makes this study a model for future scholars of decolonization. Stockwell not only uses the materials that other students of decolonization have come to rely on such as government archives in the metropole and the colony, but she has also made full use of the archives of leading British business firms. The list of these records is long and impressive: Barclays Bank, Cadbury, Ashanti Goldfields, the Bank of British West Africa, Selection Trust, Elder Dempster Line, and John Holts, as well as the papers of many British and Gold Coast chambers of commerce. She also carried out interviews with Gold Coast merchants. It is clear from the care with which Stockwell handles these sources that she did not approach her study with predetermined ideas or theories about decolonization.

Stockwell begins by taking issue with an early work on British business interests in the Gold Coast, Josephine Milburn's *British Business and Ghanaian Independence*, which concluded that British firms had little influence over the pace and decision-making of decolonization. In Stockwell's estimation, this perspective, which others have found to be true for other parts of the British empire, does not hold for the British in the Gold Coast. Instead of dwelling on official proclamations, as earlier works have done, she looks at business activities from behind the scenes and catalogues a very different picture. She finds, for example, that the Holt and UAC agents, while miscalculating the powerful momentum that ending empire would acquire, were acutely aware that they had to make major policy shifts. Accordingly, they encouraged the Africanization of their staffs and established local subsidiaries in an effort to give their firms a much greater local colouration. They supported government and nationalist efforts at industrialization even though the output of local factories cut into their import trade. In addition, the firms worked tirelessly to sway the policies of British and Gold Coast officials as well as nationalist leaders. Through inspired detective work Stockwell discovered that UAC and Ashanti Goldfields made secret payments to conservative nationalists as part of a campaign to counteract the radical visions of Kwame Nkrumah and his leftist supporters. Indeed, the United Africa Company made a £11,000 loan to K. Busia, of which he was not expected to repay £3,000.

It goes without saying that Stockwell's research demolishes the claims that some revisionist historians have made about British businesses standing idly by as colonial officials and nationalists discussed a range of matters of great interest to them. Still, Stockwell's findings are not likely to persuade scholars that businessmen exercised any decisive control over the major decolonization decisions and the scheduling of independence. Quite to the contrary, the evidence is overwhelming that nationalist agitation and the rapid pace of decolonization put British businesses on the defensive, forcing them to react to events rather than control them. Firms that had once dominated colonial polities now found themselves fighting rearguard actions, compelled to give way on one critical issue after another. In the Gold Coast they lost the battle to retain special commercial seats in the legislative assembly, and they were unable to combat the negative nationalist claims that foreign investment rode roughshod over African populations. Indeed, it is difficult to resist the conclusion, the author's protestations notwithstanding, that British business efforts to control the pace of decolonization and channel its energies were notably unsuccessful.

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ROBERT L. TIGNOR

## HODGKIN AND AFRICAN NATIONALISMS

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702408225

*Thomas Hodgkin: Letters from Africa, 1947–1956*. Edited and annotated by ELIZABETH HODGKIN and MICHAEL WOLFERS. London: Haan Associates, 2000. Pp. x + 214. £18.95 (ISBN 1-874209-93-6); £11.95, paperback (ISBN 1-874209-88-X).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, nationalism, biography.

In 1932, Thomas Hodgkin left Balliol having achieved a first in Greats. He sought employment with the Colonial Office, hoping for a posting to Palestine. He was offered one to what was then the Gold Coast, and turned it down. In a letter to a Balliol don explaining his decision, Hodgkin remarked that the Gold Coast was ‘a country with no past and no history – and no present either – only perhaps a promising future – and that at a Kindergarten level’. It was fifteen years later that Hodgkin made the first of many trips to Africa. He was then Secretary of the Oxford University Delegacy for Extra-Mural Studies, and his visit had to do with developing adult education in Britain’s West African colonies. He spent two weeks in the Gold Coast. Gone was the earlier cynicism. He was mightily impressed by the charm of the people and their thirst for knowledge, and found the climate (it was February!) tolerable.

The letters brought together in this book cover the seven journeys to Africa that Hodgkin made between 1947 and 1956. This latter year was somewhat of a milestone in his career, for it saw the publication of *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*, a work that the editors justifiably describe as ‘seminal’. It was specifically designed to meet the needs of university extension classes. I was then a resident tutor in the Extra-Mural department of the University College of the Gold Coast. I read the book with great interest, and did in fact review it for the December issue of the Legon journal, *Universitas*. The praise I loaded on it was tempered with a certain unease about Hodgkin’s conception of African nationalism as, to quote him, ‘the final stage in a chain-reaction, deriving its operative ideas originally from the French Revolution – the doctrine of the Rights of Man interpreted as the Rights of Nations’. Specifically African pasts, I urged, also had a role in shaping African nationalisms.

Hodgkin met Kwame Nkrumah in March 1951. He referred to him in a letter as ‘an altogether admirable person, with very sound ideas’, and suggested that his Convention People’s Party had ‘pretty well become the real government of the country’ (p. 69). The opposition was, Hodgkin wrote three days later, ‘completely ineffective’ (p. 70). Three and a half years later the National Liberation Movement was launched in Kumase, capital of the old Asante kingdom. A new flag was unfurled, ancient war songs sung and fiery speeches made extolling the great warriors of the past. A broadsheet was distributed: ‘The Spirits of Your great and noble Ancestors call you to Action ... Save your Nation the great Ashanti Nation’.

In her splendid study, *The Quills of the Porcupine: Asante Nationalism in an Emergent Ghana* (Wisconsin, 1993), Jean Allman has shown how the conflict between the CPP and the NLM brought the Gold Coast – Ghana – almost to the brink of civil war. The point is that the NLM was certainly an African nationalism, but it was one that had roots quite other than ones springing from events in late eighteenth-century France. Subsequent events in many parts of the African continent will provide even more telling, though often disturbing, examples of the way that deep structures in society may surface to confound political analysts. Hodgkin tended to underestimate the power of such forces precisely because of his concern with ‘modernity’. The editors of *Letters from Africa 1947–1956* put the matter succinctly. Thomas, they wrote, ‘was seeking the origins of the modern

organisations, such as political parties, trade unions, churches, youth and women's organisations, and of modern forms of leadership' (p. 150).

*Nationalism in Colonial Africa* was based on notebooks that Hodgkin wrote in the course of his travels. His letters, most of which were addressed to Dorothy Hodgkin, give the reader very little sense of what was contained in these. They do, however, provide what may best be described as a personal diary, delightfully recording his reactions to Africa, to Africans and to those other 'chaps' (to use a favourite word of his) who made a living there. The letters can, however, be revealing. Contrary to his overriding interest in modernity, Hodgkin had, as the editors put it, 'an underlying sense that the pre-European civilisation of the Western Sudan had a bearing on the ideas of contemporary West African nationalism in the 1950s' (p. 76). Hodgkin was Director of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, from 1962 to 1965. I served under him throughout this period, and benefited greatly from his inspired leadership. By this time he was becoming increasingly disillusioned with the departure of so many African leaders, Nkrumah included, from European ideas of representative government and popular participation. His interests turned more and more to the Islamic presence in Africa, and he became highly supportive of, and deeply involved in, the Institute's work in investigating the role of Muslims in Ghana over a period of three centuries and more. Readers of *Letters from Africa 1947-1956* will surely hope that a further volume will bring into the public domain the subsequent reflections and observations of this much-loved and much-respected man.

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IVOR WILKS

## DUTCH FATHERS AND AFRICAN CATHOLICISM

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702418221

*A Politics of Presence: Contacts between Missionaries and Waluguru in Late Colonial Tanganyika*. By PETER PELS. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999.

Pp. xvii + 354. No price given (ISBN 90-5702-304-0).

KEY WORDS: Tanzania, missions, colonial.

*A Politics of Presence* is a welcome and significant contribution to a rich and growing body of literature on the encounter between missionaries and Africans. Given that the field has recently been dominated by work on Non-Conformity in Southern Africa, focussed on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Peter Pels' research on the Dutch Catholic Holy Ghost Fathers and Waluguru in late colonial Tanganyika usefully extends the range of encounters studied. Pels writes as an anthropologist but his work exhibits none of the failings that some anthropological forays into 'history' can bring. Rather than drawing on odd files here and there, Pels engages with the whole range of his archives, oral and written, to draw out the full chronological sequence of religious change. And in so doing he identifies and makes original use of evidence such as photography, film and exhibitions, which hitherto has been under-utilised by historians of Africa.

Pels contends that 'the pivot of a mission is the strategy of moving "out there" to rectify a lack perceived from the centre'. But the Holy Ghost Fathers' mission to the Eastern Uluguru was 'not merely a movement towards the place where it had to rectify the lack of the Gospel and Church, it was also a religious movement at "home" attuned to another place, the "mission"' (p. 45). The study thus begins with a perceptive reconstruction of the context of the Netherlands in the early twentieth century out of which the Dutch Catholic missionaries emerged. Pels

highlights the fervour of Dutch Catholicism at this time, noting that this small constituency provided 10 per cent of the world's Catholic missionary population in 1930. He considers the ideological motivation behind missionary vocations, demonstrating the importance of 'conceptions of sacrifice and exoticism, the push of duty and the pull of desire' (p. 112). Turning his attention to missionary propaganda, he shows how the Dutch Fathers' 'selective ethnography' created an allure of adventure amongst the young noviciate, some of whom dreamt of becoming 'Lone Ranger' type missionaries, carrying white Christianity into a world of negative blackness. But the draw of the exotic was trammelled by the cost of leaving one's family, even if this did bring spiritual blessings to those who suffered the loss.

Having outlined the dynamics of the Holy Ghost Fathers' monastic practice in the Netherlands, Pels shows how it was rapidly Africanized. Dutch Fathers who organised manual work were drawn into local systems of exchange and came to be understood as local 'big men', and their strict regimes of prayer and contemplation were transformed by an African Catholic faithful whose work patterns dictated a different routine. The theme of Africanization pervades the rest of the study. Pels returns to the subject of time in his chapter on *ngoma*, showing how Christianity was indigenized through being grafted on to traditional male initiation processes, rendering the latter redundant. The fate of female initiation was somewhat different. Pels argues that wage labour and the cash crop economy undermined matrilineal authority and diminished the resources upon which women could draw. To compensate for this the women fought the missionaries to retain *ngoma*, but also transformed it by reducing the period of seclusion, and introducing a commercial note into the teaching on female sexuality. This is a provocative argument that challenges the widespread notion that twentieth century African Christianity was a women's movement. As Pels observes, Waluguru Christianity was a male religion, created in the image of Dutch priests and brothers.

Continuing with the theme of initiation Pels explores how it was also superseded by mission education which socialised young Waluguru into the 'secrets' of society as they were codified by the colonial government's syllabi and diplomas. As such, education took on a superstitious or magical quality. 'White magic' is the subject of the last major chapter. Through their interventions into Luguru healing, the Holy Ghost Fathers promoted a dichotomy between sacred and secular healing that undermined the basis of lineage medicine. The result of this, when combined with the missionaries' power in bio-medical curing, was that the Waluguru were left unprotected from maladies caused by misfortune. The gap was filled by new kind of itinerant *mganga* – healer – who treated affliction with medicines.

This is a rich study. Building on the approach of the Comaroffs, Pels' excavation of the colonial encounter offers new insights into how Christianity was mediated by the ritual and material resources available to the Waluguru. But where his work is most innovative is in his detailed ethnography of the Dutch missionaries themselves. While there are many studies of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century missionary pioneers and twentieth-century liberals, little has been written on the unreconstructed, run-of-the-mill missionaries whose work coincided with the conversion of the continent. Pels' attention to missionary medicine, schooling and propaganda sets a useful agenda.

My only regret about the book is that it is so overburdened with theory. On top of a lengthy theoretical introduction, Pels begins each chapter and many subsections with substantial reviews of the related anthropological and historical scholarship, as well as broader social theory. Admittedly, he stands in a Dutch academic tradition that pays homage to mentors and intellectual forebears, but he would have done better to integrate theory into his empirical analysis, or more confidently reappraise it in the light of his own work. As it stands, the theory,

particularly the introduction, is heavy going. When combined with his difficult style it makes the book inaccessible to all but the brightest of undergraduates. Moreover, his lengthy theoretical asides stultify the force of his narrative and obscure the significance of his own important research, which deserves to be brought to the fore.

*University of Keele*

DAVID MAXWELL

## CHURCH LEADERS AND THE POST-COLONIAL STATE

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702428228

*Church and State in Tanzania: Aspects of a Changing Relationship, 1961–1994.* By FRIEDER LUDWIG. Leiden: Brill, 1999. Pp. xiv + 285. No price given (ISBN 90-04-11506-4).

KEY WORDS: Tanzania, Christianity, state, post-colonial.

Frieder Ludwig has produced a study of the relationship between the main mission origin churches in Tanzania and the post-colonial state. His study provides a useful chronicle of the close relationship between those churches and the Tanzanian government under Julius Nyerere. As such it highlights the close co-operation between the churches and the state during the heyday of Ujamaa in the 1960s and 1970s, and the growing distance over the last two decades. However, his focus on the institutions of the churches leaves a very limited picture of religious change in post-colonial Tanzania.

Ludwig's work is a revision of his doctoral dissertation. There he focused on the three largest Protestant denominations: the Lutherans, the Anglicans and the Moravians. For this book, he has added significant material on the Catholic Church based primarily on research in mission archives, in church records in Tanzania, in the records of the Christian Council of Tanzania (for the Protestant churches) and the Tanzania Episcopal Conference (for the Catholic Church), as well as a number of interviews with church leaders and others in Tanzania.

The work focuses on three main issues that faced churches immediately before and then after independence. First, he argues that the mission churches tended to promote ethnic identity in their work. As a new African leadership took control of the churches by the 1950s, they sought to promote a greater identification with the nationalist movement. He notes that although much of the leadership of TANU came from Christian backgrounds, Muslims made up more of its core supporters. He then shows how, at independence, Nyerere's government sought to co-opt churches in support of national integration and eventually the socialist policies of Ujamaa. Nyerere found willing partners in the churches, with little opposition even to the nationalization of church-supported schools.

Ludwig notes that the failure of Ujamaa and the abandonment of most elements of socialist policy in the 1980s also marked a turning point in church/state relations. Church relations with the state never became openly antagonistic; rather a diversity of views began to be expressed by church leaders. More criticism of economic liberalization emerged in some quarters, and a new round of division within the churches resulted in a return to the pattern of ethnic or 'folk' churches in the country.

Ludwig devotes a great deal of time to the relationship between the churches and Muslims and to the emergence of charismatic and Pentecostal movements in Tanzania. It is here that the weakness of his approach becomes most apparent. By focusing on the highest level of church organization in Tanzania, he misses in his



analysis the ways in which the established churches have become identified with the power structure of modern Tanzania. As such, he has very little new to say about the emergence of new forms of churches in the country. Likewise, he provides little insight into the often volatile relations between Christians and Muslims.

Ludwig has produced a useful, if limited, volume that will be of use only to the most specialized of students. However, scholars interested in both the history of religious change and of the politics of post-colonial Tanzania will find important information here.

*Texas Southern University*

GREGORY H. MADDOX

## CHURCH, STATE AND WAR

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702438224

*A Guerra e as Igrejas: Angola, 1961–1991*. By BENEDICT SCHUBERT. Introduction by Christine Messiant. Switzerland: P. Schlettwein Publishing, 2000. Pp. vii + 251. CHF 30 (ISBN 3-908193-07-091).

KEY WORDS: Angola, Christianity, decolonization, political.

This book was originally published in German in 1997. It is divided into five chapters, an appendix and a bibliography. The author has consulted most of the usual secondary sources on Angola, includes a fair number of official Angolan policy statements concerning the status of the churches and also relies on church bulletins and other publications. There is little evidence, however, that he utilized publications of the UNITA organization or is familiar with academic work done on UNITA.

Readers hoping to read Schubert's book to learn more about the relationship between the war and the churches in Angola from 1961 to 1991 will be disappointed by the structure of the book. The plethora of details the author provides on the wider issues of colonial and postcolonial politics in Angola (and thirty pages on the early history of Portuguese activities in Angola) detract from his arguments.

This weakness is apparent from the beginning. The rather long introduction by the French scholar of contemporary Angola, Christine Messiant, although praising the author for raising pertinent issues connected with the relationship between the churches and the war, and particularly for pointing out the failure of the Angolan churches in bringing about peace in Angola, criticizes Schubert for not examining present-day social and political factors as they affected Christians, clerical elites and the churches.

In the first two chapters, Schubert provides a range of details on colonial politics, economics and religious policies in Angola. Especially significant is his focus on the official role that the Catholic church came to play in Angola after the decree of 1921 and the 1940 concordat. As he notes, Catholic church/state relations came at a high cost, since the alliance not only made it difficult for the church to carry out its spiritual mission to be the voice of the oppressed; it also came at the cost of the relative independence that the Protestant and African independent churches had enjoyed up to that time. Schubert returns to the issue of the churches in the next section when he details how the churches adapted to the differing requirements of both the waning but autocratic colonial state and the demands of the leaders of the liberation movements who called on the churches to take a more pro-active role in supporting the fight to end Portuguese colonialism. In the last section of the book the author deals with the churches in Angola during the period

of decolonization and post-independence. Essentially he argues that, like its predecessor, the MPLA state succeeded in co-opting some of the churches and delimiting and outlawing the operations of others. In this case the Methodist church came to play the same role in the post-colonial state that the Catholic church played in the colonial period. At the same time the Catholic church, the only national organization with the prestige and power to challenge the state on behalf of the suffering Angolan people, failed to find common alliance with the weaker and more marginalized Protestant and independence groups. Faced with threats, nationalization of some of its assets and severe restrictions on its ability to reach its adherents, the Catholic church preferred silence or alliance with an anti-religious state whose goal became 'war for peace'. Thus by the time the churches, especially the Catholic church, pushed an agenda of 'peace and reconciliation', the voices of those in power who wanted the 'war for peace' won out. As Schubert concludes, in the apocalyptic times that the Angola people experienced since independence, the prophetic voices of the churches were the only option they had if they wished to stem the suffering. In this the churches failed the population.

Schubert's book is timely and makes an important contribution to the study of contemporary Angolan history. This is particularly so because of the range of activities the churches have come to play in Angola during the past few decades. Nevertheless, there are some shortcomings. The author would have made his case stronger had he focused less on providing in-depth discussions of the political and economic dimensions of the Angolan situation and concentrated more on analyzing the churches and the war between 1961 and 1991. As the book is written, we learn little about the war between UNITA and MPLA and the actual role of the 'church in the bush'. Moreover, the sources the author uses all come from the state and other official church organizations. Analysis of the relationship the congregations had with the churches, both those that the MPLA government recognized and those that were considered illegitimate, is largely absent from the study. This dimension certainly needs to be studied.

*Howard University*

LINDA HEYWOOD

## EVANGELICALS AND THE DERG

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702448220

*Revolution and Religion in Ethiopia: The Growth and Persecution of the Mekane Yesus Church, 1974–85.* By ØYVIND M. EIDE. Oxford: James Currey, 2000. Pp. xx + 300. £40.00 (ISBN 0-85255-840-6); £14.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-841-4).

KEY WORDS: Ethiopia, religion, political.

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) was founded in 1959, through the amalgamation of a number of Lutheran congregations in western and southern Ethiopia which had been formed with the assistance of missionaries who were largely of Scandinavian origin. Though anxious to emphasize its credentials as an indigenous church with origins dating back to Eritrean converts from Orthodox Christianity, EECMY has therefore had particularly close links with Scandinavia; the author of this book is a Norwegian pastor who worked in Ethiopia. The book itself derives from a doctoral thesis at Uppsala, and Eide has made every effort, within the inevitable context of a deep sympathy for EECMY and its members, to provide a balanced and well-informed account of what happened to the church amidst the traumas of the Ethiopian revolution.

The western churches, Protestant and Catholic, have had a peculiar position in Ethiopia, with its entrenched monophysite Orthodox establishment, and this has led to them being marginalized in not only political but ethnic terms. Since they could not be allowed to proselytize among people who were already Christian, they could be allowed to operate only in the peripheries of the empire, and inevitably became associated with peoples who were forcibly incorporated into it in the later nineteenth century – in the case of EECMY especially with the Oromo, notably in Wallagga. Eide therefore closely tracks the relationships between the revolutionary regime that seized power in 1974 and Ethiopia's peripheries: an initial period of enthusiasm, as the new regime's promises of land reform, equality and religious tolerance removed the repressive structure of imperial government, followed by deep disillusionment as the regime resorted – under the banner of Marxism-Leninism – to a vastly more brutal form of centralism than its predecessor. Eide provides a carefully documented but nonetheless moving account of the resulting persecution, including the martyrdom – there is no other word for it – of EECMY's General Secretary Guddinaa Tumsaa. He concentrates on Wallagga, but with notes on developments in other regions and a comparison with the experience of the other evangelical churches, and ends on an optimistic note with the dramatic rise in church membership after 1985, when the regime's need for both external economic and domestic political support led it to relax its grip, especially after the Derg's collapse in 1991.

While much of the book will be of particular interest to historians of religion in Africa, it also contributes to an understanding of the impact of revolution on western Ethiopia, and especially to the relationship between religion and Oromo nationalism. EECMY was a source of particular suspicion to the Derg because western Wallagga was also a stronghold of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF); but Eide argues both that persecution was equally great in areas unaffected by ethnic insurgency, and also that links between EECMY and OLF were slight, at least until the mid-1980s, by which time the regime had – not least through its persecution of the church – decisively alienated the population of the region.

Regrettably, Eide has not had the opportunity to draw on the insights presented by Donald Donham's superb *Marxist Modern*, which examined the impact of revolution on another evangelical community in a different part of Ethiopia, but was published too late to be used in this book, which – covering a much broader canvas without the same depth of anthropological understanding – must to some extent suffer by comparison. Regrettably, too, the publisher has succumbed to the lure of the photogenic by using a cover photograph of an Orthodox priest which has nothing to contribute to the content of the book; a picture specifically related to the EECMY, perhaps of Guddinaa Tumsaa, would have been far more appropriate. These are, however, no more than minor criticisms of a thoroughly worthwhile investigation.

Lancaster University

CHRISTOPHER CLAPHAM

## SPATIAL AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702458227

*Bonds and Boundaries in Northern Ghana and Southern Burkina Faso*. Edited by STEN HAGBERG and ALEXIS B. TENGAN. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2000. Pp. 197. No price given, (ISBN 91-554-4770-8).

KEY WORDS: Burkina Faso, Ghana, ethnicity, development.

The central theme of this collection of essays is fascinating enough: the paradox of the importance of both bonds and boundaries in the maintenance and

transformation of identities, and the capability of boundaries to both separate and link. Although the focus is on how bonds and boundaries are acted upon in daily life by people in the region confined to northern Ghana and southern Burkina Faso, the variety of issues that can be subsumed is immense. This is reflected in the heterogeneity of the contributions that cover diverse issues such as population history, the relation between the Asante empire and the British colonization, conversion to Christianity, and the role of development and state bureaucracies in the production of bonds and boundaries.

Gomgnimbou argues that recording the histories of population groups – in particular their history of settlement – is a necessary step in the writing of national history, allowing each society to know and define itself in relation to others. The issue is politically sensitive. Premature foreclosure of such histories – Gomgnimbou suggests that Kasena socio-political organisation has reached its fulfilment – risks depriving inter-group boundaries of much of their flexibility and permeability and, in a context of continuing migration and population mobility, might endanger peaceful coexistence with recently arrived groups and future immigrants. Gomgnimbou points out that oral histories of the establishment of the Kasena in southern Burkina Faso vary from village to village, reflecting the contested nature of the status of first occupier of the soil and issues of control over land. Père's sometimes very detailed account of the population history of Burkina Faso's Poni province lacks such contextual information both in terms of past events and informants' present-day interests, which limits its relevance.

A. B. Tengan convincingly argues for a house-based model to understand Dagara social organization, as opposed to the descent and lineage model elaborated by Fortes. His analysis elegantly demonstrates how power is shared in villages composed of several house-based residential entities with complementary ritual responsibilities, and how each individual is embedded in an extensive social network of dispersed houses with a common name. Tengan relates the house-based structure to the Dagara's migratory history and to the permanent possibility of still other migrations in the future. However, the answer to the interesting question raised in Tengan's introduction, as to what extent this particular type of social organization is related to farming methods and land use in a hazardous natural environment unfortunately remains largely implicit. In a beautifully written study of Kasena marriage, Cassiman analyzes the movement of a wife in her husband's house, thereby linking social and spatial organization. In this movement, the woman who first came as a stranger progressively becomes a full member of the house, while she continues to belong to her father's house as well. As such, she comes to play an essential role in the maintenance and strengthening of a bond between groups that were previously unconnected. Cassiman's contribution is fresh and original in highlighting women's perspectives, experiences and roles in marriage processes, and in underscoring how these are expressed in spatial arrangements.

The final three papers focus on state and 'development' interference with the creation and transformation of bonds and boundaries. Poda shows how a seemingly harmless bureaucratic procedure that forces parents to name their children after the father's kin group, suppressing the Dagara practice of passing on the mother's kin group's name as well, disturbs social interaction, notably in joking relationships, and leaves children with a truncated, 'maternal-less' identity. In his study of Fulbe agro-pastoralists, Hagberg argues that Fulbes' otherness, allowing for practices such as entrustment of livestock and for specific inter-ethnic friendship relations, in a way facilitates their integration into communities of autochthonous farmers. He shows nicely how migration across the international border and back added to and redefined the Fulbes' status of stranger and diminished the legitimacy of their claims to resource use as perceived by farmers. He furthermore demon-

strates how an agro-pastoral management scheme supporting Fulbe access to land and power heightened inter-ethnic tensions.

In the closing paper, Dessein further elaborates on how development interventions affect bonds and boundaries between social groups and categories. He argues that by not acknowledging the significance and meaning of mobility in farmers' land use – and, consequently, by disregarding the latter's relation with identity building and social organization – the extension service in northern Ghana cut itself off from large parts of the rural population. It ended up backing a small number of urban-based 'capitalist' farmers, whereas in rural areas it established links only with certain farmers who occupy marginal positions in their communities. These farmers' collaboration with the extension service accentuated their stigmatization even further. It emerges convincingly that technocratic development approaches based on universalistic views of 'good farming' shape and sharpen boundaries between social groups and categories.

A major accomplishment of the book is that it succeeds in displaying a wide range of the bonds and boundaries with which people are dealing in their daily lives, as well as the complexity of the processes involved in their maintenance and transformation. The entanglement of many of these processes with the geographic mobility of individuals and groups, and the tensions that arise because of interference by state or development bureaucracies and procedures, emerge as being of crucial importance. No final analyses or extensively elaborated answers are offered, but this volume certainly constitutes a valuable step on the way to an understanding of these intricate issues.

*University of Amsterdam*

MARK BREUSERS

## RHODESIAN SELF-RELIANCE IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702468223

*Rhodesia: A Lesson in African Self-Reliance*. By JABULANI BEZA. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000. Pp. 169. \$26.50, paperback (ISBN 0-7618-1796-4).

KEY WORDS: Zimbabwe, decolonization, post-colonial.

Jabulani Beza's book is on a very important and topical subject, that of self-reliance. While the term is not defined, the text makes clear what the author means by it. The book has six chapters, the first being the Introduction, while Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the Rhodesian problem. Chapter 2 considers the Algerian and Kenyan examples of African self-reliance in dealing with the colonial menace, while Chapter 5 is on 'Current sources of Africa's frustration. The case of the International Monetary Fund'. Although this chapter seems relevant in terms of the problems faced by African countries in dealing with the new threat of neo-colonialism, it does not deal adequately with African relations with the IMF, and worst of all, seriously contradicts the overall theme of African self-reliance. The author in fact concludes that 'structural adjustment' programmes have eroded the sovereign status of African states while contributing to economic deterioration and generating a political and social crisis for the majority of African countries. The concluding chapter is rather brief and fails to focus on the main theme of the book, instead introducing new issues such as the Aids problem.

The main concern of the book is the various political and economic strategies adopted by African states to deal with their problems, especially when those

problems involve outside forces. Beza encourages African governments to plan ahead and to take matters into their own hands and avoid depending on outsiders. While arguing that the Rhodesian case is 'an ideal lesson in African self-reliance', Beza maintains that there is need to look at the Algerian and Kenyan cases as well to illustrate both the nature of colonialism and the resort to self-reliance as a weapon against it. The difference between the Algerian and Kenyan cases on the one hand and the Rhodesian on the other, as stressed by Beza, was that the colonial powers sided with the settlers in the first two instances, while the British colonial power identified with the aspirations of the African cause in Rhodesia (though refusing to use military force against the settlers or to give military assistance to the African nationalists).

The Algerian and Kenyan cases are discussed in a rather cursory manner, however, and do not add much weight to the main argument. If anything, it would have been more appropriate to give a more detailed study of Rhodesia, especially in view of the title of the book.

The two main chapters dealing with the Rhodesian UDI and African efforts to address the problem are generally good. Apart from places where key persons are mentioned without explanation or without their full names, these chapters do justice to the discussion on self-reliance. A little more detail on the package of UN sanctions would have been welcome. The appendices at the end are a useful addition.

While this is an interesting book, it is marred by many instances of careless writing or editing. It can be assumed that some of the problems arise from the fact that it derived from a thesis, leading to the inclusion of some material that may have been in the right place in the thesis, but which is misplaced here. This is illustrated by the mix-up in chapters. On p. 103, for example, the author says 'as we shall see later in this chapter, the economic approaches had proved a failure', when this is actually the end of the chapter and he does not go on to show any failure. There are also missing endnotes (92–8), while references to Larry N. Bowman, Lee Larry N. Bowman and Bowman *op. cit.* are confused. Finally, some statements need to be qualified: for example, reference to the overall impact of sanctions as not having been 'as great as it might have been' (p. 88). Despite these reservations, on the whole this is a relevant and informative book.

*University of Zimbabwe*

EVELYN SANDRA PANGETI

## SHORTER NOTICES

DOI: 10.1017/S002185370247822X

*The Church Missionary Society and World Christianity, 1799–1999*. Edited by KEVIN WARD and BRIAN STANLEY. Richmond: Curzon Press, 2000. Pp. xviii + 382. £40 (ISBN 0-7007-1208-9).

KEY WORD: missions.

In 1999 the Church Missionary (renamed in 1995 Mission) Society celebrated its bicentenary. For the 1899 centenary a triumphalist four-volume history by Eugene Stock had been published. Then in the 1960s it became known that two subversive young Nigerians, by name Ajayi and Ayandele, were uncovering a less triumphalist story from the CMS archives. This prompted the publication of a more self-critical history by Gordon Hewitt in 1971.

The present bicentenary volume, edited by Kevin Ward and Brian Stanley, is 'an historical appraisal of the meaning of Christian mission' (p. 7) as related to the work of the CMS. The first section is historical. Kevin Ward begins with a

historical and historiographical survey. Paul Jenkins describes the close connexion between the CMS and the Basel Mission (where he is archivist) in the early days. The (sadly, late) Rosalind Murray assesses the role of women up to 1917. 'Women were accepted reluctantly and their work inadequately recognised' (p. 89). Yet, however 'reluctantly' accepted, women, unpaid until 1885, made up over half the mission force in 1899 – if one adds in the unpaid working wives. Kenneth Cragg reviews mission relations with Islam in the Middle East.

The second section, on the foundation of indigenous churches, begins with Peter Williams on Henry Venn, CMS secretary 1841–72, and his vision of 'missionary euthanasia' – missionaries founding indigenous churches and then leaving them to function alone. Lamin Sanneh illustrates the disastrous failure of Venn's 'Native pastorates' in West Africa, including the brutal humiliation of Bishop Crowther by the CMS missionaries (which Ajayi and Ayandele originally revealed). Allan Davidson describes a similar failure in New Zealand. There is no specific account of the CMS East African missions, but John Karanja shows how in Kenya, in the CMS Kikuyu mission churches, a distinctive Kikuyu Anglican Church has developed.

Apart from its great pioneer linguistic tradition (not mentioned here) the CMS has tended to put practical activity before scholarship. But in the later twentieth century John V. Taylor, a CMS missionary in Uganda, followed his *The Growth of the Church in Buganda* (1958) with *The Primal Vision* (1963), an influential work on African spirituality, and was, with Max Warren, whom he succeeded as CMS secretary, in the vanguard of creating what has become known as missiology. Meanwhile the mission tide is turning – since 1982 the CMS has been active in Britain.

London

CHRISTOPHER FYFE

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702488226

*Official Military Historical Offices and Sources, Volume I; Europe, Africa, the Middle East and India.* Edited by ROBIN HIGHAM. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000. Pp. XXII + 388: \$95 (ISBN: 0-313-28684-1).

KEY WORDS: Military, archives, South Africa.

This work supplements Higham's earlier *Official Histories* published in 1970. For this new work, the author circulated an enquiry to seventy countries, but received material in reply from only twenty-five. The material itself is very patchy. One reason for this was that the enquiry, sent to naval, military and air attaches at embassies in Washington, simply did not target all the possible sources, either because the attaches themselves did not know of them or because even in the countries' respective ministries there was no facility for listing all the possible sources. Higham also made his enquiry some ten years ago, before many official sources were linked by computer. The anomalies that arise are well illustrated by the entry for the United Kingdom, where a detailed answer in respect of the air force is supplied, but with virtually nothing on the army or navy. Britain also has other very useful but less well known official sources not in the main ministry, for example the Sandhurst Conflict Studies Research Centre's unique collection of Soviet military publications, or the Sandhurst Central Library's collection of British regimental histories. Similarly, in the case of France there is a rich collection of material, much relating to Africa, in the archives of the Troupes de Marine at Fréjus.

A further difficulty experienced by Higham was the very different views held by those who did reply to his enquiry on what constitutes official military history. For some it is only works officially authorized and published by a country's central

government. Others include army, division or regimental histories not necessarily authorized by anyone higher than the formation or unit concerned. Others include works by private authors written with official approval, while yet others include anything they have in their collection, official because it is in their archive.

Higham's enquiry was also evidently doing its rounds at a time when certain regimes were unravelling and only too anxious to list politically correct works in self-justification. The material supplied by the former German Democratic Republic and the former Soviet Union are particularly fine 'period pieces' for specialists interested in the history and culture of those regimes and their perceptions of history. The time delay does, however, mean that works produced since the fall of those regimes are not listed. In the case of the Soviet Union, for example, the important and fascinating works of the former Soviet military historian General Volkogonov and others, all producing new, radical and soundly document-based revision of the former orthodoxy, do not appear.

For readers of this journal, one entry falling into this time frame will be of especial interest, that for South Africa, contributed just before the fall of the apartheid regime. The entry is full and valuable, not only for its completeness but also in so far as it throws an interesting light on the old white South Africa's perception of what constituted its military history. The contribution of the only other African country to reply, Zimbabwe, is valueless.

Although so far from complete as a survey, the work is of value in respect of particular countries and particular fields. Higham should be thanked for his efforts in an obviously only modestly rewarded task.

*De Montfort University*

ANTHONY CLAYTON

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702498222

*Patrick Duncan: South African and Pan-African.* By C. J. DRIVER. Cape Town and Oxford: David Philip and James Currey, 2000. Pp. xx + 326. £14.95 (ISBN 0-85255-773-6).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, political, biography.

C. J. Driver's biography of Patrick Duncan, re-published in paperback two decades after the hard cover edition, tells the story of one of South Africa's most intriguing political careers. Duncan's life, as Anthony Sampson remarks in his foreword to the new edition, 'strikes an individual, discordant note among the conventional choruses of praise and blame' that have often characterized the treatment of South African 'lives of struggle'. Born into the highest echelons of the South African establishment (the son of a governor-general), educated at Winchester and Balliol, Duncan could count Jan Smuts among the prominent guests at his wedding. When he joined the Basutoland colonial service, it seemed he was beginning a career along the lines of his father. Yet Duncan's political sentiments were to develop in another direction, and he resigned from the Colonial Service in 1952 in order to embark on a remarkable journey through South African political life.

Instead of conventional politics, Duncan chose the path of Gandhian passive resistance, famously joining the Defiance Campaign alongside Manilal Gandhi in a blaze of publicity in December 1952. The later 1950s saw Duncan joining, and playing a leading role in, the newly formed Liberal Party and then editing the journal *Contact*. He continued to campaign with vigour in support of non-violent resistance, notably in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre of 1960. His support for the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) at this time set him on a course away from 'mainstream' liberal opinion. His activities also led to increased attention from the



security forces, and, following a second banning order in 1962, he took the decision to leave South Africa. By the mid-1960s the Liberal passive resister had been transformed into the PAC representative in Algiers.

It is possible to level a whole range of charges against Duncan – his political views at times appeared inconsistent, and his shifts in political allegiance and tactics could be described, in terms of conventional political wisdom, as bewildering. Yet Driver's book, without ignoring these charges, manages to highlight Duncan's heartfelt commitment to ending *apartheid*, and captures a sense of a complex individual, a tragic hero and 'a man both before and after his time' (p. 226). It is through this, and also because of Duncan's unconventional political journey, that the value of Driver's book is most clearly discerned – as a counterpoint to standard studies of South African political life and thought in the mid-twentieth century.

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DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702508227

*Historical Dictionary of Swaziland*. Second edition. By ALAN R. BOOTH. Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2000. (African Historical Dictionaries, 80). Pp. xxxi + 403. No price given (ISBN 0-8108-3749-8).

KEY WORDS: Swaziland, general.

Booth's book is a significant and challenging compilation of events, people and places. It represents an improvement on the first edition, by J. J. Grotper, published in 1975. Booth has expanded the work to cover even the reign of Mswati III, the present monarch and to include aspects of economic development not covered by Grotper. The new edition has entries for most of the important events, places, people and animal species – an achievement which lessens the burden upon new researchers on Swaziland.

This does not mean that the second edition is without flaws. In particular, there are areas where Booth chooses silence or gives scanty coverage in proportion to the other issues which he covers elaborately. A spectacular example is that of the late medical doctor, Dr Frances (Fannie) Friedman, the former Minister of Health and Social Welfare. This lady played a leading role in health and other social aspects of the lives of the Swazi, but for unexplained reasons Booth covers her contribution to the history of Swaziland in six lines.

Booth taught at the then University of Botswana and Swaziland (now the University of Swaziland), and undertook several periods of research leading to published articles and a book, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom* (Boulder, CO, 1983). By comparison, Grotper showed fewer signs of exposure to the country and its inhabitants at the time he worked on the *Historical Dictionary*. Thus one would expect from this edition minimal errors of the kind which may arise from cultural misconceptions and misspellings of names. Unfortunately, there are many such problems of either spelling or conception. For example, Booth renders the word for princes *bantfwanenkosi* (p. 144) rather than *bantfwabenkosi*. The work would have benefited immensely from the comments of linguists or of any Swazi historian in polishing these minor yet fundamental aspects of the study. It is also important to note that the version of the spelling used by Booth is Swati, which means that he has in that attempt combined Zulu and Swati. The regular Swati version of 'princes' is *bantfwabenkosi*, i.e. adding an 'h' after the 'k'. As an historian, Booth may have had academic reasons for mixing the two, but he owes his readers a rationale. Finally, the book is in need of maps.

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