

SHORTER NOTICES

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Madagaskar und die Missionare: Technisch-Zivilisatorische Transfers in der Früh- und Endphase Europäischer Expansionsbestrebungen. By DAGMAR BECHTLOFF.

Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2002. Pp. 258. €45 (ISBN 3-515-07873-8).

KEY WORDS: Madagascar, pre-colonial, imperialism, missions, technology.

The aim of this ambitious study is to analyze, using the example of Madagascar, 'the interrelations between mission, technical modernization and indigenous reaction' (p. 37) in the context of European mercantile and imperial expansion. The book covers the period between the early seventeenth and the late nineteenth centuries and puts special emphasis on the role of technology and trade in the missionary enterprise. Relevant sources for this study had to be found here, there and everywhere: besides the documents of the Malagasy National Archives in Antananarivo the author consulted files and manuscripts in Aix-en-Provence, London and Lisbon, among other places. Unfortunately, the author does not seem to be aware of the more sophisticated recent debates in African studies on the impact of missions and missionaries. In her somewhat confused introduction, Bechtloff actually presents – in a very general and sometimes naïve way – various trends in current historical writing but in the end, with reference to Geoffrey Elton and Leopold von Ranke, she pleads for a straightforwardly empiricist approach: 'To collect and critically examine all sources available represents the only way to reconstruct the past' (p. 32). Well yes ...

The second chapter discusses the origins of the Christian sense of mission as well as the relevance of the Indian Ocean area for both Portugal and Britain. Here she mainly repeats already well-known facts. The following part of the book takes up again the theme of Portuguese colonial interests. It contains some interesting information about the futile efforts of the Jesuits to Christianize Madagascar between 1616 and 1630. The most substantial chapter, however, is the last and longest one entitled 'Madagascar as sovereign state'. Bechtloff carefully analyses both the competing interests of France and Britain regarding Madagascar and the shifting political strategies and interests of the Malagasy elite towards the European powers during the nineteenth century. She also discusses in detail the activities of British missionaries, especially their introduction of new techniques in the processing of iron and steel as well as in tanning and the fabrication of clothing. All in all, Bechtloff did a good job in finding and combining sources and literature very difficult to access. However, her account is somewhat unfocused and thus difficult to follow. Moreover she is still too closely attached to the 'action-response' scheme so characteristic of the older colonial/imperial history.

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'Things from the Bush': A Contemporary History of the Omaheke Bushmen.

By JAMES SUZMAN. Introduction by Robert Gordon. Basel: P. Schlettwein Publishing, 2000. Pp. xxvii + 191. CHF 50; NAM \$90 (ISBN 3-908193-06-0).

KEY WORDS: Namibia, colonial, postcolonial, identity, race.

This book is a reprint of the South African anthropologist James Suzman's 1997 doctoral thesis. As an addendum to the 'Kalahari revisionist' debate, it provides an acute dissection of the historical fabrication and contemporary constituents of

Namibian Ju/'hoan Bushmen identity. Combining anthropological fieldwork with historical ethnography and archive research, Suzman looks for new ways to contextualize contemporary Ju/'hoan outside redundant notions of hunter-gatherers. He examines how Omaheke San identity was born from dominating colonial and postcolonial power relations as played out between the Ju/'hoan, Boer and Herero farmers and the state. In a story that reveals the political and social processes of marginalization, his book offers a neglected and often grim analysis of recent Namibian history.

Divided into two parts, the book first deals with the emergence of Ju/'hoansi as a marginalized underclass on the Omaheke farms. In three chapters Suzman examines how early hostile relations with Boer farmers, founded in Boer perceptions of a need to dominate Bushmen, whom they considered 'wild', led to increasingly aggressive and authoritarian behaviour towards the Ju/'hoansi. At the same time the once autonomous Bushmen became increasingly disadvantaged and submissive. After Namibian Independence, and with increasing unemployment, some Ju/'hoan sought greater freedom on Herero farms. Despite the move bringing some improvements, the Herero articulated their own dominating discourse regarding 'wild' Bushmen and Ju/'hoansi remained marginalized and socially disadvantaged.

The second part of the book, again three chapters, examines how the Ju/'hoansi have adopted a new collective identity in response to their marginalized status. Suzman examines the relationship of history and folklore to Ju/'hoan identity and how Ju/'hoansi adopted Boer notions of Bushmen as stupid and as men of Satan (derived from the Boer translation of the Ju/'hoan deity G//aua as Satan), in the construction of ideas about themselves.

Suzman's book provides a stimulating read. It usefully builds on the work of other studies of 'impure Bushmen', such as those by Widlok on the Hai//om. It benefits from Robert Gordon's historically contextualizing introduction and indeed the influence of Gordon's 1992 *The Bushman Myth* lingers behind much of the text. With power and domination always at the forefront of Suzman's analysis I sometimes felt that subtler aspects of Ju/'hoan reality were not always fully explored. Does association with Satan or G//aua only impart negative connotations, for instance, or is there strength in the ambiguous deity? But to explore such issues would no doubt have diluted the impact – a valuable impact that helps pull Khoisan studies firmly into the twenty-first century.

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The Boers in East Africa: Ethnicity and Identity. By BRIAN M. DU TOIT. Westport CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1998. Pp. xi + 209. £47.95 (ISBN 0-89789-611-4).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, Eastern Africa, ethnicity, migration.

Brian du Toit, an ex-South African and professor of anthropology at the University of Florida, Gainesville, is a recognized expert on Afrikaner migrations and settlements. He has also published on Afrikaner communities in Argentina and in Mexico and the southwestern United States. Given the increasing number of Afrikaners currently leaving South Africa – often referred to as the New Great Trek – Du Toit's work on historical patterns of Afrikaner migrations is a timely contribution. While it is not the first scholarly treatment of Afrikaner settlements in German and British East Africa, it can confidently claim to be the most comprehensive.

The book provides a convincing analysis of why Afrikaners moved to East Africa, particularly after the South African War of 1899–1902. This is followed by a detailed description of the trials and tribulations of an immigrant community which formed a minority within a white community of approximately 70,000 settlers in African territory under foreign rule. Du Toit places great emphasis on religion and education as a cohesive sustaining force amongst the relatively small Afrikaans community, concluding that the Afrikaners in East Africa ‘were never anything less than Afrikaners living outside South Africa’ (p. 82).

This statement raises some troublesome questions. While admitting the general cohesiveness of the immigrant community, can it be readily accepted that the different contexts in which Afrikaners found themselves had no bearing on the nature of their ethnic affinities? Did the Kenyan experience altogether fail to leave a mark? In part, perhaps, this is a shortcoming of a particular anthropological approach that remains too static to chart and evaluate evolving patterns of identity formation over time.

Such carping should not detract from an otherwise fine scholarly contribution in the emergent field of Afrikaner diaspora studies. The author’s dogged research and keen eye for detail have produced a book likely to become standard reading in the field.

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African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20th Century. By ALLAN H. ANDERSON. Trenton NJ and Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press, 2002. Pp. xvi + 282. No price given (ISBN 0-86543-883-8); £15.99, paperback (ISBN 0-86543-884-6).

KEY WORDS: Colonial, postcolonial, Christianity.

Nearly all students of Africa are aware of the phenomenon of Africa’s local churches, and most would be aware of the surge in new churches in the last couple of decades. The author labels this book an ‘introduction’ to this topic. This is too modest. It is a rich description and interpretation of African-initiated Christianity even broader than the title suggests, going back to Ethiopia and the Congo.

Chapter 1 gives an overview. Chapter 2 considers the influences on the rise of local churches. In evaluating other treatments Anderson stresses religious factors. The following seven chapters are mainly historical. Chapter 3 looks at the movement’s beginnings. Chapters 4–7 consider, respectively, West, Southern, Central and East Africa (particularly Kenya). All these chapters are crammed with information, even if inevitably some would balance the details rather differently. Chapter 8 moves on to the newer Pentecostals, arising in the last three decades of the twentieth century. The last three chapters consider the implications of this Christianity for the mission and theology of the church in Africa, the last focusing on the implications of this movement for universal Christianity.

Anderson is aware throughout of the complexity and the changing nature of the phenomenon he is studying. This complexity leads him to see the inadequacy of all existing categorisations. He introduces his own rough categories, broadly corresponding to waves: first the so-called ‘Ethiopian’ churches in Southern Africa and the ‘African’ churches in West Africa; second, the prophet/healing or spiritual churches; and third the new Pentecostal and charismatic churches. This latter group he relates very well to previous waves, and shows the continuities and discontinuities.

Anderson is very good on the ways these churches have absorbed African culture, especially diviners and ancestors. He is also very good on the relation of this African phenomenon to worldwide Pentecostalism. His claim is that this whole movement constitutes a rethinking of Christianity every bit as far-ranging and significant as the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation in Europe. There are revelations all through (such as that it is too simple to claim that South African Zionists were supportive of apartheid). Above all, Anderson is an 'insider'. He shows enormous sympathy, even affection, for the churches he is studying. His celebration of their contribution is in the best tradition of such studies, as generous and sensitive as Sundkler. His perspective may not get the exact balance others would bring, and his approach may not provide all the answers to the questions someone else might ask, but this is a book that sheds genuine light on its subject. It is an object lesson that sympathy with one's subject matter need not distort scholarship but can enhance it.

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