

The work of Fujime Yuki, however, has challenged this narrative. In Fujime's account, Japanese womanhood crystallizes around the disparity between middle-class and lower-class women. Her position is that the first generation of upper-to-middle-class feminist activists was not a universally progressive force; they were blind to their complicity in amplifying state control targeting lower-class women, particularly in their draconian efforts to prohibit all forms of prostitution. Fujime's argument runs counter to Patessio's thesis. She sees upper-to-middle-class feminist activists as agents of social control rather than freedom. Others have argued that one of the reasons why the women of upper-to-middle-class associations such as the Japanese Woman's Christian Temperance Union (JWCTU) gained access to a public life and a degree of independence outside of the family was due to their eagerness to undertake corrective work to reintegrate the gendered poor to the discipline of the factory and the virtues of domestic life. While some may disagree about the significance of these concerns, thorough scholarship should attempt to assess their persuasiveness and meet their challenge. For this reader at least, *Women and Public Life in Early Meiji Japan* would have been a stronger and more interesting book if the competing historical explanations into the nature of the JWCTU – one of the first female organizations to become politically active – were addressed head on, rather than deftly side-stepped.

Despite the above reservations, historians interested in the experience of women in the early Meiji period will benefit enormously from reading *Women and Public Life in Early Meiji Japan*.

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AFRICA

MARKUS V. HOEHNE and VIRGINIA LULING (eds):

Milk and Peace, Drought and War: Somali Culture, Society and Politics. Essays in Honour of I. M. Lewis.

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doi:10.1017/S0041977X12000444

This volume offers, in the main, a retrospective look into the enduring work of I. M. Lewis, the doyen of Somali studies. The book consists of eight parts containing twenty essays: "The colonial period and today" (two essays), "Clan politics, pastoral economy and change" (four), "Islam" (two), "Spirit possession" (two), "Poetry" (four), "Cultural variations" (two), "Language" (two) and "Conclusion" (two). The introduction, "Lewis and the remaining challenges in Somali studies", frames and contextualizes Lewis' eminence as the "founding father of Somali studies". It is clear from the section titles that Lewis' work encompasses all aspects of Somali studies, yet the editors quite perceptively mention the elusive nature of the subject that Lewis and other scholars attempt to limn and categorize. Put differently, Somali affairs still present a conundrum to the totalizing analyses elaborated by area specialists. Lewis' work is no exception.

The Festschrift celebrates Lewis' long and illustrious career. The introduction mentions Lewis' propagation of what the editors call the "clan paradigm" and the

new crop of Somali and non-Somali scholars who take him and his paradigm to task. The editors' stance on this debate, however, reveals their partiality, for example when they write: "Somali studies were and still are confronted by two problems: the first one is rather banal. It can be called 'the *career problem*' and is the problem of how to contribute something to Somali studies which Lewis has not already touched upon. The second problem, which is more serious, is related to *the correct interpretation* of the Somali tragedy of civil war and state collapse." (p. 6; emphasis added). To explain away intellectual, disciplinary and methodological disagreements as a "career problem", one in which Lewis' critics are only interested in carving a turf or are in search of topics unaffected by Lewis' imperial gaze is simply ludicrous. There is so much in Lewis' scholarship that still needs refining. There are topics in Somali studies that still evade the undialectical, omniscient gaze the editors attribute to Lewis.

It is here where the editors – two seasoned Somalia scholars – could have benefited from the absent voices whose work they relegate to the backburner. What the antithetical voices – Besteman, the Samatar brothers, etc. – question is the validity of the assumptions that inform Lewis' work, and of his own anthropological stance. In short, they interrogate one of Lewis' blind spots, namely, the dialectical relationship that emerges from what Mary Louise Pratt calls the "contact zone". What kind of pressure, for example, did colonialism exert on the clan system to effect structural/surface and deep transformations? How much of what Lewis saw of the clan system was the result of these pressures? What sort of mechanisms did he put in place to separate the seemingly pre-colonial and colonial constructions? How did Lewis' unconscious reading of the world affect his reading of the Somali clan system? Finally, could there be a discrepancy between the "object/subject" identified by Lewis and the Somali perceptions of self and other?

The editors partially acknowledge the intractability of the problems mentioned above. They also see a discrepancy between the conjecture promoted by area specialists and regnant "Somali affairs that [continue] to challenge any premature conclusions" (p. 1). Without addressing the semantics of the operative phrase "premature conclusions", the editors seem to forget how false assumptions obfuscate all conclusions, premature or otherwise. What Lewis knows (both as object and as epistemology) must in time change. To argue as if nothing has changed over the years in the configuration and meaning of clan identity is to ignore the dialectical nature of reality. Some of the essays in the book point to new ways of looking at Somali culture, history and politics, while others do not even prove the "this-sidedness" of their argument. The editors' essays do not add to our knowledge of the two important topics with which their respective articles deal. I am not certain what "Farmers from Arabia" would contribute to our understanding of the Somali predicament. Nor am I convinced of the intellectual depth and import of "Somali (nick) names and their meaning". The latter article would have benefited from a comparative analysis of names drawn from Somali and, say, German (the writer's) culture. What would a reader learn from knowing that Esel, Bauer or Berg mean, respectively, donkey, farmer and mountain, without discussing the wider socio-political, cultural, linguistic and economic implications of name-giving? What's in a name, after all? To answer this question would necessitate a grasp of theorizing as a poetics able to accommodate diverse cultural systems and nuances from different societies.

One way out of the dual problems the editors pinpoint in the introduction is to transcend two trends that now dominate the field of Somali studies, i.e. cheerleading sycophancy and a senseless feeling of righteousness that assumes it has all the answers. Neither trend is profitable to our understanding of Somalia. Neither trend was able to sniff the air and caution Somalis about the impending danger

that came to engulf both nation and state. On the contrary, both trends lead to sterility and stagnation. As the editors of this volume write, “the truth lies – as usual – in between” (p. 7). Neither vilifying nor canonizing Lewis’ work would contribute to our knowledge of Somali society and culture.

Lewis is a scholar who is worth his weight in praise. The praiseworthy, because of the sheer magnitude of their accomplishments, are also blameworthy. The contributions to this volume attest to the towering height of Lewis’ shadow over things Somali. A man of his time, he certainly got some things wrong. The job of good disciples is twofold: to keep the master’s work in focus and in demand, while at the same time believing in the incompleteness of his work. The aim should never be to make us card-carrying Lewisites, for then we would lose track of the depth of his work and enquiry. Rather, the aim should be to go beyond him. Might it not perhaps be appropriate to pen a piece entitled “Lewis beyond Lewis”? That shouldn’t be a bad idea, after all.

Ali Jimale Ahmed

PETER PROBST:

Osogbo and the Art of Heritage: Monuments, Deities, and Money. (African Expressive Cultures.) xi, 207 pp. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011. £16.99. ISBN 978 0 25322295 4. doi:10.1017/S0041977X12000456

Osogbo and the Art of Heritage focuses on the Yoruba town of Osogbo in south-western Nigeria and engages with the two principal cultural events for which it has gained an international reputation. The first is the famous series of art workshops initiated by Uli Beier (who at the time was based in the extra-mural department of Ibadan university) in the early 1960s, which led to the emergence of an Osogbo art movement, and the second is the formal recognition by Unesco in 2005 of the already well-known Osun community grove and yearly festival (centred on the town’s river) as the first intangible cultural heritage site in Africa. The monograph is constructed as a series of thematic narratives which explore various dimensions by which these were articulated within Osogbo and beyond to other continents, notably Europe and the USA. As such, it offers a valuable alternative to dichotomous framings of the local and global in its investigation of how the Osogbo arts and the Osun festival became a locus of the cultural work of heritage in southern Nigeria.

The book commences with a brief account of Osogbo’s narratives of origin in relation to the community deity and river Osun. Probst includes some selected economic developments and religious realignments of the early twentieth century as processes of modernization, arguing that pressures of land scarcity had led by the 1940s to the abandonment of a key religious grove dedicated to the deity Sonponna, the god of smallpox. However this is not perhaps so unexpected as the colonial authorities had taken concerted action against the practices of this orisha as a vector of smallpox disease from the early twentieth century onwards on the advice of the pioneering Nigerian Dr Oguntola Sapara (A. Adeloye, *Journal of Medical History*, July 1974, 18/3, 275–93).

The next three chapters set out the history of the Oshogbo workshops (1962, 1963 and 1964) from the initiatives of Duro Lapidu, Uli Beier and Susanne Wenger. But Probst emphasizes these workshops as a modernist and anti-colonialist project through its