portrays de Souza as a great humanitarian, philanthropist, and businessman. For Araujo, the contradictory depictions of slavery that are encoded in these memorials reveal 'plural and conflictive memories of slavery' (p. 195).

On the Brazilian side, Araujo argues that slavery and the slave past are mostly absent from public space, found only in fleeting references, such as samba lyrics during Carnaval or Candomblé rituals. Her main point is that memories of slavery have been subsumed in the interest of 'racial democracy', but that celebrations of Brazil's 'African' past nevertheless open up space for remembering slavery. There are some slight contradictions in her analysis here. On the one hand, Araujo claims that 'slavery heritage and the slave past' are 'absent from the public space' (pp. 208, 267). On the other hand, she provides ample evidence of precisely the opposite – numerous monuments to the runaway rebel leader Zumbi, the Museu Afro-Brasileiro with its many objects directly related to slavery, the House of Benin, Salvador's *pelourinho* (whipping post) where Afro-Brazilian cultural groups engage in public performances, etc. The memorialization of slavery and the slave trade are not the primary impetus behind these public monuments, as is the case in the UNESCO Slave Routes project in Benin; however, just like in Benin, the representations are rife with ambiguity. They are never *simply* about racial democracy. After all, how can monuments to a celebrated runaway slave leader NOT invoke slavery? Likewise, how can outdoor public performances at the whipping post NOT invoke slavery? In her effort to distinguish Benin from Brazil, Araujo goes a bit too far in arguing for the absence of slavery in Brazilian memory. A more subtle approach would have recognized the very similar 'conflictive memories' encoded in the memorials of the two nations, each pushing in different directions – Benin 'officially' trying to resurrect memories through projects like the UNESCO Slave Route and Brazil 'officially' trying to subsume these memories through celebrations of 'authentic' Africa and its contributions to racial democracy. In both cases, history often interrupts sanctioned nationalist projects, revealing deeper and ever more contradictory memories of slavery among competing public and private interests, such as those that Araujo beautifully lays out in her analysis of the da Silva family museum in Benin (chapter seven).

Overall, in spite of its minor organizational and conceptual problems, *Public Memory of Slavery* is an important and provocative work. No other study so thoroughly chronicles the fraught and ambiguous history of memorializing slavery in the South Atlantic. Araujo's ability to 'read' multiple sources – both discursive and non-discursive – makes the book truly interdisciplinary in scope. It will be a crucial starting point for all future studies of slavery and memory in Benin and Brazil.

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THE FULL RANGE OF WEST AFRICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

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West African Archaeology: New Developments, New Perspectives. BAR International Series S2164. Edited by PHILIP ALLSWORTH-JONES. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2010. Pp x + 170. £39.00, paperback (ISBN 978-1-4073-0708-4).

KEY WORDS: West Africa, archaeology.

This volume arises out of a conference on West African archaeology held at the University of Sheffield in June 2009 and both the editor and the contributors are to

be congratulated for such prompt publication. Like the conference, it samples the full range of West African archaeology, from some of the earliest traces left by humans in the region to the residues of twentieth-century villagers living on the outskirts of one of Nigeria's largest cities. An additional paper (by Rodrigues de Areia) reports briefly on plans to reopen the Dundo Museum in north-western Angola.

The papers fall into two main categories: those that report or comment on specific research findings and those that provide general overviews of topics of general concern to archaeologists and others, such as the emergence of food-production, the innovation and consequences of ironworking, and the relevance of linguistics for understanding the West African past. In framing this review, I focus on those likely to be of greatest interest to readers of this journal, while acknowledging the significance of those dealing with the Pleistocene component of Africa's past (Soriano *et al*.; Basell).

Of the overviews, that by Manning gives an excellent state-of-the-art summary of archaeological knowledge of the development of agriculture in West Africa, emphasising the importance of recent finds that push back pearl millet cultivation to before 2,000 BCE and show that it was cultivated deep within today's forest zone in Nigeria and Cameroon during the first millennium BCE, thereby underlining the complex pathways by which today's farming economies emerged. Pole then provides a sensitive assessment of the chronology of early ironworking, pointing out the need to evaluate with utmost care claims that this began before the mid-first millennium BCE, while acknowledging that current data are still insufficient to choose between models of independent sub-Saharan innovation or acquisition through contacts, however indirect, with North Africa or the Nile Valley. Given that so much work emphasises either chronology or the symbolism of iron smelting, his interests in considering regional variation in how iron came to replace stone and in investigating how the production, distribution, and consumption of metal was organised strike a refreshing note. More restricted in geographical scope, a third overview, by Blench, proposes a history of language changes in Nigeria that will, as he points out, require much more sustained archaeological fieldwork to help confirm.

Of the research projects presented here, Rupp's paper contributes to precisely that goal by detailing results obtained by her and her colleagues in central Nigeria. Theirs is a major project that holds out hope of significantly transforming our understanding of the Nok Culture of the first millennium BCE by providing the first archaeological context for its well-known terracotta sculptures, a task all the more urgent as looters continue to destroy sites in order to feed the international art market. As well as showing that some of the sculptures were deliberately smashed (presumably for ritual reasons), her paper considers Nok's possible links to the emergence of ironworking. Also in Nigeria, Allsworth-Jones, Horvati, and Stringer reevaluate the important site of Iwo Eleru rockshelter in south-western Nigeria (excavated by Shaw in 1965) in the light of more recent research, but the volume's other papers all relate to the second millennium CE.

Particularly thought-provoking is Casey's discussion of the archaeology of Ghana's Volta Basin, the inhabitants of which occupied geographically (and economically) intermediate positions in the exchange systems linking the Sahel with the forest zone to the south. She shows that the dearth of obvious exotic trade items at sites like Begho may reflect a combination of factors, including a primary concern to ensure that such goods reached their *ultimate* destinations, as well as the perishability of many of them. She also stresses the contribution to that system of local trade networks, the importance of regular caravans for local communities as suppliers and consumers of goods, and the critical (and often overlooked) role of

women in provisioning such caravans and producing tradable goods, notably shea butter and pottery. Elsewhere, McDonald uses ethnographic fieldwork to assess the long-term history of stone bracelet production in Mali, Muller-Kosack explores the complexity of the ethnohistoric data that might provide a context for the stonewalled DGB sites of Cameroon, von Hellermann (not perhaps wholly convincingly) considers historical evidence that the kingdom of Benin may not always have existed in a thickly forested environment, and Orijemie *et al*. provide unexpected palynological evidence for a pre-European presence in Nigeria of ornamental trees of Asian/Indian Ocean origin. If Randsborg's extremely brief paper on his work in Benin offers the reader less (not least by wholly ignoring the work of Béninois archaeologists and several American-led research projects), Allsworth-Jones's own chapter on fieldwork at Adesina Oja, a village now engulfed by Ibadan, is a *tour de force* in employing ethnographic data to explore archaeological sites, engaging African students in the materiality of their own past and developing an archaeology of Nigeria's recent history. Overall, then, this is a most useful collection of papers and one currently without equal in its coverage of a broad swathe of West African archaeology.

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REEXAMINING THE YORUBA NATION

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A History of the Yoruba People. By STEVEN ADEBANJI AKINTOYE. Dakar: Amalion Publishing, 2010. Pp. 512. $64.95, £40.99, €48.50, CFA 25,000, hardback (ISBN 978-2-35926-005-2).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, ethnicity, historiography, identity.

This comprehensive book presents a history of the Yoruba people, about 30 million of whom live in south-west Nigeria today, with enclaves and diasporas in other African countries and beyond. On over 500 pages and in 18 chapters, the book explores the transformations and continuities which have shaped Yoruba life since the first millennium CE. Combining categories of academic and other forms of history writing, the book draws freely on proverbs, myths, songs, and other texts while also including some scholarly references. In scope and ambition, it presents itself as a refashioned and updated version of Samuel Johnson's *The History of the Yorubas* (1921), a foundational text of modern and nationalist Yoruba historiography. But unlike Johnson, Steven Adebanwi Akintoye does not focus on the precolonial Oyo Empire and the warrior city of Ibadan. Instead his history centres on the importance of Ile-Ife, widely acclaimed as the spiritual centre of Yoruba civilization before the rise of Oyo. This focus allows the author to extend the historical sweep of his discussion to the first millennium, while at the same time confirming the political validation of Ile-Ife by the Yoruba leader Obafemi Awolowo and his followers during the twentieth and twenty-first century. As a result, the book offers not only an interesting and engaging reflection on Yoruba history, but also a fascinating text on what it means to be Yoruba today.

In the first three chapters, Akintoye explains that early Yoruba society had a low degree of centralization and social stratification, even though many of its smallish settlements were closely linked through shared language, trade, religion, and *Ifá*