

language of education throughout French African colonies, Gamble's choice to highlight the debates over the use of 'local languages' in rural schools and at the École William Ponty in the 1920s and 1930s is particularly welcome. In Chapter Five, Gamble takes Léopold Sédar Senghor's mobilisation on education issues as an example of African elites' reactions to shifting definitions of citizenship. A similar format is used in Chapter Six to discuss the period between the start of the Second World War and the fall of the Vichy regime in FWA. Although explicitly aiming to discuss African elites' activism, the chapters also deal at length with different colonial administrators and their impact on policies and implementation, which constitutes a rich source of materials on teacher training and curriculum design. Questions of race and citizenship continue as key issues in Chapters Seven and Eight with an exploration of French policy in preparation for and after the 1944 Brazzaville Conference, as well as renewed struggles over rights and access after 1945.

The book is particularly strong on offering archival materials and angles from which to reflect upon the realities of colonial rule beyond the stereotypes of assimilation and association, with Gamble paraphrasing Robert Delavignette in stating that 'it was pointless to look for ideological consistency in something as hybrid as French colonialism' (96). The chronological coverage, which spotlights a series of historic moments and educational initiatives to illuminate other issues is particularly useful; this approach provides not only detailed materials for the specialist scholar, but also reflection points for researchers working in other geographical areas or on later periods. By drawing occasional comparisons with contemporary policies in British West Africa and metropolitan France, the author avoids depicting FWA as exceptional. Nonetheless, although other parts of FWA are mentioned, only Senegal benefits from an extended treatment.

*Contesting French West Africa* is an excellent overview of the existing primary and secondary literature, making a strong case for the importance of considering the formulation of, implementation of, and responses to education policies in order to understand the structures and practices of colonial rule. Its wide scope, from the role of language to questions of race and constructions of 'Africa', is combined with nuanced and detailed contextual analysis over the *longue durée*. This makes the book extremely valuable to scholars and students of colonial history, including those working on other regions of Africa. Gamble's work will also be of interest to those working on postindependence constructions of language, race, education, and belonging and wishing to understand the historical context of these dynamics.

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## MARKET ENCOUNTERS AND CONSUMER CULTURE IN GHANA

*Market Encounters: Consumer Cultures in Twentieth-Century Ghana.*

By Bianca Murillo.

Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2017. Pp. 248. \$32.95, paperback (ISBN: 9780821422892); \$80.00, hardcover, (ISBN: 978-0-8214-2288-5).

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**KEY WORDS:** Ghana, economic, markets, business, capital.

In *Market Encounters*, Bianca Murillo presents an engaging study of economic nationalism, consumer culture, and the politics of access to consumer goods and markets in Ghana. Murillo traces how these processes played out among European firms and their African staff, as well as with nationalist politicians and foreign investors, members of the military and African chiefs, and local consumers and African market women. Murillo's central argument is that this multitude of relationships and alliances, including fierce opposition among layers of Europeans and Africans, shaped Ghana's export-import economies, structured its capitalist exchanges, and produced the complex distributive network that operated in colonial Gold Coast and postcolonial Ghana. Murillo suggests that the trajectories of consumer markets and culture in twentieth-century Ghana were moulded by opposition to colonial and neocolonial domination, in addition to the 'controversies over the meaning of wealth and proper accumulation, the role of the state and political authority and the formation of gendered and racial ideologies' and hierarchies (6).

With a nuanced analysis of an impressive array of sources, including corporate and government archival materials, oral histories and interviews, letters, newspaper and magazine articles, material culture, and secondary publications from Ghana, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States, Murillo uncovers the intricate web of commodity distribution and sales involving Europeans, African staff of foreign trading firms, African credit customers, petty traders, and consumers during the colonial period. The book also considers the era of independence from 1957 to the 1980s and the Ghanaian traders, consumers, and civilian and military leaders that controlled the state and the economy during that period. Although chronologically organized, the five chapters of the book present relevant case studies of major drivers to the complex social terrains that Africans and Ghanaians navigated as they bought and sold goods.

Using the United Africa Company (UAC) and the Union Trading Company (UTC) as examples, the first two chapters provide the colonial context of economic restrictions and exploitation that anchor the key developments that follow. These case studies focus in particular on the politics of state control of the economy, especially the distributive system, and illuminate the profound consequences of these structures on consumer culture and practices in Ghana. The chapters consider how the UAC and the UTC dominated export-import trade of the Gold Coast during the interwar period and after the Second World War through their management of commodity prices, credit terms, and distribution channels. These processes undercut African businesses and created shortages and skyrocketing prices of consumer goods. Murillo pays careful attention to racial and gendered hierarchies and power dynamics that characterized the relationships that European and African employees of these firms had with each other and with their consumers. The discussion emphasizes African agency, which took form through workers' strikes, hold-ups, boycotts, protests, and looting, and also through efforts by African shopkeepers and credit customers to shape corporate policies and advance their own economic, social, and political interests. Thus, Murillo argues that the violent protests organized in 1948 by veterans of the Second World War, which are typically regarded as a watershed moment in the Gold Coast independence movement, should also be understood within the context of economic injustice and financial frustration.

In Chapter Three, Murillo uses the Kingsway Department Store, established in Accra in 1957, to illustrate how, in the late 1950s and 1960s, the independent government of

Kwame Nkrumah and the leadership of the Convention People's Party (CPP) pursued a modernist form of decolonization and nation building through various commercial developments. The store stood at the intersection of decolonization and consumer politics and, as such, symbolized national pride and promises and opportunities for a better future, while it also served as a place to socialize and a site of postcolonial elite culture. Although it was a gender-neutral space, the store also produced political and social tensions and class and generational conflicts; it also expressed racial and white supremacy by excluding poor and illiterate Ghanaians with its fixed-pricing, self-service, and written product information. Murillo then describes various steps that Nkrumah took to reshape the economy. Those initiatives included import license restrictions, the establishment of the Industrial Development Corporation, which supported the local manufacture of goods that were previously imported, and the establishment of the state-owned Ghana National Trading Corporation (GNTC), which was designed to reclaim Ghana's import-export business from foreigners. These efforts failed to achieve their goals, however, due to a number of factors, including mismanagement, excessive government spending on large-scale development projects, and the fall in the world market price for cocoa, which was Ghana's main export. In this context, the corruption and extravagant lifestyles of some CPP officials stood in sharp contrast to the economic austerity central to Nkrumah's socialist platform. The chapter elaborates how various state-owned industries and regulatory market policies created periodic shortages of imported goods and increased prices, and anger, and disillusionment among ordinary Ghanaians, traditional elites, and the middle class. Those circumstances help to explain the growing disillusionment with Nkrumah's leadership and the popular support for the 1966 military coup that brought to power Lieutenant General Joseph Arthur Ankrah and the National Liberation Council (NLC).

Chapter Four uses the International Trade Fair (ITF) of 1967, which was attended by thirty countries from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East and lasted for nineteen days, as a lens to understand how the politics of wealth and accumulation were negotiated in the post-Nkrumah period. Murillo demonstrates how the NLC used the ITF to gain legitimacy and condemn the corruption and monopolization of wealth by the CPP government, and also as a 'shop window on the world' to market consumer goods. Murillo argues that the ITF democratized goods because the fair appealed to ordinary Ghanaians and was focused on the private sector and local business class (128). But there are important issues that challenge Murillo's claim of economic democratization. How many Ghanaians attended and bought goods at the ITF? How could the ITF be democratic when it excluded many Ghanaians due to the high prices of the goods sold there? What number of local businesses participated in the fair vis-à-vis foreign companies? How could the trade fair be truly democratic when only one businesswoman, Kate Ohene, had a pavilion? Moreover, how could a military regime that concentrated political and economic power in the hands of a male elite and also launched an exhibition, the Ideal Home Exhibition of 1968, that domesticated women and silenced their skills and ingenuity as entrepreneurs, workers, and business people be understood as promoting the democratization of wealth and goods? Murillo also asserts that the NLC used the trade fair as a tool to build global alliances, mend old transnational relationships, and challenge state regulations that dictated the distribution of wealth. I wonder whether the author has not ascribed too many policy implications to a nineteen-day event.

Chapter Five considers the civilian administration of Kofi Abrefa Busia (Aug. 1969–Jan. 1972) and the military regime of Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong and the National Redemption Council (NRC, 1972–8). It explores how the economic austerity policies and market restrictions of these governments engendered commodity shortages and inflated prices, in spite of rural and agricultural development programs that yielded positive results in maize and rice production. In 1974, when Ghana suffered its greatest economic decline since independence, prices soared as foodstuffs and goods became increasingly scarce. In this context Acheampong launched an ‘economic war’ against local retailers, whom he accused of hoarding, profiteering, and smuggling scarce goods across national boundaries, particularly to Cote d’Ivoire, which offered a market that circumvented government-imposed pricing. Acheampong regulated consumer markets through increased surveillance of ports, borders, and marketplaces, strict enforcement of government price controls, and tighter control of distribution through the state-owned GNTC. The following year, Acheampong and his Supreme Military Council (SMC), comprised only of heads of armed services, became the sole director of the economy as well as of the country’s public institutions, state-owned corporations, and networks of commodity distribution. But efforts to make goods accessible and affordable to real consumers faltered. Increased militarization, market surveillance, and use of violence and intimidation to regulate market prices and access to goods profoundly changed Ghanaians’ relationships to consumer products and practices. The people became disillusioned with Acheampong and his regime over widespread corruption among policemen, military officers, and their wives (who became major suppliers of scarce imported goods) and the excessive use of force against retailers and consumers. The era was one of persistent dearth, inflated prices, and hardship.

In the Afterword, Murillo discusses briefly the rule of Lieutenant-General F.W.K. Akuffo and the Supreme Military Council II (July 1978–June 1979), Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings and his Provisional National Defense Council (June–September 1979), and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (December 1981–93). Taken together, these regimes unleashed the harshest economic conditions and the most oppressive and violent market restrictions in the history of the country. The bulldozing of marketplaces in major cities — especially Makola 1 and 2 in Accra, which government officials perceived as sites of hoarding and profiteering — and violent attacks on Ghanaian traders, mostly women, marked the climax of the state’s criminalization of traders and its efforts to broadly control access to wealth and consumer goods. In addition, the Rawlings regime implemented a structural adjustment program in the early 1980s. Those policies compounded the economic crisis and hardships felt by the general population and led to a massive brain drain from the country, as an estimated two million Ghanaians, mainly professionals, migrated to Nigeria, Europe, and North America. The brief tenure of Hilla Limann and the People’s National Party (1979–81) is examined in relation to Rawlings’ military coup, which brought that civilian presidency to an end.

Overall, *Market Encounters* is a compelling book with a lucid narrative that captures specific historical moments and spaces of varied interactions and encounters among multitudes of foreign and local players. It illuminates the forces and drivers that complicated consumer politics and identity and that shaped the commercial landscape of twentieth-

century Ghana. It is an important contribution to Ghanaian historiography, African consumer history, African economic and business history, and social and cultural history.

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## APPROACHING THE QUR'AN IN AFRICA

*Approaches to the Qur'an in Sub-Saharan Africa.*

Edited by Zulfikar Hirji.

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In the last fifteen years, three edited volumes featuring cutting edge research have established the study of Islamic erudition in Africa as an important field of intellectual inquiry.<sup>1</sup> This volume, which focuses on the Qur'an, is a welcome addition to that field. In the introductory chapter, the editor Zulfikar Hirji offers an overview of the study of Islam in the contemporary academy to show how Islam in Africa has long been a neglected field of study. He also argues convincingly that Qur'anic Studies in Africa has been overlooked as a subfield. The thirteen chapters of this volume address the many ways in which African Muslims engage the Qur'an, such as through manuscripts, commentaries, translations, recitations and invocations, music and poetry, talismanic practices, and designs and decorations. The editor sees four overlapping genres of practice emerging from the case studies presented: interpretation, embodiment, gendered knowledge, and transmission.

In the book's second chapter, Dimitry Bondarev offers an erudite discussion of *tafsīr*, or exegetical, Islamic sources in Borno. He examines four Qur'anic manuscripts to argue for the awareness of the Borno *'ulamā*, or learned scholars, of the complex problems of Koranic hermeneutics (*ta'wīl*). Bondarev also shows the substantial grounding of *'ulamā* in the science of exegesis and their familiarity with many exegetical works of the Qur'an, especially the *Tafsīr al Jalālayn* by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī (d. 1459) and Jalāl al-Dīn Al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505), which is the manual of *tafsīr* par excellence in Africa. This article is destined for an audience of specialists.

In Chapter Three, 'Qur'anic exegesis in Manding: the example of a Bamana oral commentary on Sūrat al-Raḥmān', Tal Tamari examines the social and cultural contexts in which Qur'anic exegesis takes place, the doctrinal sources of such analyses, and the scholarly language developed to express Islamic contents. Tamari also discusses the two central

<sup>1</sup> S. Reese (ed.), *The Transmission of Learning in Islamic Africa* (Boston, 2004), S. Jeppie and S. B. Diagne (eds.), *The Meanings of Timbuktu* (Cape Town, 2008.), R. Launay (ed.) *Islamic Education in Africa: Writing Boards and Blackboards* (Bloomington, IN, 2016).