

intransigence of Al-Shabaab was met by the global reach of draconian counterterrorist measures introduced in the United States since the attacks of 11 September 2001. The principle underlying these measures was (and still is today) to condemn every quantum of aid as tainted if it is deemed to support, even in part, the purposes of a terrorist organization. Funding for food aid and other assistance from the United States was much delayed for this reason in early 2011 and doubts remained throughout the crisis about the relative weight attached by the US government to humanitarian as opposed to counterterrorist priorities.

Maxwell and Majid devote considerable space to the interventions by Muslim aid agencies from Turkey and the Middle East – too frequently condescended to by the Western aid establishment as ‘non-traditional’ or ‘emerging’. They were less professionalized, but many of their aid workers demonstrated a strong solidarity with affected communities: ‘Non-Western actors – particularly Islamic actors – put the issues of charity and of voluntary action squarely back in the centre of humanitarianism, at least in terms of intention’ (196). This argument could be related to a more general current debate about the extent to which Islamic NGOs have an advantage of ‘cultural proximity’ in Muslim-majority populations.

Maxwell and Majid propose some possible remedies for what they call the ‘humanitarian malaise’, mainly to do with reasserting humanitarian principles and promoting open dialogue and stricter accountability (among recipient communities as well as donors). If there is a gap in their comprehensive analysis, it is that they give little attention to the processes whereby resources for emergency aid are selectively mobilized through media representations of distant suffering. But this is an indispensable book which, if read and absorbed by decision-makers, might help to reprieve humanitarian action from condemnation to an eternal recurrence of failure. At the time of writing this review in October 2016, 1.1 million Somalis are facing acute food insecurity.

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ANTHROPOLOGISTS IN CONVERSATION

Lettres de Sanga.

By Deborah Lifchitz and Denise Paulme. Edited by Marianne Lemaire.

Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2015. Pp. ix + 278. €25.00, paperback (ISBN 978-2-271-07615-1).

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Key Words: Sudan, northeastern Africa, colonial, gender, women, method.

Lettres de Sanga, published in Paris by the French academic press CNRS Éditions, tells a story of French ethnographer Denise Paulme’s first trip to Africa through letters she and her companion, Deborah Lipchitz, sent and received from the French Sudan. Paulme had just turned 26 when she set out in February 1935 as part of a team headed by the highly influential scholar of French Africa, Marcel Griaule. After seven weeks of increasingly tense relations during which Griaule’s research team busily conducted fieldwork in

the region known as Dogon country, the party split. Griaule and four associates continued their expedition from the Sahara through the Sudan, leaving Paulme and Lipchitz in Sanga. The two women remained in this location through September 1935 on a mission their professor and mentor in Paris, Marcel Mauss, had defined as their primary focus, notably to observe and record '*une société des femmes*', or 'a women's society' (98).

It was thanks to the Rockefeller Foundation in Paris that Paulme was able to undertake this extensive period of independent research. Armed with a generous PhD bursary of 50,000 francs, she found herself equipped with sufficient resources to cover the expenses of herself and Lipchitz, a talented young ethnographic linguist from Russia via Poland, studying in Paris and, like Paulme, working part-time at the Trocadero Museum in Paris, then the hub of ethnological activities in the French empire.

Paulme and Lipchitz's experiences in Sanga between February and September 1935 are explored from various perspectives through four sets of letters prefaced by a helpful and informative introductory essay by Marianne Lemaire. Through Lemaire we learn that the split that separated the young women, disparagingly referred to as *potiches*, or wallflowers, by their opponents in the group headed by Griaule, reflected a difference in methodology. While Griaule appears to have worked fast and furiously in his fieldwork sites amassing data in the form of artifacts and observational records, Paulme was developing a more measured and reflective approach. Griaule failed to appreciate Paulme and Lipchitz's preference and, as Lemaire suggests, did not appreciate their refusal to follow his instruction.

Their new methodology, admired by such luminaries as Michel Leiris, did not, however, lead Paulme and Lipchitz to achieve what they set out to do. According to Paulme, it was impossible to record an identifiable '*société des femmes*', as she notes in one letter, '*je n'ai, à Sanga, trouvé aucun indice malgré mes efforts*' ('I didn't find any trace of this at Sanga, despite my efforts.') (98). Using gender as the singular construct around which to configure 'women' as a historical and scientific category remained a Western scholarly pursuit for decades, and Paulme is one of the earliest scholars of African studies in French to point to its shortcomings. In this case, Paulme also noted that she and Lipchitz were working entirely through male interpreters and, as such, the conception of their project, at its most practical level, was faulty. What they did do over the months that followed was to observe and painstakingly describe Dogon culture, amassing over 180 artifacts to take back to the museum in Paris, following the materialistic methodology prevalent in that era. Notwithstanding these experiences in Sanga, Paulme's interest in integrating women in Africa into Western scholarship did not abate, and any reader unfamiliar with her edited collection, *Women in Tropical Africa*, translated from the French by H. M. Wright (first published in English in 1963 and reissued by Routledge in 2004), will encounter in that volume work that is extraordinarily advanced methodologically for its time, and indeed still of relevance to scholarship on gender in postcolonial African studies today.

The rift that separated Paulme and Lipchitz from Griaule and associates, notably by Paulme's entreaties to her trusted collaborators not to show Griaule the duplicates of their field notes sent at regular intervals to Paris, deepened after the women's return from Sanga. According to Lemaire, this marked a turning point in the history of French Africanism when methodology and epistemology divide (51). While Paulme went on to forge a career as a groundbreaking African ethnographer, returning many times to

Africa with her husband André Schaeffner (also a member of Griaule's Sahara-Sudan expedition team of 1935), Deborah Lipchitz's career was tragically cut short. Arrested in Paris in February 1942 and transported to Auschwitz in September of that year, she died in the gas chambers shortly after her arrival in the camp. Her letters, translated here from the original Russian, are conserved in a special archive in her honour in Paris.

Her letters in this edition provide a moving counterpoint to Paulme's more data-driven epistolary style, Lipchitz constantly beseeching her clearly much-loved family members to write more often. Through all their letters, and the replies received from their interlocutors in Paris, we gain rare insights into ethnographic developments in this era, but perhaps of even greater interest to the historians of Africa are the vivid glimpses they offer of life as a colonial agent in French West Africa.

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AFRICAN LANDSCAPES

Cultural Landscape Heritage in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Edited by John Beardsley.

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Key Words: Nigeria, Mali, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, West Africa, Central Africa, environment, urban, cultural.

This beautifully-produced volume is the outcome of a symposium held in May 2013 at Dumbarton Oaks, the home of Harvard University's program in Garden and Landscape Studies. Director John Beardsley convened the symposium and edited the book. Previous publications in this extensive series are dominated by titles such as *The Italian Garden*, *The French Formal Garden*, *Garden History Issues: Approaches and Methods*, and *Environmentalism in Landscape Architecture*. More recent titles indicate a welcome broadening of scope, *Designing Wildlife Habitats* and *Technology and the Garden* and, the latest, the book under review, *Cultural Landscape Heritage in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Even this brief overview suggests how innovative is the Garden and Landscape Studies program and the fresh themes that are currently emerging from it. A volume on Africa, even if it excludes the northern parts of the continent, is much to be welcomed, extending the range of landscape studies and allowing fascinating intellectual narratives to emerge and to be explored.

The book is divided into four themed parts: introductory (two chapters); 'Monument and Environment' (five chapters); 'Pathway and Grove' (four chapters); and, 'Rethinking Landscape' (three chapters). There is a rich bibliography, together with copious notes for each chapter and photographs, maps, and diagrams appear on almost every page. Most of the authors are scholars of Africa employed in academic institutions in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Europe. Given their disciplines – architecture, ethnography, geography, anthropology, art history, and landscape studies – the authors come