

## REVIEWS

### GREAT ZIMBABWE: A MAJOR SYNTHESIS

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703218557

*The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of Southern Zambezi States*. By INNOCENT PIKIRAYI. Walnut Creek CA: AltaMira Press, 2001. Pp. xxx + 303. \$65 (ISBN 0-7591-0090-X); \$24.95, paperback (ISBN 0-7591-0091-8).

KEY WORDS: Zimbabwe, Southern Africa, pre-colonial, archaeology, kingdoms and states.

The literature on Great Zimbabwe spans more than a century, and ranges from the wild claims of ultra-diffusionists, intent on the assumption that any social development in Africa must originate outside the continent, to the drier archaeologies, in which the typologies of ceramics and walling styles push the people who were responsible for this remarkable phase in Africa's history into the background. But, despite the persistent claim that early Zimbabwe's history is a 'mystery', there has been a core historiography which has steadily advanced our understanding of the Zimbabwe state, its origins and its decline. Milestones in this literature are Randall-MacIver's *Medieval Rhodesia* (1906), Caton-Thompson's *The Zimbabwe Culture: Ruins and Reactions* (1931), Garlake's *Great Zimbabwe* (1973) and Huffman's *Snakes and Crocodiles: Power and Symbolism in Ancient Zimbabwe* (1996). Innocent Pikirayi's *Zimbabwe Culture* is the latest synthesis, and by far the best.

Pikirayi's nine chapters are set in a conventional frame. He starts with an overview of themes and trends in the archaeology of Zimbabwe, essential in this sort of study as present-day interpretations can never be free of the baggage of the past. He then outlines the ecology of 'Southern Zambezia' – the wider geographical region that spans Zimbabwe, eastern Botswana, northern Mozambique and the Limpopo River basin, and the evidence of physiography, natural resources and their distribution and the effects of droughts and changes in the environment. This canvas is the frame for the archaeological story – the earliest evidence for livestock herding, the southward movement of farming communities, early state formation, the rise and fall of the Zimbabwe state, and interactions with the Portuguese, and then with British colonization. All the major sources of archaeological evidence are reviewed succinctly and accurately, and there is an extensive bibliography. Figures, tables, maps and photographs complement the text. *Zimbabwe Culture* will serve well as both a teaching text and as a key to the wide-ranging, and often complex, archaeological literature.

Pikirayi can best be described as a theoretical moderate in his interpretation of this array of evidence. While arguing that the evidence of landscape and climate is important, he is no environmental determinist, allowing both that the physical environment shapes the course of history, but also that human actions shape and determine aspects of the environment. He also takes a middle line in the debate about the causes for the rise of the Zimbabwe state. He allows that external trade was important, but refuses to accept that it was the sole determinant of regional state formation. In essence, he suggests that southern African societies had a dynamic of their own, resulting in the accumulation of wealth in cattle and the rise of chiefdoms, while recognizing that this dynamic was shaped by the possibilities and limitations of the environment, and by the availability of exotic goods and the

possibilities of lucrative trade with the Indian Ocean. He weaves structuralist interpretations of settlement layouts, cognitive systems and symbolism into his account, without according such factors any causal role in history. The result is a well-written, sober account that stays within the interpretative limits of the evidence.

Perhaps Pikirayi's major achievement in this book is the seamless way in which he integrates the archaeological and documentary evidence. Moving easily between potsherds and settlement patterns, early travelers' accounts and official records, oral traditions and ethnography, Pikirayi takes his reader through the fascinating and often frustrating border zone between archaeology and history, all the while keeping his eye on the major theme – the unfolding history of the southern African state that had a key place in the subcontinent's early history.

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MARTIN HALL

## HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS AND AFRICAN HISTORY

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*The Civilizations of Africa: A History to 1800.* By CHRISTOPHER EHRET. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia; Oxford: James Currey, 2002. Pp. xii + 480. \$50 (ISBN 0-8139-2084-1); \$22.50; £18.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-475-3).

KEY WORDS: Pre-colonial, archaeology, linguistics.

This book provides a useful and interesting alternative to the available anglophone undergraduate texts on Africa's pre-colonial history. Most such works, including for example Connah's *African Civilizations* and Fage's *A History of Africa*, have been written by archaeologists or historians, and are informed primarily by perspectives drawn from those disciplines. Ehret draws upon four decades of research in African historical linguistics for this book, at the same time incorporating data from those other disciplines. The results illustrate some of the strengths and weaknesses of a linguistic approach to African history.

The contrast is most marked in the earlier chapters, which deal with African societies of the terminal Pleistocene and early/mid-Holocene. The richness of cultural models in this part of the text is particularly striking, especially compared with most archaeological representations of pre-history. The latter tend to focus upon characteristics of technology and economy, and usually maintain a modest reticence about cultural features with less durable material analogues. Ehret, however, uses word histories from a variety of African language families to reconstruct ancient societies at a much greater level of detail. A book that confidently discusses details of lineage systems, ideologies and architectural styles among specific African communities at the beginning of the Holocene reads very differently from one where such communities are described as congeries of stone tools, pottery types and perhaps economic strategies. Similarly, processes of cultural change and ethnic differentiation are discussed in more detail and, to my mind, often more convincingly than they are in many archaeological texts. Ehret is one of the chief exponents of this combined use of linguistics and archaeological data, and *The Civilizations of Africa* stands as a fascinating witness to the role that historical linguistics can play in integrated reconstructions of the African past.

At the same time there are disadvantages to this approach, particularly for these early periods. Word histories can only illuminate the features of those ancient

speech communities ancestral to modern languages, and the most ancient reconstructions possible will be associated with the four maximal African language phyla known today. This means that African history in the terminal Pleistocene and early/mid-Holocene is treated as the progressive expansion of four separate culture zones, located initially in the woodlands and savannas of West Africa (proto-Niger-Congo), the Middle Nile Valley of central Sudan (proto-Nilo-Saharan), Nubia and the Red Sea Coast (proto-Afroasiatic [-Afrasian, in Ehret's terminology]) and eastern Africa (proto-Khoisan). Contemporary populations in intervening areas, presumably speaking languages with no modern descendants, are not really taken into account in these reconstructions.

Undergraduates may be unaware of debates within linguistics over the accuracy of cultural reconstructions at great time depths and over the precision of glottochronological dating. Potential disagreements between archaeological and linguistic data – the fact that archaeological evidence for sub-Saharan food production is often significantly more recent in date than Ehret's linguistic reconstructions would indicate, for example – are not examined in much detail. It may be in this particular case that archaeological evidence for earlier agriculture simply has not yet been found; alternatively, the challenges of dating ancient processes of language change may have introduced errors into these historical linguistic models. More extensive discussion of such issues would have been a useful introduction to a text so dependent upon synthesis of data from multiple disciplines. The lack of references beyond a small number of suggested readings at the end of each chapter will make it somewhat difficult for students to use this book as a basis of further research.

For later periods, data from oral and written histories are used along with linguistic and archaeological information. *The Civilizations of Africa* more closely resembles other undergraduate texts in its treatment of the last two millennia of African history, in large part because for these later periods other sources begin to approach the richness of the linguistic data. The book's discussions of social and cultural processes during that era are sophisticated and thought-provoking. Ehret explicitly addresses a set of assumptions widely held among (at least North American) undergraduates: that African societies were culturally underdeveloped before European contact, that Africans have historically been the recipients of innovations originating outside the continent and that Europeans dominated interactions with Africans from the time of first contact onward. The dynamism of African societies both before and after that contact is well represented. The extensive use of linguistic evidence also allows unusually thorough coverage of some regions where historical and archaeological data are more rare, including parts of the Congo Basin and south-western Africa.

The book is well written and comprehensive, and abundantly illustrates the richness and complexity of African societies over many thousands of years. More discussion of methodologies and data compatibility, and a more complete reference list, would have been useful. It will make a fine introductory text for courses in African history, especially if supplemented by books and papers that reflect other research methods and their results.

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SCOTT MACEACHERN

## ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE OF NUBIA

DOI: 10.1017/S002185370323855X

*The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia: Pagans, Christians and Muslims along the Middle Nile.* By DEREK A. WELSBY. London: British Museum Press, 2002. Pp. 296, col. pls. 19, figs. 103, maps 5. £29.99 (ISBN 0-7141-1947-4).

KEY WORDS: Sudan, archaeology, Christianity, kingdoms and states.

I reviewed an earlier volume by Welsby, the final report of his excavations at the site of Soba, capital of Alwa, the southernmost Nubian Christian kingdom (*Journal of African History*, 41 [2000], 295–6). In doing so, I was in a bit of a quandry, attempting to review for historians the final report of an archaeological excavation able to elucidate virtually nothing of the history of the site itself.

The volume under review is sorely needed, and Welsby is just the person to write it. He weaves together the political, economic and cultural development of nearly a millennium, c. 500–c. 1400 AD, of all three Christian kingdoms of Nubia into what can only be described as a nearly unified whole. This is no mean feat. The last attempt to pull together a comprehensive history of Christian Nubia, W. Y. Adams's *Nubia: Corridor to Africa*, was published in 1977. This was before two of the three kingdoms had been subjected to more than minimal examination, so Adams had little choice but to marshal a perspective reaching from the Mediterranean world to provide detail only for the northernmost kingdom, Nobatia. This kingdom, now largely underwater, had been thoroughly excavated and examined thanks to a series of surveys prior to the construction and then enlargement of the Aswan Dam, the last of which was co-directed in the Sudan by Adams himself. But only very limited work had been attempted south of the Third Cataract.

Welsby on the other hand is now able to achieve, if not a balanced overview of all three kingdoms and their integrated histories, then at least a comparative and far less Nobatia-centric one. Having excavated at Soba, attempting to extract every possible historical nuance from the remains, he would know more of Alwan history than anyone: Soba is virtually the only excavation so far conducted in the Alwa kingdom. The central kingdom, Makouria, also has become increasingly elucidated since the 1980s through several survey campaigns and excavation by a variety of scholars, notably the Poles but also in part again by Welsby. Thus he is in the fortunate position of being able to draw upon additional and much more widely dispersed sources to allow a far more balanced view of the Christian period than has been hitherto possible.

The volume follows what is increasingly becoming recognized as a useful easy-to-read format, with multiple subdivisions on specific aspects of each chapter theme rather than unrelieved text throughout, thus allowing the reader to follow topic 'soundbites' or entire chapters, as well as an easier search for desired sections by the researcher. Photographs and line drawings are liberally scattered and well placed throughout the text, with colour photographs in the centre. It has the usual index and bibliography, together with a useful appendix listing the Nubian kings and a necessary glossary of terms. Its only technical – and very frustrating – detraction is the decision (likely editorial) to use non-consecutive chapter end-notes listed consecutively at the end of the volume by chapter *number*, yet head individual pages by chapter *title*. This is surely the most user-unfriendly arrangement possible.

One minor factual error may be mentioned. Recently the date of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* has been ascertained to general acceptance as c. 40–70 AD, rather than the long-held estimate of '2nd–3rd c. AD' quoted by Welsby (p. 215),

from its mention of the Nabatean king Malichus II who is now known to have reigned at Petra during that period.<sup>1</sup>

This is, in short, a thoroughly up-to-date, comprehensive and authoritative scholarly account of a region and period for which much of the information between its covers has only recently become accessible. My review of his earlier excavation report said: 'This is the best we are going to get on Alwa for a considerable time'. This still holds true, but Welsby now has substantially enriched his earlier report and our knowledge not only by placing Alwa in context with its neighbours and co-religionists to the north, and but also providing such an enjoyable read. A must for one's library.

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## ETHIOPIA AND EGYPT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NILE

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*The Cross and the River: Ethiopia, Egypt, and the Nile.* By HAGGAI ERLICH.

Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002. Pp. xii + 249. \$49.95; £42.50 (ISBN 1-55587-970-5).  
KEY WORDS: Egypt, Ethiopia, Christianity, Islam, historical geography.

This eagerly awaited book is the culmination of many years of study, seminars and a series of significant conferences on the history of the Nile River basin. It amply lives up to its promise as a sweeping overall survey which brings together in one connected narrative the most important new research on the relations between Ethiopia and Egypt. It complements a collection edited by Haggai Erlich and Israel Gershoni, *The Nile: Histories, Cultures, Myths* (Boulder, 2000). *The Cross and the River* is a complex, richly textured discussion, dense, very well researched and satisfyingly detailed. Much of the book, especially the later chapters dealing with the twentieth century, incorporates new sources, especially sources in Israel. Many are archival and in Hebrew. Three major themes are developed: the political relationship between medieval and modern Egyptian and Ethiopian regimes; the connections between the two countries' churches and finally the influence of the Nile on their national identities and mutual perceptions of 'the Other'.

The book follows a chronological approach in tracing the relationship between the two countries, emphasizing the key roles of Monophysite Orthodox Christianity and the river Nile. The first two chapters set the stage, introducing three themes: the 'historic rights' and 'equable shares' of the two countries, the Ethiopian–Egyptian dialogue and the roles of Islam and Christianity. This historical survey begins with Islam, without any real focus on ancient history. Chapter 3 deals with the medieval period through the sixteenth century, chapter 4 with the late nineteenth century. The chronological coverage then becomes much more detailed and thorough with chapters 5, 6 and 7 considering 1900–30, 1935–42 and 1945–59 respectively. Until 1959 each chapter deals with both Ethiopia and Egypt within the same chapter, but then chapter 8 concentrates only on Ethiopia's concepts of Egypt from 1959 to 1991, while chapter 9 is concerned with Egypt 1959–91. Chapter 10 presents a short conclusion.

Inevitably some shortcomings should be pointed out. The focus as stated is on Egypt and Ethiopia; Sudan, with its importance as the largest country in the Nile basin, is not really included. It has only eight lines in the index, while Egypt has

<sup>1</sup> Casson, *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (Princeton, 1989), 5–6.

two columns and Ethiopia two and a half. One might go further and say that Ethiopia is emphasized at the expense of Egypt, but since there is so much less written on Ethiopia and the Nile that is understandable. Another quibble is that no real link is ever made between the medieval and modern periods: the period from the sixteenth century through 1855 (between chapters 3 and 4) is largely left out. Also, it would have been useful if the references to senior papers at Addis Ababa University (pp. 173–4) specified the departments concerned. This is important because the papers are organized by department in the university library. Again, it seems odd that the author criticizes Emperor Haile Selassie for not having even closer ties with Israel than he did. Finally it should be pointed out that the economic dimension is largely ignored in this work. The role of trade and traders, especially the *jibarti*, would have been a useful addition. However, the book as a whole is a significant contribution to the literature for both the expert and the more general educated reader.

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### THE STUDY OF SLAVERY IN THE HISTORY OF MUSLIM AFRICA

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*Slavery in the History of Muslim Black Africa.* By HUMPHREY J. FISHER. London: Hurst, 2001. Pp. xxi + 410. \$16.50, paperback (ISBN 1-85056-464-6).

KEY WORDS: Islam, slavery.

This book is a reworking of one Humphrey Fisher wrote with his father in 1970.<sup>1</sup> Like the earlier book, it takes its inspiration from and makes extensive use of Gustav Nachtigal's account of his trip through Africa, which the Fishers have translated.<sup>2</sup> While the structure of the new book is similar to that of its predecessor, the new one is more than twice as long. Many sections are re-written and new sections have been added. Its central focus is the regions of the Sahara and the central Sudan that Nachtigal crossed, but it includes material on East Africa, on Muslims in Brazil and even on non-Muslim areas of Central Africa or the Guinea coast. Fisher has done an extremely thorough job of working through the published primary sources on slavery in Muslim Africa. As such, the book will be useful to students doing research on slavery in Africa. He provides a road map through the sources, gives extensive detailed quotations and in some places has interesting and suggestive analysis.

That said, I found the book disappointing. First, there is very little history. Fisher pulls data from different periods, but only rarely indicates any change. For example, in discussing the history of the use of slaves for tribute, he describes the development of the institution. Generally, however, he seems to suggest a static model. Second, he moves from place to place without any clear differentiation between slave systems and structures of the slave trade. He deals with very different trades, but never tries to compare them. He has a chapter on 'slaves at work', but he does not link the nature of slave labour to the nature of specific kinds of slavery. He writes as if there is something called Islamic slavery that emerged

<sup>1</sup> Allan G. B. and Humphrey J. Fisher, *Slavery and Muslim Society: The Institution in Saharan and Sudanic Africa and the Trans-Saharan trade* (London, 1970).

<sup>2</sup> Gustav Nachtigal, *Sahara and Sudan*, trans. Allan G. B. Fisher and Humphrey J. Fisher (5 vols.) (London, 1971–87).

early in the history of Islam and did not change very much. It is important to recognize that slavery in the nineteenth century differed from slavery in the thirteenth, that the Swahili coast differed from the Hausa states and that both differed from Morocco and Mesopotamia.

The reason for all this is that he totally ignores most of what has been written about slavery in Muslim Africa over the last 25 years. Readers will react correctly in sensing that I feel piqued at being ignored. He does cite an early book I wrote, but ignores almost thirty years of writing on Muslim Africa. He also ignores most of the major collections in the field: Miers and Kopytoff, Meillassoux, Miers and Roberts as well as books edited by Paul Lovejoy and myself. He completely ignores the work of Claude Meillassoux, Richard Roberts, Ann McDougall, James Webb, Jean Bazin, James Searing and Boubacar Barry. He doffs his hat to Lovejoy and Manning, but does not really engage their ideas. His brief discussion of Muslims in Brazil is based on early work by Verger and Kent. It would have profited from consultation of Joao Reis's fine book on the Male uprising. His discussion of slave flight and resistance would have profited from citation of work by Boubacar Barry and Ismail Barry on the Hubbu. His discussion of Al Hajj Umar Tal would have profited from a reading of David Robinson. His discussion of East Africa would have profited from reference to Frederick Cooper and Abdul Sheriff. His discussion of slave soldiers covers major primary sources, but a more original synthesis would have been possible if he consulted the works of Echenberg, Roberts and myself and comparative work by Pipes, Crone and Toledano.

What is surprising about all this is that Humphrey Fisher spent his professional life at the School of Oriental and African Studies, the central crossroads in the development of African historical studies. We all passed through. He knows us. Some of us have profited from his kindness and his gracious hospitality. Many of us attended a conference he organized with Michael Brett on the trans-Saharan trade. In his introduction, he cites the book that came out of that conference, but never uses it. He even ignores the work of Lamine Sanneh, one of his students. This book is not without its virtues, but from a man who has been a major figure in the development of the field, we could hope for a more important synthesis. The historian's task is not merely to present raw data, but to analyze it. Progress in knowledge comes from debate and the confrontation of ideas.

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MARTIN A. KLEIN

## LEARNING FROM MAURITIUS ABOUT SLAVERY AND IDENTITY

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703268559

*History, Memory and Identity*. Edited by VIJAYALAKSHMI TEELock and EDWARD A. ALPERS. Mauritius: Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture and the University of Mauritius, 2001. Pp. vii + 236. No price given (ISBN 99903-904-3-6).

KEY WORDS: Mauritius, identity, memory, slavery, slave trade.

This is a collection of essays and conference papers generated by the scholars affiliated with the 'Origins Project', which promotes popular and scholarly knowledge of Mauritian slavery. At the time these papers were presented, the Origins Project was hosted by the University of Mauritius and sponsored by the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture and also by the Mauritian Ministry of Arts and Culture. The contributing scholars are mostly engaged in a variety of studies on the history of slavery in Mauritius and the Southwest Indian Ocean.



Lay knowledge of slavery is quite important in contemporary Mauritius. The descendants of the slaves, called Creoles, make up one quarter of the island's population. Creoles have been marginalized since 1835, when their ancestors were emancipated from slavery and the sugar planters began to rely more heavily on indentures from India. To help Creoles learn more about their past, and to encourage more scholarly research on Mauritius, some of the essays in this collection focus exclusively on local problems in researching demographic and family history. These are written either by scholars, such as James Armstrong, Colette Lechartier, Vijaya Teelock and Barbara Valentine, or by lay genealogists affiliated with the project: Nicole Papeche, Emilianne Faron, Guy Mérite. One Mauritian scholar, Joyce Fortuné, succeeds in bridging the gap between her own family history and broader methodological problems in what is one of the more elegant contributions to this collection.

Most of these essays aim to fill a gap. We know a great deal about the slaves and traders of the Atlantic, but very little about their counterparts in the Southwest Indian Ocean. It is surprising, in fact, that historians have paid so little attention to Mauritius, one of the most productive and densely populated sugar colonies, where there is today an abundance of historical documentation. Most contributors used Mauritian documents, as well as documents from Cape Town, Madagascar and France, to explore the history of slavery in Mauritius and the Southwest Indian Ocean. Daniella Police uses the accounts of officials and travellers to trace the origins of the sexually suggestive 'séga' dance, brought to Mauritius by slaves. The séga is performed for tourists today, yet ironically enough, she writes that the dance was an expression of collective musical memories of Africa that were articulated as a form of resistance. And there were not only African memories among the slaves: Sada Reddi shows that many Indians of diverse origins were enslaved there, too. Reddi also shows that Indians formed a significant part of the 'free black' population. Robert Shell uncovers another infrequently examined aspect of Mauritian slavery: the involvement of Cape traders in the Southwest Indian Ocean slave trade. Pier Larson recounts, in impressive detail, the operations of slave traders in Madagascar, demonstrating convincingly that Malagasy merchants first traded goods to the interior in order to acquire silver, which, in turn, was required for buying slaves. This caused a drain of silver from Mauritius and Réunion to Madagascar. Larson also makes the case for revising upward previous estimates of the slave trade to the Mascarenes. This revision is strongly suggested by the commanding archival research of Richard Allen, who reports higher figures in his own essay. Allen also gives us a good sense of the complex origins and structures of the slave trade to Mauritius.

It is clear from Allen's comparisons to the Caribbean that our knowledge of worldwide slavery is enhanced by knowing more about Mauritius. Such knowledge will excite students of the slave trade. An even wider audience should take notice of the essays by Edward Alpers and Megan Vaughan, who write about slavery and identity. Alpers argues that in Mauritius, slave owners paid little heed to the diverse origins of African slaves, stereotyping them all as 'Mozambiques'. This claim is well supported by the evidence that he presents on the process of enslavement. Less well supported is his claim that during enslavement, 'creolization' began to happen. It is unclear from the evidence offered by Alpers how, exactly, that process worked during enslavement, although it is clear that it resulted in a creole culture. Alpers sees creolization and stereotyping at work, while Vaughan uses archival sources to show that the slaves and their masters invoked multiple identities depending on their circumstances and objectives. She makes the further point that 'In this world social categories were no sooner invented than they strained at the seams, but the invention of those categories went on



nevertheless' (p. 51). 'In this world' refers to eighteenth-century Mauritius, but it no doubt refers to our world today as well. In this gem of an essay, Vaughan demonstrates why all historians of cross-cultural relations might learn from Mauritius.

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## EXPLOITATION, WITCHCRAFT AND HISTORICAL MEMORY

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703278555

*Memories of the Slave Trade: Ritual and the Historical Imagination in Sierra Leone.* By ROSALIND SHAW. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002. Pp. xv + 312. £33 (ISBN 0-226-75131-7); £13.50, paperback (ISBN 0-226-75132-5).

KEY WORDS: Sierra Leone, pre-colonial, post-colonial, slave trade, witchcraft, memory.

Rosalind Shaw, who teaches sociocultural anthropology at Tufts University, did her main fieldwork into divination among the Temne people of Sierra Leone in 1977–8. She has however returned regularly since, enabling her to revise her findings against the horrifyingly changing political scene. She seems to have a natural rapport with diviners. They became her friends and told her their secrets. As she watched and listened she became convinced that their rituals and narratives incorporated hidden memories of the Atlantic slave trade and of the years of warfare that followed its suppression.

The study of hidden memories, 'mute meanings', stimulated by the Comaroffs, has been a fashionable theme of recent scholarships. In her introduction Shaw works her way indomitably through the numerous relevant theories published during the 1990s, sensibly avoiding committing herself to any of them. She also avoids committing herself to that favourite and futile task of defining 'modernity' – a word which perhaps ought now to fall into the oblivion into which scholars have dropped 'tradition'.

Shaw gives her findings a historian's pragmatic grounding. Historians are fortunate in possessing authoritative Portuguese accounts of coastal Sierra Leone covering from the early sixteenth to the late seventeenth century. The earliest descriptions of religious practices depict people worshipping benevolent 'idols' who care for them in a landscape dotted with shrines. Some 300 years of the Atlantic slave trade followed, then another century of warfare. The religious landscape became hostile, its inhabitants chiefly concerned with rituals to protect them from the evil forces that surrounded and threatened their daily lives.

These are the rituals that Shaw's diviners practise, inspired by memories of a hostile past – memories which are not expressed directly as reminiscence, but mediated through generations of divining practice into what she calls 'palimpsest' memories in which 'past and present interfuse, shape and mutually fashion each other' (p. 265). These the individual diviners will interpret in their own ways and relate to the problems brought them by their clients.

She goes on to another theme fashionable in recent years – the persistence of witchcraft beliefs in contemporary Africa. Practising witches in Sierra Leone are of two kinds – women diviners working to help, or harm, their neighbours, and men diviners working to get wealth or power for themselves or their clients (a gender difference she only mentions in passing). Here again there are links with the slave trade era when witchcraft accusations were a standard way of procuring

slaves for sale. The consumer goods that the vendor then received for his slaves reappear today as the luxurious cars, household furnishings and electronic equipment flashed by today's witches.

Witches in Sierra Leone are believed to be cannibals – which again takes us back to the Atlantic slave trade and the widespread belief that the white purchasers were taking slaves away to be eaten. It also relates back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when the ruling chiefs were growing rich through trade and then, under British jurisdiction, were enabled to escape from their people's constitutional restraints on their power, and could oppress (popularly, 'eat') them. The notorious and still persisting so-called 'leopard' or 'alligator' murders, in which powerful chiefs were often implicated, supplied victims whose bodies were then used to make a 'medicine' that gave the owner power.

Today it is widely believed in Sierra Leone that successful politicians owe their power to their either being or employing witches. That they employ diviners whom they enable to live in affluence is unquestionable. Shaw has a funny story about visiting a diviner she knew who had a Mercedes parked outside each of his two houses while inside each house was a cabinet minister. 'Thus', as she puts it, "'eating" people ritually, through the mediation of a diviner, confers the capacity to "eat" people politically through the mediation of the state' (p. 261).

Shaw calls her book 'an alternative history of the slave trade' (p. 22). This is misleading: she has not invalidated existing histories. But her original, scholarly and imaginative use of historians' tools has – whether or not they believe in 'hidden memories' – enriched historians' understanding of the past and of how it continues to affect the present.

London

CHRISTOPHER FYFE

## CENTRAL AFRICAN CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO AFRICAN AMERICA

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*Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora*. Edited by

LINDA M. HEYWOOD. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. £45;

\$64.95 (ISBN 0-521-80243-1); £15.95; \$22.95, paperback (ISBN 0-521-00278-8).

KEY WORDS: Central Africa, African diaspora, slave trade.

Every first-year graduate student in African American history is familiar with the Herskovits–Frazier debate. In his 1941 classic, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, Melville Herskovits made the case for cultural continuity – the survival of what he called 'Africanisms' – in New World slave societies. The portrayal of African Americans as cultural foundlings, he declared, had long served as 'one of the principal supports of race prejudice' in the United States. Herskovits's chief antagonist was African American sociologist E. Franklin Frazier, whose *The Negro Family in the United States* (1939) had dismissed the idea of black Americans' essential 'Africanness' as a canard that served, wittingly and unwittingly, to perpetuate discredited racial ideas. For Frazier, such claims both trivialized the savagery and disruptiveness of enslavement and obscured the essential 'Americanness' of the African American.

More than half a century later, these analytical poles remain largely intact. To be sure, the debate has become vastly more nuanced, as literally hundreds of scholars, representing a dozen different disciplines, have offered their own interpretations of African American culture and identity. The political and moral valences of the

debate have likewise shifted, as the debate over continuity has become entangled in an increasingly hackneyed debate between those touting slaves' 'agency' and 'resilience' and those allegedly portraying them as mere 'victims'. Yet today, as sixty years ago, the first question the scholar or teacher confronts is still whether to tell the history of New World Africans as chiefly a tale of continuity or of disjuncture.

The debate has remained evergreen not only because of its obvious political overtones but also because of its seemingly unresolvable nature. For all their differences in approach and argument, scholars generally assumed that there was simply not enough surviving information about the provenience of African slaves to understand processes of cultural transformation – whether of 'survival' or 'syncretism', 'assimilation' or 'creolization' – in any but the most general terms. Today, with the appearance of such resources as the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database, the Afro-Louisiana Slave and Free Database and Paul Lovejoy's on-going UNESCO-funded 'Slave Routes' project, that assumption is no longer viable. As Lovejoy, David Eltis, John Thornton, Gwendolyn Midlow-Hall, J. Lorand Matory, Michael Gomez and others have shown, it is now possible to trace the entire enslavement experience of identifiable groups and even individuals with considerable historical specificity.

The great promise – and some of the still unresolved problems – of this new history are vividly on display in the volume under review. Based on papers from a 1999 conference at Howard University, the book brings together fourteen scholars from four continents, a fact that testifies in itself to a salutary reconvergence of 'African' and 'African diaspora' studies. While the essays vary widely in argument and scope, all the contributors are determined to push beyond generalizations to actual processes of cultural transplantation and transformation. All are also anxious to redress the imbalances of a historical literature that they believe has privileged the demographic and cultural impact of West Africans (and of the Yoruba, in particular) over equally deserving Central Africans.

Like the slave trade itself, the book ranges across hundreds of years and thousands of miles. The collection is anchored by essays by John Thornton (who uses contemporary documentary sources to reconstruct the religious and ceremonial universe of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Kongo and Mbundu) and Joseph Miller (who manages to compress into fifty pages an exquisitely detailed demographic portrait of four hundred years of Central African slaving). Heywood herself contributes a useful introduction, as well as an essay on reciprocal processes of 'creolization' between Portuguese and African in eighteenth-century Central Africa. Wyatt McGaffey and Terry Rey explore manifestations of Kongo religion (*simbi* spirits in McGaffey's essay, Kongo Catholicism in Rey's) in Haiti, long the cultural province of West Africanists. In an apt evocation of Robert Darnton's 'great cat massacre', Brazilian historian Robert Slenes examines the 'great popoise-skull strike', a previously unobserved work stoppage by Central African slaves in early nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro. Monica Schuler explores the history of 'liberated' Central Africans imported to Guyana as indentured laborers after formal abolition of slavery in the British Empire, a phenomenon that wonderfully complicates conventional understandings of cultural transmission from old world to new. Ras Michael Brown imaginatively pursues Africa's legacy in understandings of the natural world, drawing on the experience of slaves in the Georgia and South Carolina low country. In contrast to most academic anthologies, virtually all the essays have something novel and important to offer.

Inevitably, the collection leaves some questions unresolved, from the prevalence of Christianity among Kongo slaves to the degree of cultural uniformity within 'Central Africa', an entity that is itself conceived differently by different contributors. While McGaffey stresses the importance of seeking 'correspondences'

between old and new worlds in the 'details' of specific African beliefs and practices rather than in 'general conceptions' of African religion, others treat Central African culture in surprisingly sweeping (and, in a few cases, static) ways. Perhaps the most extreme example comes from Jan Vansina, who suggests, in a short foreword, that Central Africans were able to provide the 'common glue' for a shared African American culture precisely because of their considerable cultural and linguistic homogeneity. While broadly defensible – homogeneity, after all, is a relative concept – such a suggestion can have the ironic effect of propelling us back to the days of Herskovits, with Central Africa's 'single overarching culture' standing in for his timeless West African 'cultural zone'.

Such quibbles aside, Heywood's anthology represents an important achievement, whose sheer range – geographically, chronologically and methodologically – assures it a wide and diverse readership.

*Brown University*

JAMES T. CAMPBELL

## COASTAL AKAN STATE AND SOCIETY: PRE-COLONIAL APPOLONIA

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703298558

*I signori di Appolonia: poteri e formazione dello Stato in Africa occidentale fra xvi e xviii secolo.* By PIERLUIGI VALSECCHI. Rome: Carocci, 2002. Pp. 345. €19.30, paperback (ISBN 88-430-2146-X).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, pre-colonial, economic, kingdoms and states, kinship.

The study of the pre-colonial Akan state system is one of the most vigorous and advanced in African history. Blessed with a fairly dense pre-colonial written documentation (albeit in a disconcerting number of languages) and a vigorously collected oral tradition, there is a great deal of material to work with. Not only have general histories given way to more regional approaches, often focusing on small areas, but in recent years the field has been approached by non-Anglophones. Valsecchi, an Italian, joins a group of French scholars already published in the field.

Valsecchi takes the 'kingdom' of Appolonia, that formed around Cape Three Points in the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century as his piece of the puzzle, and sets about examining how a state consolidated in the region. This book is based on a careful and virtually comprehensive examination of the sources. He has studied the Dutch and English records exhaustively, not only through the Furley Collection (which has its own difficulties) but in the original texts as well. He is particularly good at the use of cartographic sources, both in locating and interpreting them. To this substantial documentary base he has added oral traditions, working the Native Court records in Ghana to good effect for early twentieth-century traditions cited in court disputes. Finally, Valsecchi has conducted his own field research.

His work on establishing the ethnic and geographical boundaries of the region, that occupies just under the first hundred pages of the book, is a painstaking study using a full range of written and oral sources to trace the origin and development of the various ethnic terms, regional designations and settlements as they shift across time (and space). He is alert to the now well-developed literature on identity and ethnicity and applies these concepts to his documentation.

The next long section traces the origin of Appolonia out of the complex environment of the western Gold Coast from the late seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century. Following on the work of Ray Kea, he situates the emergence of the kingdom of Appolonia in the turbulence of the late seventeenth century.

In this environment, commercial competition involving both African and European players, military confrontation and political disruption all led to the formation of the new polity from refugees, local population and adventurers. While conscious of the role of European interests in these changes, and their involvement in some of their aspects, his analysis centres much more on the dynamics of Akan society than on reactions to European demands. In this regard, Valsecchi makes remarkably little mention of the slave trade, or the impact that the exportation of the many thousands who were deported would have on the shape of events, though he follows wars in considerable detail.

Valsecchi shows the critical role that events, especially the formation of the merchant-empire of Jan Konny and Asante expansion in the early eighteenth century (beginning with the war against Aowin in 1715), played in the formation of new polities in areas that Asante did not conquer. Again Valsecchi makes careful use of modern tradition as well as earlier versions of tradition and the contemporary record. A final, shorter section then details the fate of the newly formed state in the eighteenth century.

A striking and interesting aspect of the book is Valsecchi's wrestling with family structures, clans, webs of relationships and other aspects of Akan society that have puzzled historians and anthropologists alike, while also being attentive to state and other political structures that are less visible in the modern setting. The fragmentation of authority typical of the seventeenth-century Akan world produced interesting interactions between the state and the kinship system, as well as the economy, since in the micro-polities of the area economic activity, kinship and individual power often functioned beyond the boundaries of the polity. He is comfortable with the literature of the anthropologist on these topics, and yet conscious of the flexibility of all these concepts in the unsettled conditions of the seventeenth- to eighteenth-century Gold Coast.

The history of the Akan has been well served by local studies, especially of the eighteenth century, but often reaching back to the seventeenth as well. Valsecchi's work stands out among the group for its careful use of source material and for its willingness to grapple with the interesting theoretical issues raised by the exercise of power in relatively small polities in the context of the complicated history of the old Gold Coast. Indeed, this work is a model for the genre.

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JOHN K. THORNTON

## BASEL PERSPECTIVES ON SOUTHERN GHANAIAN SLAVERY

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703308552

*Slaves and Slave Holders on the Gold Coast: Towards an Understanding of Social Bondage in West Africa.* By PETER HAENGER. Edited by J. J. SHAFFER and PAUL E. LOVEJOY. Introduction by Paul E. Lovejoy. Translated from the German by Christina Handford. Basel, Switzerland: P. Schlettwein Publishing, 2000. Pp. xvi + 213. CHF 48 (ISBN 3-908193-04-4).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, pre-colonial, colonial, slavery.

As is generally known, historians of nineteenth-century southern Ghana are blessed with a wealth of contemporaneous written sources, located mostly in diverse European archives. Some of the richest but least exploited records are those of the Basel Mission archives. Peter Haenger has done the great service of bringing to light a number of intriguing and richly detailed Basel documents bearing on the

institutions of slavery and pawning among the peoples of the southeastern Gold Coast – principally Akan and Ga-Adangme – in the latter half of the nineteenth century. His largely empiricist approach is both the book's strength and its weakness. Nevertheless, this is an important book that no historian of servile institutions in pre- and early colonial Ghana can afford to ignore.

Haenger begins his study with a critique of 'western' notions of slavery (i.e. those based on understandings of New World slavery) by first examining the mid-century writings of the British official Brodie Cruickshank and the Basel missionary Johannes Zimmerman. Despite their quite different perspectives the two came to a similar view of Gold Coast slavery: bondage was in fact the state of all individuals, no one was totally 'free', yet the institution was in practice relatively benign as it was embedded in larger 'patriarchal' structures. Their work provides enduring insights despite their inherent biases. By contrast, Haenger largely dismisses the efforts of more recent scholars to develop an all-encompassing definition of slavery. Oddly and unfortunately, he does not consider the classic work of anthropologist R. S. Rattray or, more recently, of A. Norman Klein.

Haenger wants to show both the complexity of the institution of slavery in the southeastern Gold Coast and the difficulty scholars have in using the available (and limited) European sources to get a handle on this complexity. A fascinating discussion of the life history of Rosine Opo, a 'house-born' female slave, daughter of a prominent chief of the interior kingdom of Akuapem, and Christian convert, serves to make his case in chapter 2. Despite her humble birth status (traced through her slave mother), her fate came to be linked first with powerful individuals contesting the Akuapem kingship and then with some of the earliest Basel Mission converts. Among other things this case study shows clearly how the establishment of the Basel Mission community in Akuapem 'expanded the slaves' spectrum of possibilities for living and acting' (p. 55), though the range of possibilities for slave agency was already quite substantial.

What gave rise to the extraordinary richness of the Basel records from the 1860s was the controversy that raged within mission circles over slave ownership by Christian converts. Chapter 3 is devoted to this controversy and sheds light on the character of slaveholding among the (mostly) Euro-African trading families of the coastal towns. Unlike the slaveowners of the inland states, the trading families were more commercially oriented and therefore less 'patriarchal' in relations with their slaves. Some contemporary observers like Zimmerman felt that this made coastal slavery more like 'American' slavery, but as Haenger notes, this is to be understood as meaning primarily a wider 'social gulf' between master and slave, rather than more 'brutal treatment' (p. 64). Interestingly, this also meant that slaves' lives were perhaps more 'autonomous' under coastal masters than under the patriarchal masters of the interior. The bulk of the chapter is devoted to a detailed examination of controversies surrounding slave ownership by Euro-Africans C. C. Reindorf, Thomas Svanikier, Nils Holm and Peter Bernasko, and Ga convert George Lomotey. The chapter also offers wonderful photographic portraits of most of these individuals and their families.

The last chapter examines evidence from the Basel Mission records, British colonial correspondence and court records regarding the effects of the 1874 slave emancipation ordinance. This chapter nicely complements recent articles by Kwabena Opare Akurang-Parry and Trevor Getz.<sup>1</sup> What Haenger adds to our

<sup>1</sup> K. O. Akurang-Parry, 'Colonial modes of emancipation and African initiatives', *Ghana Studies*, 1 (1998), 11–34; T. Getz, 'A "somewhat firm policy": the role of the Gold Coast judiciary in implementing slave emancipation, 1874–1900', *Ghana Studies*, 2 (1999), 97–117.

understanding of the process of emancipation is evidence that many coastal slave masters relaxed control and provided material incentives in order to hold on to the labour of their former bondsmen and that women and children predominated among those who continued to be bought and sold after 1874.

Haenger's work is marred by several small errors – for example, Elmina was ceded to Britain in 1872, not 1868 (p. 46); 'tribal tattoos' (p. 57) is in an infelicitous term for the facial scarifications of slaves of northern origin; the Wassa king deposed for slave trading was Enemil Kuow, not Duow (p. 139) – but these do not detract from the overall significance of the book. A more serious deficiency is the omission of a conclusion, in which the author could have returned to the question of global (and local) definitions of slavery and their relevance to the nineteenth-century Gold Coast with which he began his study.

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LARRY W. YARAK

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON COLONIALISM

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703318559

*The Archaeology of Colonialism*. Edited by CLAIRE L. LYONS and JOHN K. PAPADOPOULOS. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2002. Pp. 284. £30, paperback (ISBN 0-89236-635-4).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, West Africa, archaeology, slave trade, colonialism, comparative.

This volume presents eight studies of colonialism from its first known manifestation 6,000 years ago through the modern period. Two essays are set in Africa. In an elegant introduction, Lyons and Papadopoulos discuss the practice and intellectual framing of archaeology as part and parcel of European colonial expansion. The organizing theme is that objects – personal items, monumental sculpture, kitchen pots, architecture – are not the residual background of human activity, but shapers and mediators of those activities, saturated with thoughts, motives and fears of men and women, colonized and colonizers. The power of objects extends to what they can tell about encounters between people on 'both' sides of colonial situations, and about the heterogeneous and changing nature of those sides.

Working in Bénin, Kenneth Kelly contrasts strategies of elites in Hueda and Dahomey, seventeenth- to eighteenth-century states, with those of Elmina in Ghana. He argues that Hueda and Dahomey elites exerted far greater control over European traders than historians and archaeologists have generally envisioned for West Africa. In a zone where contact between Europeans and Africans had such far-reaching consequences, Kelly underscores the dramatic need for more archaeological attention to colonialism and related encounters. Stacey Jordan and Carmel Schrire provide a study from the Cape of Good Hope, using earthenware pottery to discern the changing lives of Asian and Creole women in 'European' households. Local women were brought into such households as servants early on, which set the stage for a later, widespread trend of intermarriage between European men and local women, and increasing social power of such women. The Dutch East India Company's control over earthenware production is here linked to the creation of moral boundaries and hierarchical identities in the face of the complex colonial history of southern Africa.



The remaining case studies include Gil Stein's on fourth-millennium trading colonies in Anatolia, what he terms 'colonies without colonialism' (p. 27). Using a trade diaspora model, Stein illustrates that southern Mesopotamian traders, living in enclaves in northern settlements for centuries, made no attempt to alter power relations by their presence. Adolfo Domínguez flips Stein's contention, arguing for colonization without colonists. For Iberia in the mid-first millennium BC, the author focuses on the role of Greek stone sculpture. Iberian elites had consumed sculpture as status-enhancing; as this Greek colony, governed from afar, struggled to define itself politically, the majority of Iberians rejected and destroyed sculptures in widespread resistance.

For the ninth-century BC Bay of Naples region, Irad Malkin recalls Richard White's 'Middle Ground' model, and uses it to discuss Greeks, Etruscans and local elites in relation to one another, as frontiers between them constantly shift. Nicholas Thomas analyzes western clothing and bark cloth technology, in the context of Christian conversion, comparing Tahiti and Samoa. His approach is one of the defining perspectives in the field of material culture studies. Tom Cummins writes about Spanish implementation of social control in Andean communities through Catholic marriage and gathering people into planned towns. He analyzes space in the towns beginning in the sixteenth century, as well as diagrammatic documents concerned with ordering the local populace.

It is a rare volume that presents essays of such evenly high quality, integrated by a shared theoretical perspective that focuses on breaking down overly static models of colonial situations. Despite this shared perspective, each study presents new and unique argumentation and evidence, and makes a major contribution to the larger project of comprehending colonialism in all its nuances.

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ADRIA LAVIOLETTE

## GERMAN SOURCES ON ANGOLAN HISTORY

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703328555

*Ethnographische Aneignungen: Deutsche Forschungsreisende in Angola [Ethnographic Appropriations: German Explorers in Angola]*. By BEATRIX HEINTZE. Frankfurt: Verlag Otto Lembeck, 1999. Pp. 458. €25.50 (ISBN 3-87476-343-9).

KEY WORDS: Angola, exploration/travel, sources, text editions.

Early German research expeditions in present-day Angola have been severely neglected to date, both in historical writings and as ethnographic sources. Their remarkable absence from literature results mainly, according to Beatrix Heintze, from language barriers within the research community. With a few notable exceptions such as Jan Vansina and Joseph Miller, non-German-speaking historians and anthropologists write as though this large corpus of travel reports simply did not exist. Many supplementary published writings, especially brief news and travel reports from nineteenth-century newspapers and journals, are rarely quoted because they are time-consuming to trace.

This well-researched book covers a time span from Samuel Brun's early travels (1611–13) to Hermann Baumann's ethnographic research of 1954. Particularly in the last third of the nineteenth century, west-central Africa – an area that roughly corresponds to present-day Angola – held a special attraction for German travellers. Heintze has assembled sources on thirty German explorers. The best-known travellers include Max Buchner, Julius Falkenstein, Paul Pogge, Hermann

von Wissmann and, last but not least, the German founding father of ethnology, Adolf Bastian. For each of the thirty Heintze provides a short biography, explaining the aspirations and motives that led them to embark on their expeditions. These biographies are entertaining to read. There is a vivid depiction of Max Buchner running into Hermann von Wissmann in the Angolan town of Malanje and wondering where he had met this fellow before. They did indeed know each other, having shared a prison cell ten years earlier after both being convicted of duelling.

The biographies are followed by extracts of ethnographic interest from the explorers' works. These original texts have been selected because they contain basic ethnographic information and theoretical assumptions about African people. The collection is followed by a table listing 24 German expeditions to Angola that includes information about the various scholars who accompanied each expedition and the patron who commissioned it. This provides the reader with a convenient chronological orientation. Two maps show the approximate travel routes of the various explorers. There are three useful bibliographies: general introductory literature; sources and references corresponding to each individual biography; and selected works on Angola in German.

The substantial introductory chapter summarizes some aspects of how the explorers travelled and of the conditions under which their reports were produced (a greatly reduced version of the introduction 'Per aspera ad astra' has been translated into English and published in *History in Africa*, 26 [1999], 69–128). It reveals emotional hardships, Portuguese suspicions of alleged German interest in annexation, the logistics of managing a caravan of hundreds of people – a nearly impossible task, as local porters often refused to go beyond the borders of the world known to them. The organization of the journey consumed a huge amount of energy and, if this alone or the frequent eruption of open violence did not play havoc with the research expedition, then numerous illnesses and mosquitoes did.

The title, *Ethnographic Appropriations*, refers to the climate of violence surrounding almost all of these journeys. The introduction analyses the mutual aspirations and disappointments of Africans and Europeans, and attempts to capture something of the atmosphere that pervaded the long months spent on the move. Many reports reflect prejudices and presumptions on both sides, with travellers expressing the feeling that they were being watched as if in a zoo, and with Africans attempting to sidestep the explorers' questions that they perceived as impertinent. In some cases, however, explorers and locals seem to have achieved a degree of mutual understanding. Pechuël-Loesche, for example, worked closely with African women and appreciated their willingness to explain basic elements of their culture and language to him.

Heintze shows great concern for the evolution of the ethnographic report as a final written product. She vividly documents the process of producing these texts. It was necessary to overcome physical hardships – not to mention language barriers, translation difficulties and problems of material conservation – in order to obtain the information, and the final written form had to be modified to comply with contemporary stylistic conventions. Perhaps the main merit of Heintze's endeavour is that she provides the reader with a thorough sense of the evolution of these early writings. They remain the first reports from the interior of that part of the continent and are therefore invaluable.

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UTE RÖSCHENTHALER

## A 'PEOPLE'S HISTORY' OF THE CONGO

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703338551

*The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People's History.* By GEORGES NZONGOLA-NTALAJA. London and New York: Zed Books, 2002. Pp. xiv + 304. No price given (ISBN 1-84277-052-7); paperback (ISBN 1-84277-053).

KEY WORDS: Congo – Democratic Republic of, general.

The 'People's History' announced by this book sandwiches a century between two symbolic figureheads. Behind the arresting juxtaposition of Leopold II and Kabila lies the argument that personal tyrannies run like a red thread through the modern history of the Congo, ever depriving the 'masses' from control over their own destinies. This broad theme is developed through three narratives which are intertwined through the eight chapters of the book.

The first belongs to the 'great narrative' genre. It sets the scene for some quintessential entities such as 'scientifically defined' social classes, international capitalism, and colonial bourgeoisie. The dynamics are those of a deepening spiral into oppression, endlessly challenged by the toiling masses, guided themselves by enlightened intellectuals.

Nzongola quotes Fanon's and Cabral's readings of Marx as his main references for this scenario. Behind these resounding constructions, however, the book bears witness to the basic uncertainties of African history. There is a poignant dimension in this 'People's History' with its assumptions that the Congo is a treasure land with 'fabulous riches', deprived of its earlier moral bearings, eternal victim of evil forces coming from without. Unfortunately riches only become riches through accumulation, the external factor is not uniquely decisive, and it is left open to question how intangibles like public morality can be 'restored' regardless of the long-term history of the region.

In fact, little interest is shown here in any linkage between present and past concepts of power. When history is called upon, it is to serve as a stylized décor against which the scene is set for the chronicle of present times. The toolbox is elementary. The matrix of ancient cultures and concepts of power is hardly touched upon. A few mentions of migrations and kingdoms bring back memories of old textbooks which bravely transplanted into the African past some of the *clichés* of Celtic historiography. Early colonial history follows on the footsteps of Adam Hochschild's essay, now accepted outside the profession as an authoritative piece of scholarship. His *King Leopold's Ghost* squarely withdrew the Congo Free State from its local anchorage and set it fully into the history of totalitarian abuses of the twentieth century. Nzongola concedes that the rubber atrocities do not 'technically' qualify as a genocide, but rather as a 'holocaust', equally calling for reparations.

The claims to special victim status for the Congo are extended to the remainder of the colonial period. Analysis here basically follows the archeo-marxist surveys of colonial political economy produced some forty years ago. When set against the tragedies which litter the history of the twentieth century, these claims ring rather hollow. As for cultural history under colonial rule, it is only recorded here as a traumatic experience, Africa having apparently been reduced by the colonials to the status of a *tabula rasa*. So much for the inheritance left by past generations of local and foreign 'Africanists'.

It is on this lunar background that another narrative is developed. It chronicles the exercise of power in Central Africa and forms the major contribution of this book. One would need the pen of a Guiccardini or of some Latin American novelist of dictatorships to unravel the knots of Congolese political intrigues: a world

which, behind the screen of a culture of impermanence, displays the permanence of the idea, rather than of the reality, of the state. Interestingly enough, this paradox already struck visitors to the Kongo kingdom in the eighteenth century. In the post-colonial narrative of Nzongola, some milestones emerge, such as the comet-like passing of Lumumba and his ensuing 'beatification', the 'second independence' rebellions, the ascent and fall of a dictator, all set against a background of factional mutability. Tragedy permeates this chronicle: the cruel deaths of Lumumba and Mulele were only the tips of the iceberg as political assassination, real or assumed, became a tool of government. This was also an age of brutalization. Beginning with the atrocities of the rebellions, it culminated in mass murder and genocides – this time no doubt 'technically' qualifying as such.

A third narrative, intertwined with the preceding ones, introduces the personal history of a self-conscious African 'Gramscian intellectual', caught in the backwashes of a troubled period. There are valuable evocations here of the latter days of the Mobutu regime and the entry of the Congo into the murderous dynamics of Great Lakes politics. The American connection runs through this autobiographical sketch, from the pre-independence school days in American missions of the Kasai, and later through the Africanist lobbies within US academia, leading eventually into international expertise: at the time of publication, Nzongola was serving in Nigeria as a senior technical adviser on governance.

This book thus bears testimony to the horizons of a joint African, American and African-American page in the history of the Congo. By the same token, it demonstrates solid qualities of editing which set it apart from the sloppy presentation of much French-language production on Congolese *histoire immédiate*.

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JEAN-LUC VELLUT

## GERMAN CONQUEST AND AFRICAN MERCENARIES

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703348558

*Mikono ya Damu: 'Hands of Blood': African Mercenaries and the Politics of Conflict in German East Africa, 1888–1904.* By ERICK J. MANN. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002. Pp. 335. £33 (ISBN 3-631-37614-6).

KEY WORDS: Tanzania, colonial, military, politics.

Erick Mann's work focuses more on the second part of his subtitle than on the first. As such, it fills a gap in the scholarship on the history of German East Africa. Mann provides a detailed study of the origin of the *Schutztruppe* and its soldiers as well as of German campaigns of pacification. While German colonialism in East Africa has received considerable attention from scholars such as Iliffe and Koponen and regional studies – such as those by Austen, Giblin, Feerman, Glassman and Spear – have discussed the extensive use of force by the Germans in the process of conquest, little work has been done on the *Schutztruppe* itself. As Mann notes, the force is inherently interesting in that in the beginning, the vast majority of its troops were Africans recruited from outside the colony. However, the work itself fails to live up to the whole promise of its premise. Mann has written a history of the politics, strategy and tactics of German conquest; he has failed to provide a social history of the impact of the force in German East Africa.

Mann begins with a brief discussion of the origins of German colonialism and the historiography of the impact of conquest on communities in what became German East Africa. He then gives a blow by blow description of the pacification campaigns carried out by the *Schutztruppe*. His account provides graphic detail of

the violence with which the Germans carried out their occupation. He organizes his account by region and as a result the greatest service of the book is that it demonstrates the pervasiveness of German violence in conquest. His accounts of these campaigns complement the more detailed regional studies of conquest by the authors mentioned above. He demonstrates the differing tactics adopted by German commanders toward African political leaders, temporarily co-opting some while seeking to destroy others. While Mann does discuss the different tactics adopted by African leaders, the focus of his book prevents a detailed discussion of the dynamics of African politics in the face of conquest.

The last chapter struck me as the most interesting and the one that left me wanting to know more. Mann briefly discusses the social dynamics of the *Schutztruppe* as an organization and provides some information on the relations of the troops with local communities. The Germans recruited troops initially from the Sudan (locally known as Nubians) and from Mozambique (locally known as Zulu since most were Shangaan in origin). In addition, many of the non-commissioned officers came from the forces of the Ottoman Empire. Only toward the end of the period under study did the Germans begin to recruit more *askari* from within the colony. Many of the mercenaries, as Mann calls them, settled in German East Africa after their tours of duty. Mann provides only the merest of hints of the impact of these troops and veterans within the societies of German East Africa and Tanganyika. Such a history seems to me at least as important and interesting as one of the military campaigns of the *Schutztruppe*. Part of the reason the work seems foreshortened in this respect is Mann's decision to end his study in 1904. He obviously felt that the much more broadly researched era of the Maji Maji revolt and of the German East Africa Campaign needed little additional explanation. However, such an end point for the study means that Mann missed the opportunity to explore the effects of conversion to a locally recruited force as well as the settlement of veterans in the colony.

Mann utilizes German archives and published accounts, and several mission collections. He seems to have covered all the major European sources available for his work. He does, not, however, utilize African sources very extensively. First-hand accounts by *askari* or even the victims of 'pacification' do not, for the most part, exist. However, I could envision a research project that included oral accounts of descendants of veterans that would explore the social impact of the colonial military in Tanzania.

Mann's work began life as a dissertation, and the book still shows clear signs of its origin. While Mann displays a clear grasp of the historiography of Tanzania and refers to scholarship on the history of the military in Germany and military history in colonial Africa, I felt his work would have benefited from a broader reading of the literature on colonial conquest. Likewise the work contains a number of tables that provide information on the campaigns, personnel and organization of the *Schutztruppe* that he does not fully integrate into his text. Such tables at least provide useful information for other researchers even if their presentation does not advance his arguments in the most effective manner. In short, Mann has produced a useful work, even if it leaves the reader asking for more.

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GREGORY H. MADDOX

## PLAGUE AND POLITICS IN COLONIAL SENEGAL

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703358554

*Black Death, White Medicine: Bubonic Plague and the Politics of Public Health in Colonial Senegal, 1914–1945.* By MYRON ECHENBERG. Portsmouth NH, Heinemann; Oxford: James Currey; Cape Town: David Philip, 2002. Pp. xviii + 303. £40 (ISBN 0-85255-696-9); £16.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-646-2).

KEY WORDS: Senegal, colonial, health, medicine.

Myron Echenberg has written an engaging and sophisticated history of bubonic plague in colonial Senegal. The story begins and ends in Dakar, with important plague outbreaks in 1914 and 1944 that are the central events in Part 1 and Part 3 of the book. In the middle section Echenberg examines plague ecology in the interwar years and the experience of Africans in the 'plague zone', where the epicenter was occupied by the Sereer Ndut subgroup of the Northwest Sereer. The two Dakar plague epidemics define the period studied. In 1914 Africans resisted public health policies in the streets and French countermeasures against plague were ineffective. In 1944 plague retreated rapidly after applications of the new insecticide DDT and Africans put up little resistance to public health measures, now accepted as part of colonial rule.

On one level Echenberg argues that bubonic plague was a disease associated with colonialism or globalization, like sleeping sickness in other regions of the continent. The plague bacillus, *Yersinia Pestis*, most likely entered Dakar aboard ships from abroad and then found an ecological niche where it went underground and became an endemic infection of rodents, providing a reservoir for further human outbreaks. The most likely explanation for the disappearance of bubonic plague after 1945 was the arrival of DDT with American military forces and the availability of more effective sulfa drugs and antibiotics in the postwar period. The story of epidemics, disease ecology and French medical responses forms one thread in Echenberg's analysis.

Echenberg's most successful and detailed case study is the Dakar epidemic of 1914. Archival sources, contemporary medical literature on the epidemic and the secondary literature on Senegal during World War I are utilized to create a richly textured narrative of the epidemic that includes diverse actors: French colonial authorities, Blaise Diagne and his political allies, French medical officers, plague victims and the Lebu 'crowd' in the street. African resistance in 1914 was linked to emergency public health measures such as forced removals of Africans from districts of Dakar now defined as European, the burning of houses and property in affected areas, forced vaccination campaigns and restrictions on 'native funerals'. Arguing that the plague was as much a political as a medical event, Echenberg shows that African action in the streets and in the political arena forced the French to back down from plans for rigid segregation and the use of force. The compromises that emerged in the context of world war and military recruitment gave some protection to urban Africans, with promises of compensation for lost houses and property and measures designed to transform the Medina into more than a dumping ground for unwanted Africans.

Part 2 is the least successful part, because of the disparate nature of the material presented. This includes a lengthy discussion of the Tijani community in Tivaouane that has few links with the account of plague; oral testimony from two distinct Sereer communities, the Ndut of Mont Rolland and the Siin-Siin of Niakhar district; and an account of the plague in Dakar, Rufisque and Saint Louis in the interwar period. It is unclear why Niakhar district is included, as it was not part of the endemic plague zone. Although there is poignant testimony from plague victims and analysis of Sereer funeral dirges, the chapter based on

oral testimony ends abruptly. The story of endemic plague in rural districts does not come to a clear conclusion. It is unclear whether villages in the plague zone experienced DDT dustings. The rural plague zone does not figure in the final section of the book, despite 226 rural deaths in 1943, 60 in 1944 and 42 in 1945 after the Dakar epidemic had effectively ended.

In Part 3 new technologies like DDT and American and French actors play the central role. Echenberg argues that there was little African resistance to plague control measures. In Dakar at least, coordinated dusting campaigns in the 'native' districts, themselves a legacy of the 'sanitary' segregation of Africans in the Medina after the epidemic of 1914, were an effective assault on the flea vector responsible for transmission. Echenberg is critical of the stern paternalism of American officers and the resistance of French officials to change, but in the end he argues that DDT was probably 'responsible for its [bubonic plague's] disappearance from Senegal after 1945' (p. 242).

Overall Echenberg's account of the plague is clearly written and well researched. His book is a welcome addition to studies of disease and public health in colonial Africa. It is also highly readable, with a sophisticated mixture of narrative and analysis.

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JAMES F. SEARING

## AN HISTORICAL APPROACH TO THE POLITICS OF ECOLOGY

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703368550

*Eroding the Commons: The Politics of Ecology in Baringo, Kenya 1890–1963.* By DAVID M. ANDERSON. Oxford: James Currey; Nairobi: EAEP; Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002. Pp. xvi + 336. £45 (ISBN 0-85255-469-9); £16.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-468-0).

KEY WORDS: Kenya, pre-colonial, colonial, development, environment, politics/political.

In this dense, scholarly book, David Anderson explores the complicated and often contradictory politics of African-settler-colonial government relations as the three groups struggled over the control and use of land in Baringo District, Kenya. Through the skillful integration of oral and archival sources, Anderson carefully details the social, economic and environmental shifts in the landscape from the pre-colonial period, through the drought and depression of the early 1900s, to the intensive state development interventions of the late colonial period. His point is to use history to show the 'politics of ecology', that is, how and why certain environments, such as Baringo District, become sites of political disputes, and how these political tensions in part produce ecological problems such as overgrazing, drought and famine. The book contributes to the emerging scholarship on the history of development and environment in colonial Africa.

After a brief introduction, the remainder of the book is structured chronologically. Early chapters explore the pre-colonial history of Baringo District, focusing on the shifting ethnic movements of Tugen, Maasai, Il Chamus and others across the land in the nineteenth century. Anderson also documents the creative and flexible production strategies (including an ingenious system of irrigation) used by these groups to feed, support and reproduce their households from an always uncertain and often precarious landscape. Subsequent chapters examine colonial government and settler incursions on the land in the form of land alienation for settler farms, range 'development' interventions and the creation of new



legal categories, crimes and consequences (especially 'trespass'). Two chapters focus on the complex history and politics underlying two specific government initiatives – the award of a land concession in Lembus Forest to commercial timber interests, and ensuing debates and struggles over 'native' land rights in the forest; and the ambitious but inherently misguided and disastrous Perkerra Irrigation Scheme. The conclusion revisits these chapters in terms of Anderson's arguments about the politics of ecology and the persistent tendency of both colonial and post-colonial development agents (as well as Kenyans themselves) to 'misread' history.

Throughout these chapters, Anderson contrasts what he calls 'European ideals' to 'African realities' with regard to the meanings, use and control of land, that is, what Europeans believed Africans should do with their land and what Africans were doing given the new legal, spatial, economic and political constraints on their lives and livelihoods produced by colonial policies and practices. In a useful chart (pp. 154–5), Anderson distils these differences through the lens of the Kenya Land Commission report in terms of the ideals and realities of pasture control, water management, marketing and other areas. These contradictions in ideas of land use, Anderson argues, were deeply ideological, a product of European notions of entitlement, ownership and production versus African ideas of entrustment, access and reproduction. These disparate views, in turn, shaped British development interventions and land-tenure 'reform' efforts, as well as African resistance to these initiatives.

The strengths of this work are many and varied. Anderson demonstrates in compelling detail his argument about the 'politics of ecology', and the necessity for a historical approach to unravel the complexities of ecological change. Moreover, through careful use of a remarkable array of sources, he moves beyond the broad categories of Africans, settlers and colonial administrators to show the range of overlapping and sometimes contradictory interests within each group. He deftly traces the influences and contexts shaping the sympathies and actions of specific people to create a dynamic picture of economic, political and ecological change that acknowledges the agency of all involved.

Despite its superb scholarship, the book has two weaknesses. First, in great part because of the myriad details Anderson compiles and relates, the narrative line and arguments are often obscured. Although the sometimes dizzying collection of scrupulously referenced names, events and localities are extremely useful for historians of colonial Kenya, I believe that they make the book less accessible and teachable in the broader areas of development studies and environmental history. Second, I find it somewhat astonishing that a contemporary historian of colonial Africa could write a book on development, politics and colonialism in which no African women are interviewed or even mentioned. My argument is not that Anderson should have written a very different book in which gender figured as a central category of analysis (although that would have been welcome), but that given the by now well-documented centrality of African women to cultivation, pastoralism, food processing, trade, politics, development, colonial resistance and more, their (unacknowledged) silence and absence from this book is surprising. Not only does it limit our understanding of the processes and practices he describes, but it also reinforces the very misconceptions and misreadings of colonial African history, *especially* of development and the environment, that many social historians have worked so hard to correct.

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DOROTHY L. HODGSON

## RESTORING WOMEN TO CENTRE STAGE

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703378557

*Women in African Colonial Histories*. Edited by JEAN ALLMAN, SUSAN GEIGER and NAKANYIKE MUSISI. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002. Pp. 352. No price given (ISBN 0-253-34047-0); £18.95, paperback (ISBN 0-253-21507-2).

KEY WORDS: Colonial, women.

This volume brings together a number of new studies by young scholars who focus on the experiences, perspectives and actions of African women during the colonial period. The scholarship that has emerged in the last fifteen years on gender, broadly conceived, is enormous, but it has increasingly focused less on women and more on gender relations and colonial representation. This collection seeks to bring women back on to the centre stage of colonial studies by insisting on their importance in the shaping of the colonial world, in both rural and urban areas. The collection is organized into three sections. The first, 'Encounters and engagements', comprises chapters by Gengenbach, Urban-Mead and Turriffin, exploring how and why African women interacted with European colonials as they did. For example, Gengenbach argues that African women's 'marital' involvements with European men (as seen in a case study from Mozambique) were a form of strategic engagement with the colonial world even though such women may have described their relationships in terms of 'matters of the heart'. Urban-Mead discusses the cultural choices made by several women in Botswana, a European and three local Botswana women, in the context of their exposure to each others' cultures while resident at a mission station. Turriffin explores the cultural appropriations and rejections of colonial culture by a colonially educated, Francophone West African, female midwife. Each author also uses a variety of sources to reconstruct these histories: oral narratives, colonial diaries and that rare documentary source, the autobiography. Part Two, 'Perceptions and representations', presents essays by Musisi, Hawkins, Mianda, Barnes and Jackson, all seeking to understand better how colonial representations and understandings of African women impacted the lives of African women. Musisi and Hawkins, respectively, discuss colonial efforts to define the nature of Baganda women's fertility and women's social identities in northern Ghana. Mianda analyses the impact on the *évolué* of the images generated by West African French colonials of those identified as *évolué*. For colonial Zimbabwe, Barnes and Jackson focus on colonial images of the gendered African migrant and on accounts of coerced medical examinations. Part Three, 'Power reconfigured/power contested', with chapters by Hansen, Tashjian and Allman, Bastian, Schmidt and Lyons, explores the colonial disruption of women's economic and political positions and how African women responded in what is now Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea and Zimbabwe.

Readers of this volume will find a number of real gems in each section. As a social historian, I found particularly intriguing Gengenbach's paper on cross-racial unions in Mozambique, and the contributions by Schmidt and Lyons examining the role women and gender relations played in the quotidian struggles to organize nationalist movements, in Guinea and Zimbabwe respectively. Individually and collectively, these articles represent the most recent work on African women's history in the colonial period. Each selection is solidly researched and well written. Perhaps most exciting for this reviewer is the fact that each author has also appended after his or her article a selection from one of the primary sources they used in writing their essay. This makes *Women in African Colonial Histories* especially useful in the classroom. Instructors can not only expose their students to the latest

research, but also provide a primary source that the students can use to hone their own reading and analytical skills.

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SANDRA E. GREENE

## ORIGINS OF THE ANGLOPHONE PROBLEM

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703388553

*Southern Cameroons, 1922–1961: A Constitutional History.* By VICTOR JULIUS NGOH. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001. Pp. xv + 218. £40 (ISBN 0-7546-1401-8).

KEY WORDS: Cameroon, colonial, politics/political.

Since the early 1990s, the political agenda in Cameroon has been increasingly dominated by what is referred to as ‘the Anglophone problem’. In short, the ‘problem’ for the Cameroonian government is that several Anglophone associations and pressure groups fight against the Francophone-dominated unitary state and argue for more federalism or even secession. The government has devised various strategies to minimize or even deny the existence of an Anglophone problem, to create divisions among the English-speaking elite, to reward some allies with important positions in the state apparatus previously reserved for Francophones and to repress all actions designed to change the status of the Southern Cameroons.

In his study (a revised version of a book published in 1990 in Cameroon), Victor Julius Ngoh from the University of Buea attempts to shed new light on the origin of the Anglophone Problem. Like most historians of Cameroon, he traces its genesis to World War I, when the erstwhile German Kamerun Protectorate was partitioned between the British and the French, first as mandates under the League of Nations and later as trusts under the United Nations. Ngoh focuses on the constitutional history of the British administered territory from 1946 to 1961, when the birth of the independent Federal Republic of Cameroon marked the reunification of the two territories. Although the title of the book suggests otherwise, the interwar years are treated only very loosely.

Based on hitherto-neglected archival material from the National Archives in Buea as well as on interviews with former political activists, Ngoh emphasizes the fact that Britain, without explicitly saying so, wanted its area of Cameroon ultimately to accept association with Nigeria. Although the majority of Southern Cameroonian politicians criticized the blatant neglect of their territory by the British, they first opted for regional status for the territory within Nigeria. Later they requested the territory’s attainment of independence as a separate political entity. Failing that, many, especially the traditional rulers, preferred association with Nigeria. However, because politicians could not agree on the political future, a plebiscite under UN supervision was organized. In February 1961, the majority of voters opted for reunification with French Cameroon. At the Fouban Constitutional Convention some months later, the naïve, ill-prepared and confused Southern Cameroons delegation was simply outmaneuvered in negotiations by a well prepared delegation from Yaoundé, which also benefited from the expertise of their French advisors. Contrary to expectations, the reunification did not provide for the equal partnership of both parties, but turned out to be merely a transitory phase to the total integration of the Anglophone region into a strongly centralized, Francophone-dominated unitary state under a dictator, Ahmadou Ahidjo, supported by the French.

The overall arguments and the general facts of Ngoh's story are already well known at least to specialists. However, the author adds some interesting details. For instance, he presents new evidence on the banning of the radical nationalist party, Union des Populations du Cameroun, in Southern Cameroons in 1957. He also meticulously describes the plebiscite campaign strategies of various political parties such as the Kamerun National Democratic Party and the Cameroons Peoples' National Convention. All in all, this is a solid contribution to the political history of later colonial Cameroon.

*University of Hamburg*

ANDREAS ECKERT

## INDIGENOUS AND IMPORTED THERAPIES

DOI: 10.1017/S002185370339855X

*Health, State, and Society in Kenya.* By GEORGE O. NDEGE. Rochester NY: University of Rochester Press, 2001. Pp. xvi + 224. £45; \$65 (ISBN 1-58046-099-2). KEY WORDS: Kenya, colonial, post-colonial, health.

This is an important and well-written history, with a strong sense of changing periodization, to be read in parallel with John Iliffe's *East African Doctors*. While Iliffe concentrated on the growth of a profession, Ndege considers what the profession was enabled politically and financially to provide and, if rather briefly, how indigenous therapies have continued to serve where scientific medicine has failed. His firmest data relate to the earlier twentieth century, before the Second World War.

Ndege started his research on the history of health care in colonial and post-colonial Kenya on the once-conventional assumption that he would be studying the tensions between 'the medical occupier', scientifically assured, and 'the colonised native', resistant to such alien bio-medicine. What he discovered in the archives, especially in the records of commissions of enquiry into successive epidemics, and in two dozen interviews conducted in western Kenya, mostly with herbalists and holistic healers, was a more equal history of shifting compromise. Neither Africans nor Europeans were entirely confident of their own expertise and were to varying extents ready to accept the knowledge of the other. In recent years Kenya's experience of the AIDS pandemic at a time of state failure has added its own unhappy twist to the story of how, in an age of science, African sufferers have continued to participate in their own therapy.

'Shadow-boxing' aptly describes the first three decades of the colonial era, to the mid-1920s. Sleeping sickness and bubonic plague epidemics along Lake Victoria's shores at the turn of the twentieth century associated alien rule with pestilence in many African minds. Ndege shows how the new regime's preventative strategies of enforced population movement, urban residential segregation and bacteriological examination offended African strategies of colonization, condemned urban Africans to live in conditions favourable to the spread of plague and outraged African concerns to protect their bodily fluids from sorcerous manipulation. As colonial demands for African labour climaxed in the First World War's recruitment of the Carrier Corps, one can also appreciate the growing conflict between African and colonial ideas of medically prudential segregation. Africans knew labour migration as a threat to the health of rural communities. Europeans needed African labour to move, tried to prevent it from contaminating their own urban dwellings and were initially careless of the consequences of time-expired workers returning home diseased. If one then remembers, with Ndege, the slow expansion of African access

to western education and medical qualifications, any cross-cultural therapeutic conversation had clearly got off to an unpromising start.

From the mid-1920s, nonetheless, an era of mutual accommodation began. Medical officers discovered limits to their knowledge and power, African and European lives became more entwined, Africans learned to operate a plural medical system that combined old therapies and new science. In the lean 1930s African local councils, crucially, began to fund health facilities – including, for the first time, maternity clinics – that the central state could not provide. In the same years, not coincidentally, the British Colonial Office stuck to its belief in the improving benefits of primary health measures for Africans, against the racial pessimism of the eugenicists. Economic growth and vastly improved state health provision from the mid-1940s to the mid-80s constituted a third period of Kenya's medical history, in retrospect a golden age of declining child mortality and lengthening life expectancy, especially after subjects became citizens in 1963. Sadly, state failure and external neo-liberal development prescriptions have ushered in a fourth era, since the mid-1980s, when the retreat of biomedicine has obliged Kenyans, faced now with the AIDS pandemic, to look once again to their indigenous therapies. In some respects Kenyans today find themselves in a situation grimly similar to that faced by their forebears a century ago.

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JOHN LONSDALE

## ORIGINS OF A DICTATORSHIP

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703408554

*Revolt of the Ministers: The Malawi Cabinet Crisis 1964–1965*. By COLIN BAKER.

London: I. B. Tauris, 2001. Pp. xiv + 370. £45; \$69.50 (ISBN 1-86064-642-5).

KEY WORDS: Malawi, decolonization, politics, post-colonial.

In September 1993, a conference was held at the University of York on the 1964 Malawi cabinet crisis. Its origins were Jack Mapanje's presence at York as research fellow, following his release from detention, and our joint attendance at the memorial service for Orton Chirwa in St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh. There we met ex-federal MP Wellington Manoah Chirwa, whom we had both assumed was long dead. Participants at the conference included Aleke Banda, Colin Cameron, Vera Chirwa, Willie Chokani and his wife Grace, Kanyama Chiume and David Rubadiri, along with historians, former missionaries and other activists. Regrettably, Colin Baker was not invited to attend. It was a bad mistake not to have realized that his administrative and constitutional interests extended beyond Malawi's independence in 1964.

Baker's latest book is a sequel to his studies, in rapid succession, of the Nyasaland state of emergency and of the governorships of Sir Robert Armitage and Sir Glyn Jones (all published by I. B. Tauris).<sup>1</sup> It is unlikely that the politics of this period, including the present, exhaustive account of the cabinet crisis that followed Malawi's independence in July 1964, will ever be examined in greater detail. Baker has tracked down an extraordinary range of sources, including minutes of the key cabinet meetings, correspondence including the Kuchawe manifesto, minutes of telephone calls and even details of the secret operation to smuggle Henry Chipembere out of Malawi in April 1965, including the special

<sup>1</sup> *State of Emergency: Crisis in Central Africa, the Nyasaland State of Emergency, 1959–1960* (1997), *Retreat from Empire: Sir Robert Armitage in London and Cyprus* (1998) and *A Proconsul in Africa: the Life of Sir Glyn Jones* (2000).

branch manoeuvres to extract from Andrew Ross copies of his correspondence with Chip.

In a long book devoted, for the most part, to the events of a few weeks, Baker seems at times to have slowed history down to the pace at which it actually occurred. Each exchange between the main actors is examined for what may or may not have been intended and what may or may not have been the effect, with a good deal of resort to 'possibly' and 'perhaps' and other in-determiners. This establishes, however, with great vividness, the uncertainties and gross contradictions in virtually everybody's behaviour, so that no one emerges as a hero. The final chapter, narrated at normal historical speed, gives the main outlines of an interpretation. The issues at stake – new detention measures, relations with South Africa and Portugal, the question of Chinese aid, the 'tickey' charge for hospital treatment – are what had always been assumed, against the background of a larger struggle about cabinet responsibility and prime ministerial power.

Yet everything Banda did was strictly constitutional, much of it following colonial precedents reinforced by Glyn Jones's advice representing the queen. Most of what the rebel ministers did was naive and counter-productive, mishandling their undoubtedly strong case as they applied the politics of anti-colonial protest (confrontations, walk-outs, press-conferences, ultimatums) to the post-colonial vacuum. The results were a thirty-year dictatorship, probably made worse by Banda's memories of the type of opposition he had successfully overcome.

At the York conference, there were two highlights. First was a contribution by Grace Chokani who described visiting the scene of Dunduzu Chisisa's fatal car crash the morning after it happened in September 1962. She phoned her husband who was on a trip abroad, warning it could not possibly have been an accident. Whether her assessment was right or wrong is less important than the joint reaction of the ministers – that nothing should be done to call Dr Banda to account until after independence had been won. This is entirely consistent with Baker's version, but at York it dramatized something further, namely, the extent to which the rebel ministers were themselves complicit in the political methods to which they eventually fell victim.

The second was Aleke Banda's good-humoured assessment. He described how he had been resented as the baby at the party, appearing from nowhere and promoted far too soon to be chairman of the MCP. But the ministers had fatally under-estimated the role of the party, the women's league and league of Malawi youth. The issues raised, the 'tickey', the foreign policy options, were never, he said, discussed at party level. It was only after the cabinet confrontations, in the disastrous Kuchawe memorandum (?) that complaints about Aleke Banda were first included in the ministers' demands. 'But', he concluded, 'when you attacked me I was chairman of the Malawi Congress Party'. Willie Chokani shouted 'Aleke!' and burst into applause.

A further perspective is provided by the Banda–Nkrumah correspondence (see the *Times Literary Supplement* for 17 August 2001). What Banda describes as his 'Ghana methods', and his horror at the attempts on Nkrumah's life, surely throw light on Banda's reaction to opposition. I have no sympathy for Banda. But the game that all these actors were engaged in – those colonial tea parties with the gloves suddenly removed – was a bloody one with real corpses. One of the shocks in reading Baker's account is the degree of violence invoked by every actor at each stage. As for the British government, which backed Banda consistently, the Zomba parliament with its Westminster-style choreography remained as the physical symbol of its pusillanimity.

For the real betrayal was at the level of the kind of politics on offer. Glyn Jones, negotiating the transfer, was a devotee of the Tory art of the possible. There are

moments in this book when Baker all-but-protests – it was ‘surprising’, he says, it was ‘remarkable’ that this or that initiative was promoted. But Banda’s bloody dictatorship was in the end Britain’s constitutional legacy, and the consequences for Malawi’s brightest and best – charted most vividly in Jack Mapanje’s poetry – were tragic. The one thing absent from this otherwise definitive account is a sense of how it felt from the inside to inherit this sad history.

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LANDEG WHITE

## LIBERALISM AND COMMUNITARIANISM

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703418550

*Black Political Thought in the Making of South African Democracy.* By C. R. D. HALISI. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999. Pp. xxi + 192. £22.95 (ISBN 0-253-33589-2).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, democracy, intellectual, nationalism, politics/political, popular culture.

In August 1976 C. R. D. Halisi arrived in South Africa to conduct research on black political thought. He tells us that he spent his first evening in South Africa in a shebeen in Soweto, where – amidst the turmoil of the student-led ‘revolt’ – he was party to intense political discussions on political movements and thought. It soon became clear to him, he writes, that ‘there was a popular, deeply entrenched tradition of black political thought’. Halisi sees this as a variant of the broader phenomenon of African nationalism. Influenced by a series of scholars of Africa, including especially Peter Ekeh and Richard Sklar (who supervised Halisi’s UCLA thesis), Halisi seeks to understand the complexities, nuances and tensions *within* African nationalism in South Africa, as elements of an individualist liberalism were woven together with elements of a communitarian, ‘black republicanism’.

Halisi points to the importance of examining how the enduring core of African nationalism in South Africa resulted from the fusion of liberalism, entrenched within influential sections of the black political elite, and a more race-conscious communitarianism. ‘Where segregation has persisted’, he suggests, ‘the major challenge of liberal citizenship is to foster political institutions that reflect the diversity of civil society while remaining true to the principle of legal equality. Concurrently, the republican dimension of citizenship has involved the appropriation of sentiments associated with communal life in order to provide the struggle for citizenship an emotional context’ (p. 112). In his conclusion, he reiterates that ‘the challenge is often to make nonracial citizenship a popular identity’ (p. 133).

For most of the book, Halisi sees this emotional communitarianism as nostalgia: ‘the memory of communal life’ and the shared experience of alienation from the land provided the foundation for a ‘black republican identity’ (pp. 19–21). The Black Consciousness movement (‘BCM’) of the early 1970s recast the emotional foundations of black republicanism. ‘Moving far beyond a mere celebration of racial pride, the BCM proposed a new foundation for the republican theory of citizenship: racial domination, rather than African tradition, provided the basis for a sense of peoplehood and national solidarity’ (p. 114). The fusion of liberal and communitarian concerns was taken furthest in the work of Steve Biko, the Black Consciousness leader killed in police custody in 1977. Halisi terms this the ‘black republican synthesis’.

In this short book Halisi offers a series of shrewd observations. For decades, the black proponents of the liberal goal of multi-racial union struggled to build a mass movement in the face of what Halisi calls the racial populism of their more



race-oriented rivals. 'The populist goal of Black Consciousness thinkers was to articulate popular sentiments which serve to unify intellectuals and the masses' (p. 126). This extended to a populist – rather than Marxist – criticism of capitalism. In his conclusion, Halisi considers some of the implications for post-apartheid South Africa. How can governments balance 'non-racial and race-conscious political sensibilities'?

Unfortunately, Halisi's book does not fulfil its promise. In practice it does not take us far beyond Gail Gerhart's *Black Power in South Africa* (1978). Both books cover much the same ground, both really concluding in the 1970s (leading one to wonder how long Halisi's book took to be written and published). Crucially, Halisi offers no analysis of the 'emotional context' of popular political culture. Popular political culture remains one of the major neglected topics of South African studies. Nor does Halisi offer a critical analysis of Biko's thought. Biko, after all, sought to transform and not just reflect black political culture. In opposing racial essentialism, Biko might well have been out-of-line with popular political culture. What was the popular appeal of – and support base for – the Black Consciousness movement, relative to the bantustan political leaderships, trade unions or even multiracial liberalism? In a short conclusion, Halisi reflects on post-apartheid politics, but he does not try to explain how and why the African National Congress was so successful in securing a near-monopoly of political loyalty among black South Africans in the 1980s and 1990s, nor why 'populist' organizations such as the Pan-Africanist Congress and the Azanian People's Organization have remained so extraordinarily unpopular.

The book is organized around the concepts of 'citizenship' and 'republicanism', but neither appear to have been fully thought through. It is far from clear why the concept of republicanism is appropriate. Liberalism is clearly the frame of reference for important strands in nationalist thought, as Halisi (and many others) recognize. But why describe the non-liberal alternative as 'republican'? The race-conscious strands in black political thought might share with republicanism a concern with collective political identities. But not all group-based or communitarian thought is republican. Republicanism requires also an emphasis on equality and democracy. Halisi *assumes* but does not demonstrate that the communitarian elements of African nationalism are egalitarian and democratic. Neither opposition to apartheid, nor nationalism, nor communitarianism, nor even a rhetorical or even genuine concern with the 'people', is inherently egalitarian or democratic. A fuller discussion of the meaning of republicanism would have added greatly to the appeal of the argument. Similarly, a more critical engagement with the concept of citizenship would have been valuable here.

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JEREMY SEEKINGS

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE STATE IN ZIMBABWE

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703428557

*Democracy in Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Liberalisation.* By ALFRED NHEMA. Harare: University of Zimbabwe Press, 2002. Pp. 205. No price given, paperback (ISBN 0-908307-93-4).

KEY WORDS: Zimbabwe, colonial, post-colonial, civil society, democracy, politics/political, state.

Nhema's book claims to be the first study to examine the development of civil society in Zimbabwe 'over time', and to provide an in-depth exploration of 'a State-constructed order dating back to the settler era, based on control,

manipulation and co-optation of civil society' (p. 3). The survey of civil society covers several groups including business, labour, students, women, human rights, professional associations, religious organizations and selected indigenous NGOs. The main sources used are secondary material, newspapers and interviews. The major analytical tool deployed by Nhema to understand such state–civic relations is the state corporatist model whose strength, the author argues, is its capacity to 'provide a framework for theorising about an arrangement in which the state seeks to organise civil society along officially sanctioned paths' (p. 6).

The book is divided as follows. After the theoretical chapter, there are two chapters on state–civil society relations during the settler-colonial period, two further chapters on the post-colonial period focusing on the 1980s and 1990s respectively and a concluding discussion. Overall the central chapters provide a cursory examination of African civil society over the last century, outlining its broad features, and seeking to establish the continuities of state control and manipulation. The result of such controls was the failure of different forms of the state over the last century to 'develop a capitalist pluralistic society with non-ascriptive characteristics' (p. 157). For black civil society in particular, the combination of exclusionary policies in the settler-colonial period, and the co-optive policies of the independent government, resulted in the failure to provide 'a firm basis for the aggregation of private interests' (p. 157).

Despite its grand claim to provide a major study of Zimbabwean civil society, the book falls far short of its objectives. The historical analysis of civil society is based on existing secondary literature, with the author having done no archival work of his own. The result is a repeat of existing views on the subject, with no substantive original insights into the development of civic society in the colonial period. Much more interesting work is now available on the development of urban civil society in Zimbabwe, mapping out the terrain of civic politics in the major cities, as well as drawing out the relationships between such politics and rural protest. These studies reveal a complex range of civic politics around race, nation, ethnicity, women, housing, self-help groups, 'domesticity', labour, international influences and other issues. This new research has opened up much more interesting questions about African civil society in Zimbabwe. Against such work Nhema's historical picture of the subject looks positively anaemic.

Nhema's description and analysis of the development of civic groups in the post-independence period provides little improvement on his settler-colonial chapters. The case studies are based largely on limited newspaper reports and isolated interviews, with little data from the organizations themselves, resulting in a series of impressionistic portraits of the groups concerned. Moreover there is little sense of the differential importance of particular civic groups because of their organizational structure, their capacity to articulate broader national concerns and their ability, thereby, to create the conditions for a challenge to ruling party politics. All the reader gets is a broad catalogue of civic activities, and the general explanation that the rise of civil society in Zimbabwe in the 1990s resulted from the breakdown of corporatism under economic strain. The state corporatist model utilized by Nhema proves to be largely functionalist, telling us as little about the post-colonial state, as it does about civil society.

Finally, Nhema's book ends on a bold and somewhat Panglossian note. He writes that as liberalization proceeds, 'corporatist structures will gradually disintegrate, thereby paving the way for the emergence of a political system that gives greater latitude and autonomy to civil society groups' (p. 169). Moreover, says the author, as liberalization persists and becomes entrenched in society, 'democratisation and democracy would be the end and sustainable result of that transformation' (p. 169). Given the developments in Zimbabwe since 2000, the kindest

thing that can be said about this prediction is that the author underestimated the destructive effects of neo-liberalism, and the potential for the kind of revived authoritarian nationalism, that has brought Mugabe world attention.

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## MULTIPLE WARS, MULTIPLE CAUSES

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703438553

*The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars.* By DOUGLAS H. JOHNSON. Oxford: James Currey; Kampala: Fountain; Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003. Pp. xx + 234. £40 (ISBN 0-85255-392-7); £12.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-392-7).

KEY WORDS: Sudan, civil wars, colonial, post-colonial, politics/political.

The plural of the title is sadly significant. Johnson's introduction points out that much of the writing on conflict in the Sudan (not a little of which has taken the form of self-justificatory statements by various actors) has recurred to a sterile debate, between those who identify 'the war' as the continuation of a long pattern of 'northern' oppression and those who attribute the conflict to the baleful consequences of British colonial policies which encouraged racial and ethnic tensions. The real value of this book is that it rises above this, partly by the remarkable breadth and depth of knowledge on which the author calls, but more importantly by its consideration of the multiplicity of the current conflicts. It combines an historical survey of the grand 'north-south' conflict with a consideration of the ways in which development policies, the manipulation of ethnic rivalries and the operations of the aid community have combined with the inherent dangers of living in a difficult neighbourhood to produce decades of violence and suffering, which have afflicted extensive areas of 'the north' as well as the southern Sudan. The current violence is *not* simply a continuation of the 'first civil war' of 1955-72, for it involves new elements, and affects new areas. Johnson's brisk summary of the effects in the north of the expansion of mechanized farming, financed by Islamic banks, is particularly striking; and his description of the effective collusion of some development agencies in schemes which use refugees as cheap labour is deeply alarming. As Johnson perceptively explains, water and oil have become major resource issues in the south, but land drives the conflicts in the north.

Johnson's 'root causes', then, are by no means all long-standing. But he does identify one enduring problem: the extractive nature of centralizing states, which he sees as characteristic of the Sudan even before the Turco-Egyptian period. Johnson argues that the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium maintained this tradition, privileging the riverain north at the expense of the rest of this vast territory. For him uneven development, rather than the British obsession with 'Native Administration' and racial categories, laid the basis for conflict. Indeed, Johnson is decidedly keen on the legacy of Native Administration, which he sees as offering the basis for the most successful forms of participatory government in some of the areas now beyond government control. This argument runs counter to a considerable body of received wisdom; many will find more readily acceptable his suggestion that the rapid British scuttle in the early 1950s allowed the state to fall into the hands of a particularly narrow elite, which upheld with enthusiasm the exclusive, extractive, nature of the state.

Distinctive as it is, this book does share some of the characteristics of the genre. There is the familiar, gloomy, catalogue of names of ephemeral political factions, and of murdered or suborned southern leaders. Where others have used books to

score points off rival politicians, Johnson uses his footnotes (which are sensibly kept to a minimum) to tick off other scholars, or to reprove journalists. And for those who like their academic literature piously non-partisan, this book may be something of a challenge. Johnson is pithily condemnatory of much of the political and military leadership of the multiple movements which have claimed to represent the south, but the reader will have little difficulty in identifying where his sympathies lie, and his suspicion of the political elite of the north lies behind one significant lacuna. While it does escape the simple focus on the north–south conflict, anyone trying to understand the complex political manoeuvrings and conflicts between the Islamists, the army and the sectarian parties will derive little from this book. While a useful corrective to the bizarre (but still extant) notion that Sadiq el-Mahdi might somehow be committed to liberal secularism, the implication that all the northern political parties are pretty much all the same, and that their fractious jostling for power has led them ever further into an exclusive and intolerant Islamism, understates the significance of debate and conflict in the riverain core of the north.

Events inevitably tend to move ahead of publishing, but this book does briefly cover the recent ‘Machakos Accord’. Johnson is distinctly cautious on this (as will be any reader who has followed his discussion of the effects of international interventions in the Sudan over the years). Self-determination, he suggests, has vexed and divided southern opinion for decades, and governments have repeatedly followed the uncourageous example of the departing British in wriggling out of promised referenda on the subject. Johnson himself is a little ambiguous on the subject, but his argument would seem to be that while secession for the south would not end conflict, and would create its own problems, it is only the possibility that the south might secede which will impel the northern political elite to deal seriously with the wider grievances of southerners and the marginal groups of the north. The right to self-determination, he implies, is essential to any peace agreement; even if secession would be undesirable. That may be a difficult line to sell, to any of the sides in these multiple wars.

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## CHANGES IN ETHIOPIA AND IN ITS HISTORIOGRAPHY

DOI: 10.1017/S002185370344855X

*Remapping Ethiopia: Socialism and After*. Edited by WENDY JAMES, DONALD L. DONHAM, EISEI KURIMOTO and ALESSANDRO TRIULZI. Oxford: James Currey; Athens: Ohio University Press; Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2002. Pp. xiii + 306. £14.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-455-9).

KEY WORDS: Ethiopia, post-colonial, politics/political, regional, social.

In 1986 Donham and James edited *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia: Essays in History and Social Anthropology* (same publishers), now reissued alongside *Remapping Ethiopia*. In a number of ways *Southern Marches* was seminal, pointing to new directions in Ethiopianist historiography and to the complementary centrality of history and anthropology to the understanding of Ethiopia's cultures. *Southern Marches*, by examining Ethiopia's marginalized subject peoples, explored the basic core–periphery relationship between the northern centre and the south.

*Remapping Ethiopia* is intended to promote further discussion of themes developed in the earlier work although broadening and extending that discourse

considerably. The sixteen contributors (most of them new in this volume) add much. Further, this work differs from that of the earlier volume in new and constructive ways. The editors intended an update of societies examined in the earlier work (although that goal was largely unfulfilled) by reviewing what has happened in and to those societies during the period of the Derg (socialist military government, 1974–92) and under the current government. Case studies by a new generation of scholars (Tadesse Wolde on the Hor, Alexander Naty on the Aari, Tadesse Berisso on the Guji Oromo, Hiroshi Matsuda on the Muguji, Ren'ya Sato on the Majangir, Elizabeth Watson on the Konso and Eisei Kurimoto on the Anywaa), not in the earlier work, considerably augment our knowledge about the multiplicity of peoples in southern Ethiopia and tie in nicely with themes developed previously.

Additionally the editors reassess and reshape their usage of the centre–periphery paradigm that in the earlier work was defined primarily geographically. That older reference remains except that, since the publication of *Southern Marches*, Ethiopia's political boundaries, both regional and local, have been reconfigured several times, creating new dynamics in centre–periphery relations. Derg programmes and policies engendered a state that was more centralized in many ways than any other that had existed in Ethiopian history; policies of the current government stress regional autonomy and decision-making and define territory ethnically, thus creating new potential centres of political and economic power. Overarching all of this is the impact of globalization on Ethiopia and its various constituencies as missionaries and tourists reach even the remotest peoples. Government-sponsored programmes such as the student *zemecha* (campaign), villagization, collectivization and military service have politicized groups and provided opportunities for new leadership to emerge. As Jon Abbinck points out in his study of the Suri (Surma), ethnic studies of people based on geographic boundaries may be less relevant to understanding Ethiopia today than 'the flow and exchange of commodities, images and persons' among and within these societies (p. 171).

Contributors to *Remapping Ethiopia* no longer see centre–periphery relations strictly in north–south terms. Chapters by Ahmed Hassan Omer on Northern Shewa, Jenny Hammond on Tigray and Cressida Marcus on Gondar shed new light on these regions as peripheries (current and/or historic). Alula Pankhurst explores the experience of northerners resettled to the south in Wellegga under the Derg who suddenly find themselves 'peripheral' and isolated as a consequence of their move. Lastly, Wendy James offers an interesting perspective on the centre–periphery discussion by examining peoples along Ethiopia's western frontier, straddling an international boundary that is also a periphery, but one not unaffected by international diplomacy and intrigue.

Christopher Clapham sets the scene with an essential introductory historical essay. In any edited work of this type, there is often some unsettling unevenness and disconnection in the contributions (and that is true in this work as well), but Donald Donham ties the various authors together masterfully as he did in the earlier volume. Alessandro Triulzi concludes the work with an overview of recent Ethiopianist historiography, praising the fact that the voices of previously unheard Ethiopian peoples are now being represented, but decrying the fact that so much of the 'history' has been highly politicized. He pleads for scholars to remain true to their professional integrity. In the end the line between perception and reality, between truth and propaganda can be a precarious one. All in all the editors are to be commended for their work in bringing these essays together. Serious scholars will find much to challenge them and to ponder.

## 'LUSOPHONE AFRICA' AFTER 1975?

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703458556

*A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa.* By PATRICK CHABAL with DAVID BIRMINGHAM, JOSHUA FORREST, MALYN NEWITT, GERHARD SEIBERT and ELISA SILVA ANDRADE. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002. Pp. xx + 339. £40 (ISBN 1-85065-594-4); £14.95, paperback (ISBN 0-253-21565-X).

KEY WORDS: Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, post-colonial, economic, politics/political.

This is an ambitious and unusual book. Ambitious because it bills itself as the first comprehensive and comparative history of five African nations: Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe for the period 1975 to 2000, and unusual because it has a split format, six authors and a compiler. Patrick Chabal is the convenor and author of the overview interpretative essays that comprise Part I: end of empire, construction of the nation-state and limits of nationhood (pp. 3–134). Part II combines five historical essays: David Birmingham on Angola, Malyn Newitt on Mozambique, Joshua Forrest on Guinea-Bissau, Elisa Silva Andrade on Cape Verde and Gerhard Seibert on São Tomé and Príncipe (pp. 137–315). The bibliography by Caroline Shaw includes 'general works', followed by country listings with sub-headings for selected literature and literary criticism (pp. 316–39). The book has one completely inadequate map.

Chabal presents the book as comprehensive, comparative and iconoclastic, and suggests that chapters are designed to stand on their own and can be read separately, but that the point is to read them all together (p. xix). The book is indeed comprehensive, but it is hardly iconoclastic, and is certainly much better read in parts than as a whole. Part I is much less successful than Part II. First, Chabal's decision to address each major set of questions, country by country for all five quite diverse countries, produces a narrative that is exasperatingly choppy and repetitive. Second Chabal does not make the case for analysis of the post-1975 history of these very diverse countries in a single comparative perspective. His strategy and goals are unclear.

Are these simply case studies for the body of theory Chabal has developed over a generation of scholarship on contemporary Africa? Does he intend each nation as an example of some political configuration related to his sub-headings? Does he want us to consider the resonance among five countries who shared both the experiences of Portuguese colonization and the forging of independence in light of the pitfalls and successes of the first generation of newly independent African nations? Chabal admits that there is little to connect these countries except a long colonial heritage (p. xvii) but goes on to argue that 'the legacy of the Portuguese presence left an indelible if at times elusive mark on ... their African Empire. The difficulty lies ... in assessing how significant [it is] to an understanding of [their] present condition' (p. xviii). Portugal's substantive colonial presence in all but the island nations dates from their late nineteenth-century military conquest – 'pacification' is a patronizing euphemism. Portuguese presence was notoriously uneven, and its most intrusive phase occurred only when other colonial powers had begun to dismantle their pitch. The essays in Part II suggest that on the whole Portugal's mark was more elusive than indelible.

Although the island nations have few options but to nurture Lusophone links, why should the other nations bother with Portugal? Portuguese language is the obvious reproduced link among these disparate countries, but Chabal says little about the politics of language and Portugal's aggressive efforts in language and education to sustain its gatekeeping aspirations in Africa. Newitt points out, for

example, that the creation of a Commission of Nations with Portuguese as their Official Language (CPLP) was Portugal's response to Mozambique's membership in the Commonwealth (p. 234). The French and English languages have broadly enhanced the ability of states in the former Francophone and Anglophone areas to re-invent links with neighbours and regions as well as the former metropole. Portuguese, however, continues to isolate African speakers from their neighbours, while courting elites with higher education. Have Portuguese language links served simply to comfort, and sustain prestige markers for the national elites? Are Lusophone connections like CPLP simply resources elites keep in play, or should the very term Lusophone Africa be discarded?

The country study authors, all well-respected writers in their fields, approach their essays quite differently. Birmingham (whose name is misspelled on the cover and whose footnotes have gone missing!) moves easily from intimate anecdotes and character portraits to sharp analysis of Angola's key political and strategic interfaces in the region. His powerful and crisp essay delivers a devastating, but sadly convincing critique of Angola's political leadership. Malyn Newitt brings his signature clarity and mastery of sources to the essay on Mozambique; organizing it by political and economic transitions with explicit attention to key academic and political debates. He keeps Mozambican, European and Southern African interests in sustained articulation. In his balanced treatment, Frelimo emerges as a cat with at least nine lives. Without neglecting the economy, Joshua Forrest favors a political view for Guinea. Despite his faith in ever-elusive 'well-institutionalized bureaucracies', and 'rules-based political culture', his portrait of creative and rigorous local Guinean political arrangements leads one to hope Guineans keep will keep all bureaucrats at bay! Without neglecting politics, Elisa Silva Andrade places greater emphasis on economic and social development policies in Cape Verde since 1975. She incorporates a great deal of primary data, but some of it could have been more effectively presented in graphs. Gerhard Seibert's essay draws out the essence of small town parochialism to inform a careful engagement of the culture of politics in São Tomé and Príncipe. His closing comment, 'While the introduction of democracy has not reduced the prevalence of corruption, freedom of speech and democratic institutions have at least made corruption an issue of public debate and inquiry' (p. 314) resonates with the other essays. Good maps would have greatly enhanced all these chapters.

Although Caroline Shaw includes a broad range of sources in the bibliography, she does not state the criteria for its structure or content. Not all the sources mentioned in the essays are included, and the separate sections on literature and literary criticism seem inappropriate and disconnected. Only David Birmingham even mentions literature, and virtually all the literature cited is in Portuguese rather than the English translation. Finally, three separate sections of literary criticism seem a bit much when each includes only one title: Chabal's *Postcolonial Literature of Lusophone Africa*.

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## ADRIAN HASTINGS AND AFRICAN CHRISTIANITY

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*Christianity and the African Imagination: Essays in Honour of Adrian Hastings.*

Edited by DAVID MAXWELL with INGRID LAWRIE. Leiden: Brill, 2002. Pp. xii + 421. \$87 (ISBN 90-04-11668-0).

KEY WORDS: Christianity, colonial, post-colonial, missions.

English Catholic, radical priest, political journalist and inquiring scholar, Adrian Hastings maintained an outsider's critical appreciation towards everything that he did. While he aspired to be a Catholic priest from an early age, he resolved not to be just any priest, but a European priest serving an African bishop and church. He got his wish in 1958, but he was soon transferred to a seminary, where his superiors became suspicious of his influence and moved him to Tanzania and then Zambia to serve as an editor and writer.

Hastings wrote incessantly from early in his career. Before he even went to Africa, he had written the prescient *The Church and the Nations* (1958). In Africa, he authored a profusion of books, pamphlets and articles on mission, theology, African culture and the church, including the influential *Church and Mission in Africa* (1967). He also began ecumenical work, writing a critique of *Christian Marriage in Africa* (1973) for the Anglican bishops, after which he took up a tutorship at Selly Oak.

His formal break with the Catholic Church came soon thereafter, whereupon he turned to an increasingly distinguished academic career as a religious historian at SOAS, Aberdeen, Leeds and Harare. During this time, he produced a path-breaking series of studies of the development of African Christianity in and outside the mission churches, including *A History of African Christianity, 1950–1975* (1979), *African Catholicism* (1989) and the magnificent *The Church in Africa, 1450–1950* (1994), pausing along the way to write an equally influential *History of English Christianity, 1920–1985* (1986), edit encyclopedic volumes on *A World History of Christianity* (1999) and *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (2000) and edit the *Journal of Religion in Africa*.

Yet, there was more. Hastings was also a prolific political journalist, and he remained obsessed with European racism throughout his life. His most popular work was his exposé of the Portuguese massacre at *Wiriyamu* (1974), but he also published hundreds of books, articles and letters on African, Irish and Balkan politics, culminating in his influential political study, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Regionalism, and Nationalism* (1997). Hastings's bibliography extends to 40 pages and includes 22 books, 9 edited collections, 15 booklets, 157 encyclopedia entries (from Abhisiktananda to Zara Ya'iqob), hundreds of newspaper columns and countless letters to the editor.

Hastings died on 30 May 2001 just as this *festschrift* went to press. Assembling such a work must have been a daunting task, given Hastings's disarming array of interests and talents. It opens with an introduction by David Maxwell focusing on Hastings's enduring concern with the development of the African church, popular Christianity outside the church and the African catechists, evangelists and teachers responsible for interpreting and appropriating the faith. And it closes with a insightful intellectual biography and a comprehensive bibliography of Hastings's life and works by his longtime editorial assistant, Ingrid Lawrie.

In between, a *Who's Who* of distinguished religious historians share Hastings's concern with the social history of African Christianity. Richard Gray opens with the story of a Kongolese delegation to Rome in 1608 to seek papal recognition of Kongo as an independent diocese and Catholic kingdom in an early quest for legitimacy by African Christians. Andrew Walls follows with a discussion of

Bishop Crowder's approach to Islam as a comparable faith, *contra* prevailing European prejudices and fears of Islamic adaptability and advance.

Taking up the history of mission, John Waliggo studies the growth of the Catholic Church in Buganda. Awarded Buddu after the 'Christian Revolution', Catholic chiefs converted the populace, while priests mimicked royal compounds and surrounded themselves with chiefs and catechists. Ganda Catholics fused Ganda devotion for the Queen Mother, veneration of ancestral spirits, use of charms to guard against evil and quest for stately vocations with Marian devotion, veneration of saints, use of religious medals, rosaries and holy water to ward off evil and pursuit of religious vocations. Just as the state became Catholic, Catholicism became the state religion.

Terence Ranger then reprises his earlier work on Makoni to trace the trajectory of conversion. Comparing Catholic, Anglican and Methodist missions, Ranger shows how African agents were critical to the missionaries' early success through adoption of popular folk variants that accorded with African expectations. But as missionaries sought to rationalize belief in the 1920s and 1930s, African prophets took over where the missionaries left off to revive the church and complete the task of conversion.

Similarly, Matthew Schoffeleers shows how economic prosperity brought by cotton production initially encouraged the spread of mission churches and schools, while a subsequent shift to migrant labor disadvantaged women and led to the spread of Apostolic churches as the functional equivalents of earlier possession movements that addressed women's concerns. Subsequently, modern development projects fostered the development of a neo-traditionalist ancestor cult among disadvantaged elders.

Finally, John Lonsdale traces in fine detail the 'long conversation' between Christian and African cosmologies in the creation of multiple Kikuyu Christianities reflecting divergent religious strategies, knowledges and politics. Citing the vigor of African moral discourse, Lonsdale analyzes how Africans passed through successive stages of rebellion, reconciliation, revival and reproof in defining their faiths.

John Peel then shifts to politics to probe 'the embarrassment of African nationalism at its Christian roots' through a subtle and insightful analysis of Soyinka's fictional memoir, *Ísarà*. Kevin Ward follows with an analysis of the ambiguities of martyrdom in Mwanga's Buganda and Amin's Uganda, revealing the complex interplay of political and ethnic factors in religious politics. And Samuel Gyanfosu introduces the intriguing case of a politicized traditionalist movement in Ghana, led by a former Catholic priest and academic, that seemingly owed less to traditional or Christian beliefs than to American Afro-centricity.

In closing, David Maxwell explores the profusion of Pentecostal movements now flooding Africa and demonstrates how earlier Apostolic faiths were revived in the 1990s by new 'born again' preachers who drew on American models but were African in their leadership and organization and critique of mission churches and neo-colonial dependency.

In conclusion, this collection reflects new scholarly concerns with the rise of African Christianity *within* mission churches as well as outside them as its careful studies of mission, conversion and popular belief continue to expand our understandings of the vitality of Christianity in Africa.

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THOMAS SPEAR

## ESTABLISHING POWER IN LIGHTLY POPULATED TERRITORIES

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703478559

*States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control.* By JEFFREY HERBST. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000. Pp. x + 280. \$55; £35 (ISBN 0-691-01027-7); \$17.95; £11.50, paperback (ISBN 0-691-01028-5).

KEY WORDS: Pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial, international relations, state, currencies.

This book is intended primarily as a contribution to ‘historically grounded comparative politics’ (p. 4): to ‘de-exoticizing’ Africa in political science, by establishing sub-Saharan experiences among those routinely examined by theoreticians of the state. Considering the enormity of its subject, it is rather short – 257 pages of text and footnotes, tables, maps and diagrams – and reads as an extended pursuit of a single intuition. This is that the comparative spareness of population in most times and places in sub-Saharan Africa has mattered, and continues to matter. The principle is familiar to Africanists in various contexts, political, economic and social, as we have heard from Jack Goody, Hopkins, Iliffe and others. Herbst develops it in relation to the creation and consolidation of states over several centuries.

Following an initial chapter which introduces the thesis, chapters 2–4 consider the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods respectively. Herbst notes that pre-colonial states tended to adapt to the difficulty of extending monopolies of force over thinly settled expanses by seeking authority over populations rather than land. Hence sovereignties overlapped and, crucially, states did not fight each other over every hectare, unlike in Europe. This muted the military imperative for the further expansion of state claims – fiscal, monetary, judicial – and allowed weak states (and stateless societies) to survive. At the Berlin Conference of 1884–5 the European imperialists agreed not to quarrel over territory. They thereby allowed each other the luxury of not having to establish effective central control over peripheral districts. The crucial innovation of Berlin was the agreement of borders fixed in space and time. This consecrated the capacity of weak states to endure, but at the price of creating a fictional claim to authority throughout their nominal space. Herbst suggests that the endorsement of the colonial borders by the new post-colonial governments at Addis Ababa, perpetuating that fiction, was critical to the ‘pathologies’ of post-colonial states. Because control of the capital was sufficient for international recognition, governments could privilege the urban population at the expense of the rural, without necessarily maintaining control over the provinces. In the worst cases, the result was both national economic decline and rural disaffection and even revolt, producing ‘failed states’ which yet retained international recognition as the sole legal authorities – over areas they did not control. In these chapters Herbst shows very effectively that the problems of state consolidation in the post-colonial decades have to be understood in a much longer perspective. The argument would be more rigorous, however, if more space was given to examining whether the deviations from his overall picture, notably such a relatively strong pre-colonial state as Ethiopia, is indeed an exception that ‘proves the rule’, or one that falsifies it. Relatedly, Herbst formally omits South Africa from his analysis; yet invokes South African examples when it suits the argument. More systematic treatment of the ‘peripheries’ of Herbst’s own study area would enable the reader to judge how effectively his intellectual authority is consolidated.

Four further chapters consider particular issues in more depth, primarily for the post-colonial period. Chapter 5 examines how African states look on the map, arguing that the variations in their physical outlines, and the distribution of

populations within their territories, create relatively favourable or unfavourable conditions for the broadcasting of state power. On the evidence provided I was unconvinced that it is as important an influence on outcomes as Herbst suggests. Chapter 6 discusses the relations between states and chiefs, focusing on the attempts of the former to disturb the latter's control over the allocation of land. This I found the least satisfactory chapter, taking insufficient account of the complexity of the issues as demonstrated, for example, in Platteau's survey (in *Development and Change*, 1996). In contrast, chapter 7 is full of insight: a revealing analysis of the politics of currency, specifically for West Africa. Herbst argues that in monetary terms, West Africa became progressively *less* integrated in the world economy from the time the early colonial regimes displaced the international currencies circulating in the region with exclusive currencies of their own, to the post-colonial years of over-valued and often non-convertible currencies. Chapter 8 argues that post-colonial regimes have mostly missed the opportunity to align citizenship criteria to their respective population geographies. Thus states with large populations on borders far from the capital are ill-advised to base citizenship on descent, as Mobutu did to self-destructive effect, rather than on place of birth. In shifting from report to prescription, Herbst implicitly admits that in the context of citizenship his demographically based analysis fails to explain the actions of post-colonial governments, at least to date. The concluding chapter calls for recognition that the moment when the sovereign state was regarded as the only legitimate form of government was historically late and – he urges – should pass, in favour of African solutions that reflect real rather than fictional capacities to exert control on the ground.

There are some notable gaps in the references (including Bayart, and Lonsdale's 1981 survey). Factual errors include the statement that there were no settlers in French West Africa (p. 191). But any author brave enough to attempt a major interpretative synthesis is vulnerable to local pitfalls. Herbst has provided a lucid, incisive and stimulating analysis which deserves the attention of historians as well as political scientists.

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## SHORTER NOTICES

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703488555

*The Nile*. By ROBERT O. COLLINS. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

Pp. xii + 260. £30 (ISBN 0-300-09764-6).

KEY WORDS: Egypt, Sudan, Northeastern Africa, historical geography.

Professor Collins 'first saw and drank from the Nile in 1956' as he tells the reader, and from 1960 onwards he has produced numerous publications on the history of the Upper Nile and its peoples. Here he has widened his scope, and has written what is in effect a general handbook to the Nile from its sources to its delta, covering its geography, history, politics and hydrology. The body of the work deals with the different sectors of the White and Blue Niles and the main river. Chapters 2 to 4 cover the Lake Plateau in which the White Nile rises, the vast and formidable marshes of the Sudd (Arabic, *sadd*, a barrier), the Upper Nile fringed by the homelands of the Dinka and Nuer Niletic peoples. Chapter 5 turns to the Blue Nile from its source in Ethiopia and brings the account down to the confluence of the two rivers at Khartoum. Chapters 6 and 7 deal with the Nile in the northern Sudan

and Egypt respectively. The closing chapters are concerned with modern questions of engineering, water storage and politics, including the negotiations between Egypt and the Sudan republic over water rights, and the attempt (frustrated by civil war) to bypass the Sudd by cutting the Jonglei Canal. The latter problem was surveyed by Professor Collins in a lecture in Durham, published as *The Jonglei Canal: The Past and Present of a Future* (Durham, 1987). In the present work each chapter has copious bibliographical annotation, and there is a more general Bibliographical Essay. The book is generously illustrated with photographs and a useful series of maps. Finally, Yale University Press is to be congratulated on this very fine specimen of book production.

Oxfordshire

P. M. HOLT

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703498551

*The South African War Reappraised*. Edited by DONAL LOWRY. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000. Pp. xii + 258. No price given. £49.50 (ISBN 0-7190-52580); £16.99, paperback (ISBN 0-7190-58252).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, imperialism, press, military.

Based on a conference held in 1996, the majority of the essays focus on the international impact of the South African War and the allegiances generated within southern Africa by British imperial power. An effective introduction by the editor that reviews that historiography is followed by Iain Smith on the controversy over origins. Smith concludes that it was not gold that Britain was after but the establishment of British power and influence over the Transvaal on a firmer basis. Dorothy Helly and Helen Callaway look at journalism and the conflict, specifically the active support of Flora Shaw, the colonial editor of *The Times*, who, by her strong indictment of Kruger's regime for corruption and her warnings about his military build-up, contributed to Milner's attempt to force Kruger back down. Shaw's appreciation of Cecil Rhodes was a driving force in her use of journalism to further political goals.

Jacqueline Beaumont also considers *The Times*. She explains why it was readier to criticize the early conduct of the war than subsequent actions, and argues that, because the paper saw Liberal radicals as motivated by party considerations, it rejected their accusations. John Benyon depicts Milner in terms of overreach, while Fransjohan Pretorius considers *agterryer* loyalty to the Boers and notes that, after the war, their role was largely forgotten and the arming of Africans was regarded as a nefarious and wholly British operation. In his assessment of the Cape Afrikaners and the empire, Mordechai Tamarkin argues that Milner presented them as part of an anti-imperial conspiracy in a misleading attempt to justify the conflict.

Christopher Saunders charts growing African disillusionment with Britain and the empire. He argues that the initial impression was not too hostile, and, indeed, that members of the westernized African elite which began to emerge at the Cape from the 1870s associated Britain with Christianity, the ending of the slave trade and the emancipation of the slaves. However, as in the USA after the Civil War, reconciliation between the whites led to African disillusionment. Balasubramanyam Chandramohan considers India and the war, arguing that, in general, Indians, in both India and South Africa, were happy to contribute to the war effort as members of the Empire. Greg Cuthbertson assesses the religious dimension, specifically the role of anti-war nonconformity, Keith Jeffery looks at the military effects, while Lowry, in a wide-ranging chapter, considers the varied consequences

of the war for relations within and beyond the Empire, including American support for the Boers. A very useful volume.

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JEREMY BLACK

## DOCUMENTING DECOLONIZATION IN NIGERIA

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*Nigeria*. Edited by MARTIN LYNN. (British Documents on the End of Empire, Series B, Volume 7). Part I: *Managing Political Reform, 1943–1953*; Part II: *Moving to Independence, 1953–1960*. London: The Stationery Office for the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, 2001. Part I, pp. vii + 643. No price given (ISBN 0-11-290597-8). Part II, pp. vii + 801. No price given (ISBN 0-11-290598-6).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, decolonization, text editions.

It is widely accepted by historians and political analysts that decolonization set the stage for rapid transformation of Nigerian state and society. Focusing on a detailed survey of historic constitutional reforms, the structural imbalance of the modern state, the regionalization of state power and the struggle of communal groups for governance, this two-part 'volume' is a comprehensive compilation of official and non-official documents on the transfer of power in colonial Nigeria.

Starting with an authoritative introduction by the volume editor, Martin Lynn, this documentary source book is a chronological presentation of the principal events of the critical historical moment from 1943 to 1960. The detailed archival material it presents on the political transformation in Nigeria includes the perspectives of British politicians, senior Colonial Office officials, British administrators in Nigeria and major Nigerian political actors. The compilation also captures a comprehensive array of critical local, regional and national themes that have shaped subsequent Nigerian political development: the formulation and implementation of British colonial policies; regionalization and state formation; ethnicity and religion in the configuration of state power; the transformation of the pre-existing system of indirect rule; the introduction of local government reform; the emergence of party politics; and Nigerian decolonization in the wider global context.

The volume thus puts Nigerian state formation in its appropriate historical context. It reveals the importance of the underlying structures of society and the complexities of decolonization. In addition, by providing authoritative documentation of official correspondence among British officials and the perspectives of Nigeria's emergent political elite, the volume provides a unique published source for the analysis of the crises of the contemporary Nigerian state. These extensive primary materials vividly reveal that the enduring problems that have dominated the post-colonial Nigerian state, notably entrenched ethno-regionalism, the persistent failure of constitutional republicanism, statism, neopatrimonialism and economic crisis, were clearly anticipated during the critical period of decolonization.

In an era of growing interdisciplinary studies, this volume is a major and timely accomplishment to the social science and humanities disciplines in modern Nigerian studies. It is a welcome addition to landmark documentary source books such as A. H. M. Kirk-Greene's *Principles of Native Administration in Nigeria: Selected Documents, 1900–1947* (1965) and *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria: A Documentary Source Book, 1966–1969* (1971). Finally, Lynn's lucid introduction

is a superior survey of Nigeria's complex process of decolonization and transfer of power. This authoritative volume is an essential research tool for students of modern Nigeria.

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OLUFEMI VAUGHAN

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703518552

*African Political Leadership: Jomo Kenyatta, Kwame Nkrumah, and Julius K. Nyerere.* By A. B. ASSENSOH. Malabar FL: Krieger, 1998. Pp. 220. \$19.50, paperback (ISBN 0-89464-911-6).

KEY WORDS: Nationalism, politics, colonial, post-colonial.

This is a simple work, evidently derived from undergraduate classroom notes meant for a non-African audience. The narrative is derived from secondary sources about Kenyatta, Nkrumah and Nyerere. Surprisingly little use is made of the protagonists' own writings and speeches, which should have been the first line of study. For there is no valid way of studying leadership without reference to political thought. The author devotes four pages to Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya*, two pages to all of Nkrumah's prodigious output and half a page to Nyerere's political philosophy with a reference to *Uhuru na Ujamaa* but to no other Nyerere works. This book impoverishes rather than enriches Africanist pedagogy. Even for undergraduates, particularly American undergraduates unfamiliar with Africa, need immersion in historical texts. This the author has not done. It is not enough merely to harvest from popular cognomens *Osagyefo*, *Mzee* and *Mwalimu* and label them as 'three radical leaders'. The three men were made of sterner stuff.

*Rice University*

E. S. ATIENO ODHIAMBO

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853703528559

*People Power and Democracy: The Popular Movement against Military Despotism in Nigeria, 1989-1999.* By RITA KIKI EDOZIE. Trenton NJ: Africa World Press, 2002. Pp. xiv + 205. \$24.95; €17.99, paperback (ISBN 0-86543-917-36).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, post-colonial, civil society, democracy, military, politics/political.

For the reader in search of a comprehensive listing of the major protest organs of the pro-democracy movement in recent Nigerian history, their leadership and their domestic and international affiliates, Edozie's book is a mine of information. If the need, however, is for theoretical illumination and close analysis of group dynamics, and the subtleties of ideological nuance, there could be some disappointment. Our author examines the civil/military associational ties in evidence since independence, and the manner in which this almost umbilical connection legitimized the perennial military incursion into politics, and spawned a near-dyarchic political praxis that sometimes ruffled civilian sensibilities, yet was tolerated for its sanitizing effects on a rather aberrant post-colonial political culture. This accommodation suffers its ultimate betrayal in the annulment of the 12 June 1993 presidential elections, popularly believed to have been won by Moshood Abiola. This treachery by the ruling military authorities stung civil society into action, and our author details the range of associations – labour, professional, women's, retired-military, student and others – that now assailed praetorian



hegemony in a bid to reclaim political space and terminate the military stranglehold on power. Confronting this threat to its authority, as seen in marches, riots and other forms of civil disobedience, the militariat responded, predictably, with force, persecution, incarcerations, even assassinations. The fragile civil/military relations were at a historic crossroads, and, in the subsequent civilian triumph over military despotism, which returned the political reins to the people, Edozie claims, Nigeria appears to be on the verge of a democratic rebirth.

This is much too sanguine a prognosis, and we are not told convincingly how constituent mass organizations of such immense diversity as to leadership potential, ideological composition, ethno-regional location and mobilizational strategies could succeed in breaking the draconian will of a military that is legendary for its intransigence, and manic in the protection of the corporate interests of its elite. Furthermore, the study promises, but does not quite tell us, how the political process will ultimately free itself of the military's clutches when the prevailing patronage networks intricately knit military top brass and civilian elite in such a seamless web of mutual material advantage. The curiously phrased 'democracy paradox' theory proclaims, but clearly does not inform. Finally, Edozie's prose could have been much tighter, the editing less indifferent. She does, however, open up many questions for further exploration.

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MAC DIXON-FYLE