

BOOK REVIEWS

Saheed Aderinto. 2022. *Animality and Colonial Subjecthood: The Human and Nonhuman Creatures of Nigeria*. Athens: Ohio University Press. 322 pp.

Saheed Aderinto's publication is a critical contribution to the historical understanding of 20th-century imperial rule in Africa, specifically in Nigeria, from the nuanced perspective of animals as colonial subjects whose lives are no less, if not more, impacted by hierarchical classifications of imperial logic and practice. "Colonialism involved governance of and through nature; colonial possessions included not just human inhabitants but also the nonhuman creatures and the environment as a whole" (p. 9). Aderinto's writing broadens the question and understanding of subjecthood as it seeks to expand Africa's historical analysis of the colonial experience by analyzing the social implications of the imperial mechanisms of labor, resource extraction, land ownership, the control of public health, and the law, as these relate to human-animal relations, animality, and animal subjecthood. From the perspective that the history of Africa is one shaped by all its inhabitants and "that animals have their history both independent of and deeply intertwined with human stories" (p. 8), Aderinto contends that animals have escaped the attention of Africanist historians seeking to further the historical significance of the "animal turn" on the continent, which he argues remains in its infancy.

This work is crucial to the discipline of animal studies within the context of Africa, reflecting on the history of imperial domination during modernity and the development of postmodernity. The ideology of modernity was used to wield human-animal encounters through the production of modern animals, most clearly outlined in Aderinto's exploration of the changing relations between humans and canines in Nigeria throughout colonial rule and the dramatic shifts that occurred in the life history of cattle in Nigeria and the impact of this on the modern Nigerian diet. He contends that until Nigeria and Africa at large include animals in an understanding of colonialism, it will not be possible to comprehend the full extent of the ongoing impact of imperial domination, "Colonial animality went beyond being an animal under foreign domination; it encompassed unveiling human existence that manifested in animalistic tendencies" (p. 3).

Aderinto's writing is visceral and visually vivid, opening and closing with the social politics and pageantry of the role of animal subjects during the 1956 royal visit of Queen Elizabeth II to Nigeria, which frames his approach to the historiography of a wide range of species in Nigeria using a single analytical framework. "The sources I consulted on such topics as rabies, cruelty to animals, racing, bylaws for impounding animals, and wildlife provided clues to the importance of animals in the framing of coloniality, subjecthood, and modernity" (p. 22). Shaped by his interest in extending the boundaries of Africanist scholarship rather than his interest in animal studies itself, Aderinto's work draws from a rich history of colonial and national archives in Nigeria located in different geographies of the country, mainly Ibadan, Kaduna, and Enugu, alongside orally based interview materials. His central focus on archives both directed and shaped the subject matter of his work. He writes that "The issues tackled in this work are therefore more informed by what the data revealed than by my own ideological

preferences as to which species of animal is important for historical writing and thinking” (p. 21). This data included histories from national archives and various expert reports compiled for veterinary, agriculture, and animal husbandry departments. These reports provide unique insight into the making and control of Nigeria’s modern animals during imperial rule, demonstrating a highly creative approach regarding what data matters in the reconstruction of multispecies historiographies. The work uses social theory to cross disciplinary boundaries, taking “seriously grassroots experience, or history from below, while also placing political, cultural, intellectual, artistic, environmental, and economic narratives revolving around both sensational and everyday life in time perspective” (p. 21).

The publication comprises eight chapters, thematically divided into two parts. Here, Aderinto posits that “all the core dichotomies of human colonial subjecthood—indispensable yet disposable, both good and bad, violent but peaceful, saints and outlaws—are embedded in the identities of Nigeria’s animal inhabitants” (p. 7). Part One, “Loyal Companions, Tasty Food, Distinguished Athletes, Political Beings,” focuses on the metaphoric ideals of animals during imperialism, both materially and symbolically, through the themes of power, recreation, and human-animal affiliation. This metaphoric representation is most eloquently substantiated in discussion of the representation of modern animals in the work of Nigerian artist and cartoonist Akinola Lasekan (1916–72) in chapter four. Part Two, “Pathology, Empathy, Anxiety,” takes a more psychological approach to exploring human-animal relations through the themes of fear, pathology, morality, and animal welfare, most vividly illustrated in the discussion of canines and rabies in chapter five. Each chapter provides the reader with a unique insight into human and animal Nigerians’ shifting social, political, economic, and material realities during the colonial evolution of modernity. For example, chapter one analyzes the reconfiguration of animal husbandry during the expansion of the Nigerian city. In chapter two, he details the role of animal transportation in the movement of agricultural products, mineral extraction, and the movement of humans to sustain imperial capitalism. Despite its historical objectives and approach, several chapters shed light on the lingering and contemporary effects of colonial policies and laws, mainly on wildlife conservation, animal rights, and animal welfare. These chapters allow Aderinto to contextualize the importance of historiography to the question of human-animal relations in present-day Nigeria and the need for Africanist scholarship to adopt a multispecies approach to the ongoing study of social relations in Africa— suggesting that his work can and should be extended through more focused studies of the history and social relations of individual species in Africa.

Chantal Noa Forbes, *California Institute of Integral Studies*

Paul Darby, James Esson, and Christian Ungruhe. 2022. *African Football Migration: Aspirations, Experiences, and Trajectories*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 268 pp.

African Football Migration: Aspirations, Experiences, and Trajectories is significant piece of scholarship. Through an interdisciplinary approach, Paul Darby, James Esson, and Christian Ungruhe focus on the migration of African footballers outside of Africa. They move away from analyzing African migration through the prism of migrant passivity and victimhood toward African migrants as sophisticated agents. They demonstrate that Africans made strategic

decisions, learned how systems operated, embedded themselves in transnational networks, and created opportunities for themselves.

The authors conducted interviews with former footballers in Ghana, conducted research there, and collected former media interviews. The primary focus of their interviews and driver of their narrative is Nii Odartey Lamptey. A prodigy in his early career and regarded as a generational talent, Lamptey struggled to fulfill his potential through numerous stints at various clubs. His story is used as a proxy to further investigate other stories of African footballers. His experiences are not universal, but they highlight different features of African football migration, such as the racism he faced when playing professionally in Europe.

This book can be broken up into three main sections. The first section (Chapters 1-3) discusses frameworks for the analysis of African football migration and provides an overview of the history of African football migration. These chapters stress the structural factors that create the networks for African footballers to migrate. Chapter 1 details the GPN (Global Production Network) model used for this section of the book. This model “seeks to capture and explain the nexus of interconnected functions and operations through which goods and services are produced” (p. 28). In this case, the good produced is the labor of the African footballer. Chapter 2 examines the historical and geographical factors at play in the creation of global football networks. Highlighting the role that France and Portugal played in creating the first avenues for African football migration, the authors show the role colonial actors played in creating the transnational networks for footballers. Chapter 3 discusses the creation of youth academies in Ghana as export nodes for the GPN.

The second section (Chapters 4-6) discusses the individual agency of African footballers in greater detail and how they navigate the structures of football migration detailed in the first three chapters. They draw a focus on Ghanaian footballers in these chapters. Chapter 4 outlines the development of football industry in Ghana. In post-independence Ghana, football was viewed as a means of developing national unity, but overtime this ethos shifted to a neoliberal conception where football was driven by profit motives and individual development. Chapter 5 argues that these young individuals are motivated to migrate due to social, spatial, and economic mobility prospects. Chapter 6 reveals how migrants’ dreams of playing professionally in Europe are often unrealized, resulting in an ‘involuntary immobility.’ Here, the ingenuity of African footballers is highlighted as they navigate disappointment in their playing careers and seek alternatives.

The last section (Chapters 7-9) examines the mobilities of African footballers and the trials and tribulations they face in the new settings they encounter through migration. Chapter 7 explores the initial crossings and experiences of African footballers into Europe and South-East Asia. Chapter 8 examines how dreams of playing abroad align with experiences abroad. This chapter reveals how African migrant’s careers are shaped by racism and racialization in new environments. Chapter 9 focuses on their post-playing careers and the anxieties and responses that accompany this process. The book’s organizational structure is one of its strongest aspects, allowing for an intensive study on any topic discussed above. Each chapter has a self-contained argument that can be examined in isolation from other chapters, making the various arguments encountered in this book easy to examine.

The book largely neglects the plight of African women footballers and focuses almost entirely on Ghana. By including women in this study, the authors could have highlighted the sexual violence that sometimes follows women and male footballers. Incorporating women into the story also would also point to the women footballers' agency, strengthening their argument that African footballers are active agents and not passive victims. Moreover, focusing on more African countries than Ghana might complicate or further support their conclusions that African footballers are active agents in creating transnational, migratory networks. These gaps are invitations for future scholars to examine. Ultimately, this book is a must-read for anyone interested in migration, football, Africa, or the continued relationships between African states and European colonial rule and neocolonialism.

Atticus Williams, *Fordham University*

Sara de Simone. 2022. *State-building South Sudan: International Intervention and the Formation of a Fragmented State*. Leiden: Brill. 217 pp.

This insightful work sheds light on the manifold challenges and interventions that have shaped the trajectory of South Sudan's state formation and its subsequent collapse. The book attempts to "provide a satisfactory explanation of how the South Sudanese state started functioning and then collapsed...by focusing on the time span of the international state-building intervention" (p. 2). The book's "main argument is that, to understand the political dynamics of contemporary South Sudan, we need to look at the intersection between externally supported state-building projects and the historical process of state formation, shaped by endogenous forces that have, since the very inception of Southern Sudanese statehood, captured and reinterpreted resources of various kinds provided by external actors" (p. 2). Indeed, where "existing literature on post-conflict South Sudan addresses international intervention and 'high' national politics...or local political dynamics...this book argues that it is not possible to understand contemporary South Sudan without simultaneously looking at both" (p. 2).

De Simone's research is accordingly deeply anchored in a comprehensive analysis of international intervention in South Sudan, tracing its evolution from the pre-independence era. By delving into historical, political, and socio-economic factors, the author elucidates how external actors have influenced state-building efforts within South Sudan, often with unintended consequences. One of the book's strengths lies in its highly specific portrayal of South Sudan's complex post-independence landscape. De Simone navigates through the country's turbulent history, examining the legacy of civil war, ethnic rivalries, and institutional weaknesses that have hindered effective governance. Through meticulous research and astute analysis, she highlights the interplay between domestic dynamics and external interventions, offering valuable insights into the challenges of state-building in such a fragile context.

Central to de Simone's argument therefore is the notion of South Sudan as a "fragmented state" and a state-building failure, characterized by internal divisions, weak institutions, and competing power structures. Drawing on a rich array of empirical evidence, including interviews, archival sources, and policy documents, she intricately presents the complex web of factors contributing to South Sudan's fragmentation, from ethnic politics to resource conflicts

and the capturing of state-building resources by local political actors. De Simone critically examines the role of international actors in shaping South Sudan's state-building process. She interrogates the motives, strategies, and impact of key external players, including international organizations, donor agencies, and regional actors. By highlighting the tensions between external interventions and local realities, she offers a sobering critique of the limitations and unintended consequences of international state-building efforts.

One of the book's compelling aspects is its engagement with theoretical debates surrounding state-building and state fragility. De Simone skillfully navigates through different conceptual frameworks, to offer a peculiar understanding of South Sudanese state's reality. By synthesizing empirical evidence with theoretical insights, she contributes to broader discussions within the field of peace and conflict studies. Through vivid case studies and illustrative examples, she brings to life the challenges and complexities of state-building in South Sudan, inviting readers to grapple with the intricacies of post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding in the beleaguered country. Then throughout the book, de Simone adopts a balanced approach, thereby acknowledging both the opportunities and pitfalls of international intervention. While she recognizes the importance of external assistance in addressing humanitarian crises and supporting institutional development, she also underscores the need for greater coherence, accountability, and local ownership in state-building initiatives.

In conclusion, the work is a timely and thought-provoking contribution to the literature on state-building, conflict resolution, and international interventions. Through meticulous research, engaging analysis and spirited writing, Sara de Simone offers a highly comprehensive examination of the challenges and complexities facing South Sudan. The book is essential reading for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners seeking to understand the dynamics of state-building in fragile contexts as exemplified by South Sudan and the intersections among the roles of international actors, local players, and local processes in such situations. The contribution essentially provides a distinctive report on how the resources meant for state-building South Sudan were manipulated and captured by local players at several levels, in negation of the state-building agenda. The result of this failed state-building remains the intensification of ethnic disintegration and the continuing politicization of ethnicity in South Sudan.

Remi Chukwudi Okeke, *Madonna University (Nigeria)*

Itamar Dubinsky. 2022. *Entrepreneurial Goals: Development and Africapitalism in Ghanaian Soccer Academies*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. 177 pp.

Itamar Dubinsky's *Entrepreneurial Goals* is an interesting ethnographic study of Ghanaian soccer academies. Dubinsky's fieldwork took him to three different soccer academies, each with a different approach, stemming from the goals of the individual entrepreneurs involved. One focused more on academics, the second tried to find a balance between the academic and the sport, while the third focused more on the sport itself. The difficulties of running all three of these academies are discussed in depth, and Dubinsky makes this discussion interesting by abandoning the prevalent anticolonial perspective in favor of an "Africapitalist" perspective.

At the outset Dubinsky explains that “Africapitalism is the idea that the private sector should be committed to the socioeconomic development of the continent through investments that generate both economic prosperity and social wealth...Africapitalism is based on four core values: progress and prosperity; parity; peace and harmony; and place and belongingness” (p. 10). To separate this new concept from previous perspectives on Africa that focus on colonialism, Dubinsky tells us that the goal of Africapitalism—in the words of Tony Elumelu, the Nigerian banker who coined the term in 2013—is “to empower a generation of successful for-profit entrepreneurs who drive Africa’s economic and social transformation” (p. 18). This approach to the subject matter is a refreshing new take, and Dubinsky points out that previous discussions of soccer academies tended to either focus on the north/south divide, and the profits that European teams make from African talent, or on the exploitative tactics of European talent seekers that impoverish the development of local African sporting culture. As Dubinsky points out, these neo-colonial discourses tend to ignore the agency of Africans involved in the academy scene, and the Africapitalist perspective does a good job of filling this lacuna in the literature.

Chapters three, four, and five focus on three different academies: the Mandela Soccer Academy (MSA), the Kumasi Soccer Academy (KSA), and Unistar. While these chapters provide readers with a first-hand look at the inner workings of each academy, as observed through fieldwork and interviews, it would have been helpful to compare and contrast the academies in a more focused manner. Each chapter had different subheadings that made it seem like the academies were being analyzed without a unifying framework. For instance, the section in Chapter five about the fans of Unistar becoming a major force to bring the community together was very interesting, but there was no similar discussion of fans of other academy teams in the preceding chapters. Of course, given the different approaches and goals of each academy in question, such a unified approach was likely difficult. Also, it was unclear as to how ‘pure’ the data was, as participants may have been likely to give ‘socially desirable’ answers to the author’s questions.

Still, the author did well in illustrating the difficulties indigenous African entrepreneurs and sports figures have developing their own academies due to financial constraints, some of which are out of their control, like those stemming from the Ghanaian economy’s general downturn. The difficult question of whether academies should focus on educational or sports goals is also an understandable conundrum, considering the economic benefits of focusing on the soccer side by developing professional players to promote.

Perhaps one of the book’s best points comes at the conclusion, when Dubinsky confirms that “examination of the three academies has revealed that development is not a homogeneous concept and that it can mean different things” (p. 135). Indeed, to many observers, development is seen as an economic improvement while others view development in terms of social change. Ultimately, Dubinsky argues that “development is seen as being primarily about enabling more possibilities and opening new economic, social, or cultural opportunities for people” (p. 136). Indeed, all three of the entrepreneurs who opened academies seemed to genuinely care, and wanted to help their communities as best as they could despite all the constraints they faced. This is why this break from development theory is useful—development is not just economic, and the local still matters even in a globalized world. The perspective offered by this book is

useful for both scholars of sport and scholars of Africa, and Dubinsky should be commended for trying a new approach to the subject.

John Konuk Blasing, *Independent Scholar*

Christopher Ehret. 2023. *Ancient Africa: A Global History, to 300 CE*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 210 pp.

Christopher Ehret's *Ancient Africa: A Global History, to 300 CE* is well researched and contributes greatly to the scholarship of ancient African history. He provides a comprehensive and insightful examination of the ancient African civilizations, their cultures, and their interactions with the world. Ehret was able to demonstrate how Africa is not irrelevant in ancient history, but very relevant like those other areas of the ancient world that experienced change and development. He also was able to prove this by offering a narrative of the technological and social developments that happened in Africa, each effecting the other, using the different categories of evidence available to him. The book basically consists of six chapters but can be divided into four sections, covering various aspects of African history, including social structures, cultural practices, political organization, and economic systems. Ehret's work is a valuable resource for anyone interested in understanding the rich and diverse history of Africa in its early stages of progression.

In the first part of the book, Ehret introduces the reader to the geography, climate, and environmental conditions of Africa, providing the necessary context for understanding the development of ancient African civilizations. He also explained that Africa was the source of human beginning when he stated that "barely more than fifty thousand years ago, the primary ancestors of every single human being alive today lived in eastern Africa. World history to that point was African history" (p. 1). He also discusses the early hominids and human populations that inhabited the continent, tracing their evolutionary history and the emergence of modern humans. He states: "Africa, as the origin land of us all, is the most diverse continent in its human genetics. The peoples of the rest of the world, whose ancestors began spreading outward from Africa fifty thousand or more years ago, form essentially one subset of that African diversity" (p. 2).

The second part delves into evidence of political and social structures that emerged in various parts of ancient Africa. Ehret examines the rise of complex societies and the development of political systems, including kingdoms, chiefdoms, and city-states. He also discusses the role of trade and cultural exchanges in shaping these early societies and their interactions with neighboring regions. He stated that "In the middle and second half of the fourth millennium a new growth of political scale began to take hold across the middle and northern parts of the Middle Nile Culture Area not just in southern Upper Egypt, but also in the lands inhabited by Nilo-Saharan-speaking peoples and extending well south through Nubia" (p. 110).

The book's third part explores the various cultural practices and early use/spread of technology prevalent in ancient Africa. Ehret explains that "the farthest west of these sites, dating to the eighth or ninth century BCE, were in the lands of the Nok culture of north-central Nigeria. Other sites dating as early have been found in the nearby southwestern Chad basin.

And faraway to the east, in Rwanda" (p.19). He discusses religious beliefs, artistic expressions, and social customs, highlighting the diversity of African cultures and their influences on one another. Ehret also examined the role of women, language, and writing systems in the development of ancient African societies. A good example of this in his book is "independent women entrepreneurs have long been prominent in societies that spoke languages of the Niger-Congo family" (pp. 151-52).

The final part focuses on the economic systems that were prevalent in ancient Africa. Ehret analyzes various economic activities, such as agriculture, pastoralism, and mining, that were central to the development of these societies. He also discusses the impact of trade and external influences on the economic systems of ancient Africa and the ways in which these societies adapted to changing circumstances. A good example of the existence of agricultural activities in Africa is the "third African invention of agriculture, among the Omotic-speaking peoples in far southwestern Ethiopia" (p.135).

Ancient Africa: A Global History, to 300 CE is an invaluable resource material for anyone interested in understanding the rich and diverse history of Africa in its early stages. One strength is the passionate way and manner Ehret explained the relevance and contributions of ancient Africa to the modern world. The book provides a comprehensive and remarkable overview of social structures, political organizations, cultural practices, and economic systems, offering a detailed and well-researched account of ancient African civilizations. The book presents a passionate argument and reasons as to why historians or scholars interested in ancient African history should broaden their historical knowledge beyond the Sahara region and into the rest of the African continent. In all, it is a study well carried out.

Suleiman Yakubu, *University of Pardubice*

Ernest N. Emenyonu (ed.). 2022. *African Literature Comes of Age: African Literature Today*. Suffolk: James Currey. 225 pp.

This edited volume contains essays and literary supplements that celebrate the growth of African literature. The introduction provides a historical overview of African literature, claiming that before 1958 texts written by Africans on the continent in both the European and indigenous languages were not classified as African literature. However, with the publication of Achebe's novel, *Things Fall Apart*, African literature came into its own and became known by its rightful name.

The essays in the collection contain a variety of subjects. Essay one by Kazeem Adebisi-Adelabu discusses the novelty of literature and medicine in African literary analyses using the novel *Dazzling Mirage* and claiming that creative writing on sickle cell disease is slowly but steadily growing. Chirwurah Destiny Isiguzo in essay two rehashes the colonial enterprise that reduced the humanity of the Black man to animalism in Zakes Mda's *Heart of Redness*. The writer avers that Mda challenges anthropocentrism in the use of animals as sacrifice and contends that animal subjugation is like human subjugation and exploitation.

Several essays discuss representations. Paramita Routh Roy examines the portrayal of masculinities in Adichie's novels, arguing that Adichie's works have not been discussed enough, a claim which is not wholly true, especially when one considers the plethora of essays

written on her works. The other, by Nonye Chinyere Ahumibe, discusses the representation of women in African literary texts. The writer asserts that female characters in African texts are not transformative enough but are rather locked in victimhood and exploitation. She uses African texts from the 1960s through the early 2000s to make her claims. This is problematic as those texts are dated and contain themes of victimhood and exploitation of women. It would have helped her argument if she had chosen more current texts in line with the theme of the volume because for a paper published in 2022, we expect to see how the portrayal of women has changed from the 1960s to now.

Two other essays in the collection deal with themes that have occupied African literature for a long time. H. Oby Okolocha analyses Nawal El Saadawi's plays published in 1995-96, examining the themes of social and political injustice, and gender inequality that Saadawi's other works already dealt with. The other, by Christophe Sékéne Diouf, discusses religious collusion and colonialism in two of Ngugi's texts. No new insights are offered in these discussions from what the literature over time has proffered. It would have been expedient if these essays had looked at new themes that African literature engages. Some of the essays appear lost in the broader scheme of things—for example, Tinashe Mushakavanhu's essay on Robert Mugabe. Is it a historical analysis or is it a tribute to his legacy?

A few of the essays offer new insights into African literature—Alexandra Negri deals with gang violence in South Africa; John Uwa writes about stand-up comedy as popular literature; and Eugen M. Bacon analyses a poem that breaks all the aesthetic rules governing poetry. The addition of African popular literature to the collection is an important aspect that ought to have been explored more in this collection on African literature coming of age. This is because there is a lot being done in popular literature today that needs to be celebrated. From stand-up comedy to the spoken word and popular fiction and comics, African literature has proven to be a genre that is rapidly growing and responding to the current demands of the times.

For a work that purports to celebrate African literature coming of age, there is a lot that was left unsaid and undone as there are many texts from other parts of Africa that show African literature coming of age. An example is Taiye Selassie's *Ghana must Go*, a novel that brought Afropolitanism to the limelight in African literature. Gender issues are limited to representations of men and women and the plethora of African texts dealing with LGBTQ+ issues are not seen at all in the collection, e.g. Kobby Ben Ben's *No One Dies Yet*, and Nana Sakyiama's *The Sex Lives of African Women*. I believe that if the editor had expanded his scope of contributors, and really looked at the vibrancy that is African literature today, the collection would have been truly outstanding, and a real celebration of a milestone.

Theresah Patrine Ennin, *University of Cape Coast*

Joost Fontein. 2022. *The Politics of the Dead in Zimbabwe, 2000-2020: Bones, Rumours & Spirits*. Suffolk: James Currey. 349 pp.

In seven chapters, Joost Fontein, a professor of anthropology, offers a critical descriptive case study on the topical subject of the politics of death in Zimbabwe. The introductory section details an aerial overview of the politics of the dead in Zimbabwe as well as the power of uncertainty.

The first chapter explores the ambiguous agency of bones as both 'persons' and 'objects' in the politics of heritage and commemoration in Zimbabwe. The chapter further takes on anthropological discussions about materiality and the agency of objects. The everyday politics of the dead are explored using examples from Zimbabwe with the story of an opposition activist, Gift Tandare, whose burial attracted controversy particularly about place of burial and the circumstances surrounding his death, which arguably involved the ruling party, Zimbabwe African National Union for the Patriotic Front (ZANU PF). The second chapter focuses on post 2000s era particularly political violence in Zimbabwe with the 2008 national elections in question. The quest for 'healing' and 'reconciliation' remains a subject of debate especially when using the 2009-2013 Government of National Unity (GNU) as a prism to explore the history of violence in independent Zimbabwe.

Chapter three discusses fraught questions about the identity of the dead, the manner of their deaths, and who has sovereignty over them. The Zimbabwe state media, government authorities, and civic organizations offered differing narratives on the discovery of the 'fresh,' 'intact,' 'fleshy,' 'leaky,' and stinky bodies, bones that were found at a disused mine in Mashonaland province in 2011. While failure to have expert observations from forensic scientists, Joost Fontein gathered 'reliable' feedback from the National Museums and Monuments in Zimbabwe (NMMZ) heritage experts who dispelled rumours that the bodies were those from 2008 election violence. The NMMZ expert analysis deduced that the bodies could have been indeed from the 1970s Rhodesian brutalities.

In chapter four, the year 2011 also comes to the fore with the death of retired general and businessman Solomon Mujuru deployed to explore factionalism, rivalries in the ruling party ZANU PF body politic, and the complex inquest which ensued. The chapter goes into the death of Susan, wife to the late former Prime Minister Richard Morgan Tsvangirai, who died in a car accident and the stories that circulated in print and online media about her death. Chapter four fits tightly into the themes of 'rumours' and 'bones' as the various reports on the death of Solomon Mujuru remains with outstanding questions rather than answers over nine years since he died.

Chapters five and six explore the uncertain and unfinished incompleteness of death by relooking at the political relevance of ancestors and spirit mediums in post 2000 Zimbabwe. To advance his argument, Fontein uses two contrasting stories, one of Rotina Mavhunga who gained local Zimbabwe media spaces and that of Mai Melisa who hailed from rural Masvingo province only known in her family circles. In chapter seven, the death of the long-time leader Robert Mugabe in September 2019 was also compounded by uncertainty over his place of burial since supposedly 'natural' burial place was next to his late wife Sally Mugabe at the national Heroes Acre located in Harare-Warren Park. While Robert Mugabe was eventually buried in his rural home in Zvimba-Mashonaland West, his death fits well into the politics of the dead bones and rumours dominating public discourse.

Again, the death of Morgan Tsvangirai, Zimbabwe's former Prime Minister (2009-2013), is argued to fall into Mugabe's 'rule book of political chicanery' with Emmerson Mnangagwa presiding over his political legacy. The subject that remains uncertain pertains to Gukurahundi of the 1980s with 'healing' and 'reconciliation' as enunciated by the Mnangagwa administration in the infancy of the 'new dispensation.'

While Joost Fontein opens up academic enquiry into a subject 'silent' in academic debates, it is undisputed that there are some stories that remain controversial with disappearances taking another layer of political accidents and politics of the dead. The story of Itai Dzamara, a journalist and pro-democracy activist who disappeared in 2015, deserves academic attention among others. Equipped with anthropological tool kits, Joost Fontein offers refreshing lens into the contentious subject of politics of the dead in post independent Zimbabwe with bones, rumours, and spirits enriching these narratives into historical, religious, and political dimensions.

Brian Maregedze, *Stellenbosch University*

Tobias Hagmann and Finn Stepputat (eds.). 2023. *Trade Makes States: Governing the Greater Somali Economy*. New York: Oxford University Press. 274 pp.

The tragic collapse of central authority in Somalia in 1991 has often been depicted as one of the great disasters of statehood. Over the last three decades, the complexity of the widely observed "statelessness" in Somalia has puzzled scholars, policymakers, and humanitarians alike. But, simultaneously, the informal economy has been thriving. This may seem paradoxical to those who assume that state collapse always produces destructive anarchy and insecurity that thwarts economic activity.

Trade Makes States explores the politics dictating exchange and the flow of goods in Somali-inhabited territories of East Africa. It discusses trade's role in state-building and connects the diaspora centers as part of an anthropological inquiry into the "greater Somali economic space" (p. 3). The timely volume responds to the need to understand the dynamics and importance of commerce in the presence of frail government and state-like entities in Somalia. Its focus on political impact and regulation of trade provides a frame for understanding institutional aspects of the political economy in the country.

The volume emerges from an interdisciplinary research project to understand the connection between "the everyday" in trading activities and the process of state formation. Essentially a study of Somali political economies from the local perspective, the book comprises eight chapters of which six discuss various locations and aspects of Somali trade and its regulation. The editors provide an introductory and concluding chapter and include an afterword by Peter D. Little, a longtime observer of Somalia's stateless economy. Although the volume has a commendable mix of European and African authors, it could have included more African women, especially as first authors of chapters. This, however, continues to be a common problem with scholarly edited volumes.

The book shows the importance of controlling trade for the institutionalization of political entities in the Somali-inhabited economic space. While the business and commercial elites have been fundamental in influencing political dynamics, their relationship with political elites is also highlighted. The editors argue that displacement due to the Somali civil war and growing economies in the neighboring countries expanded the economic space of the long-distance trade networks that have characterized the Somali exchange for centuries. They contend that competing state-building projects between various intra-state regions, Somaliland, and the

federal government, as well as powerful non-state actors, have added complexity to the relationship between politics and economic activity.

While the volume highlights the importance of everyday politics involved with trade and associated logistics in the Somali experience, the editors claim to contribute to the theory of state formation. They emphasize the “politics of circulation” or power competition over the control of the movement of goods, money, and people, where those seeking to build a state extract revenue to gain legitimacy as the rightful authority. To the editors, the governance of the circulation of goods is therefore essential for understanding state formation because it offers lessons for the process of state-building. This has clear policy implications and makes the analysis highly relevant.

The editors further argue that a balance should be struck between encouraging the flow of goods and extracting revenue from trade. This, however, assumes that state builders can determine and impose such a balance, which does not depend solely on them. Secondly, they contend that competition of state-like entities over revenue extraction from the circulation of goods enables traders to choose partners and routes to minimize costs and maintain a level of control over trade flows to project influence on state builders. Finally, the authors adopt Fana Gebresenbet’s argument about the importance of varying value and durability of goods to argue that state builders tax them differently to build stronger states or state-like units.

Trade Makes States claims to provide commanding insights into state formation. However, while the analysis itself is highly insightful, the ability to generalize based only on the Somali experience is inevitably limited. Although the editors imply that the inquiry allows such generalization, factors including the uniqueness of the Somali experience of prolonged *de facto* statelessness in the context of *de jure* survival of the failed state, and the exceptionally widespread global diaspora, make this assertion somewhat questionable. Also, more emphasis on comparative and temporal aspects of state formation could have supported the argument for generalization since statehood can differ significantly over time and space. Finally, one would also have wished for more explanation on the role of external commercial linkages and foreign partners in the context of the international economy due to their influence in the politics of circulation, and the governance of the flow of goods and state-building in Somalia. However, overall, *Trade Makes States* provides a rich in-depth case study analysis of the political economy of the Somali economic space and makes a palatable contribution to the literature.

Aleksi Ylönen, *Iscte-University Institute of Lisbon*

Kwasi Konadu. 2022. *Many Black Women of this Fortress; Graca, Monica and Adwoa, Three Enslaved Women of Portugal’s African Empire*. London: Hurst & Company. 176 pp.

Kwasi Konadu’s work on empire at the ground level is a postcolonial account attempting to give agency or a granular framing (accomplishing even one of the two would be a triumph) to the experiences of three African women whose lives were dominated by the presence of the Portuguese fort in their midst at Mina, in present-day Ghana. A pathbreaking effort for this kind of writing was Saidiya V. Hartman’s *Scenes of Subjection; Terror, Slavery and Self-making in Nineteenth Century America* (1997), which was later followed by her *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals*

(2019). The second book frequently blurs or crosses the line between reconstructive or subaltern history and historical fiction. Konadu in his reframing doesn't go that far—he provides context, describes impacting motivations, and notes elements of daily life.

Graca, born between 1470 and 1480, though nominally a Christian, was called a “renegade against the Catholic faith” for practicing some local rituals. She would have been sixty or seventy years old when she was brought before the inquisition in Lisbon. A fact which comes out of the threadbare account of her trial is that she was hardly a Christian at all, much less a “renegade” against the faith. Her conversion and no doubt that of so many men and women on the African coast involved little more than a perfunctory statement of faith to facilitate employment, or to avoid harsh treatment. In Graca's case, she was sentenced to house-arrest and “Christian instruction” at a nunnery in Lisbon. Konadu points out that conversion—whether voluntary, enforced, or partial, and indentured or slave status were effective tools of Portugal's globe-spanning enterprise.

Although Graca was a slave of the crown and Monica was manumitted (p. 14), modern readers might ask what real benefits if any were conferred by manumission, since both women suffered exile and essentially the same treatment. In these three lives the protagonists do not confront empire so much as an empire confronts them and arbitrarily directs and disposes of their lives. Monica (probably born in the 1520s) was tried in Lisbon in the 1550s for persisting in local (i.e. non-Christian) practices, and for possibly cursing a fellow worker at the Mina fort. In her case (pp. 88-89) there may have been the hope that after “instruction” at the College of the Doctrine of the Faith she would be set at liberty, though one wonders what choices she actually had. We do not know. Adwoa came from the village of Adena in the latter part of the 16th century. Konadu uses her example (little more is cited than her name) to describe the villages surrounding Mina fortress, which constituted the gateway into the vast African interior, about which the Portuguese knew little. These villages constituted a kind of buffer zone.

The women, if they could have written an account which would come down to us, might have protested, “Must we be merely your footnotes?” Many ironies accompany Konadu's framing and recentering. One of them is illuminated by the proposal of a Portuguese party in 1572 (p. 119), the same year of the Portuguese triumphalist poem *Os Lusíadas*, arguing that settlers should be sent out to Ghana, agriculture should be developed, and Portuguese dominion of the area expanded. But this proposal fell on deaf ears: the court was fixated on India and points east, and on Brazil. Nor could the Portuguese—with a relatively small population, embark on new projects of settlement in West Africa. In the eyes of the distant power, Mina was primarily a waystation on the road to India.

Another irony: this empire which looked so imposing from ground-level was not invincible. In fact, it disappeared in an instant in 1580 when King Sebastao perished in one of many futile battles (or we may even say crusades) against the Muslims in the Maghreb (p. 124). Spain assumed control of Portugal and all its possessions, and it was sixty years before the country escaped Spanish control. From the wider perspective, this work is effective in taking small steps to give African history back to the Africans, and make women such as Graca, Monica, and Adwoa more than footnotes.

Kenneth Meyer, *Western Washington University*

Simon Ottenberg. 2022. *Double Descent and Gender Issues in the Cross River Region of Southeastern Nigeria*. Pittsburgh: Dorrance Publishing. 145 pp.

Simon Ottenberg, emeritus professor of anthropology at the University of Washington, joined the ancestors on November 1, 2023. He was one of those enviable anthropologists who had the opportunity to conduct dissertation fieldwork in southeastern Nigeria before the civil war devastated the region. With the research assistance of Phoebe, his first wife, and Nnachi Enwo, a titled elder and retired schoolteacher, Ottenberg produced a groundbreaking ethnography of Èhugbò that became his first book, *Double Descent in an African Society: The Afikpo Village Group* in 1968 (Afikpo is an “egregious colonial spelling” of Èhugbò). In the monograph reviewed here, self-published at the age of 99, Ottenberg comes full circle—returning to the double descent societies of southeastern Nigeria that first occupied him as freshly minted Ph.D. (p. 14).

In *Double Descent and Gender Issues in the Cross River Region of Southeastern Nigeria*, Ottenberg describes and compares the “so-called double descent societies, or double unilineal descent societies” on the middle length of the Cross River—that is, those Cross River societies in which “patrilineages and patrilineal clans” exist alongside “matrilineages and matrilineal clans” (pp. 14-15). In double descent societies, as Ottenberg contends, the main question “is who controls the residential quarters in the villages and who uses and controls the farmland” (p. 15). He describes the variations of control that exist in double descent societies on both the west side (Ohafia, Erei, Afikpo [Èhugbò], and Agbo) and east side (Mbembe and Umor) of the Cross River and the role that various political, historical, and social factors play in creating that variation. The comparative nature of this study gives the monograph a wider scope than his first book, which analyzed a single Igbo-speaking double descent community on the west side of the Cross River.

While Ottenberg’s initial book was based on pathbreaking fieldwork in Èhugbò, this monograph reaches its conclusions by synthesizing the scholarship of “anthropologists, historians, political scientists, and colonial administrators” produced between the 1930s and 1990s (p. 16). Ottenberg relies heavily on his own past publications as well as those of Phoebe Ottenberg, Philip Nsugbe, Daryll Forde, Rosemary Harris, and Mary Ecoma. There is no new ethnographic data in these pages.

Novel insights can certainly be gleaned from old data when it is put into dialogue with cutting-edge scholarship, but the interlocutors singled out above—Ottenberg, Nsugbe, Forde, Harris, and Ecoma—indicate that Ottenberg has not kept up with the historical and anthropological literature on southeastern Nigeria over past twenty years or so. A couple examples should suffice to make this point. The section on Ohafia (pp. 23-29) does not engage with Ndubueze Mbah’s 2019 monograph on Ohafia (*Emergent Masculinities: Gendered Power and Social Change in the Biafran Atlantic Age*). Additionally, his discussions of masquerade and Ekpe (p. 80) are absent of the scholarship of Ivor Miller (e.g., Miller and Okon’s 2020. “Èkpè ‘Leopard’ Association Songs from the Cross River Region”) and Ute Rösenthaller (*Purchasing Culture: The Dissemination of Associations in the Cross River Region of Cameroon and Nigeria*, 2011). This matters because the ethnographic descriptions of anthropologists like Forde capture a reality that no longer exists. They are snapshots of a bygone world that has since been ravaged by war

and neoliberal policies. The interesting question then is not what variations existed in double descent societies at the end of the late colonial period, but rather how the relationships in the double descent societies that Ottenberg describes have been reconfigured by these transformations in post-colonial society. Answering this question, however, would require engagement with more contemporary scholarship.

At its best, Ottenberg's self-published monograph constitutes an acceptable synthesis of twentieth-century research conducted on the double descent societies of the middle Cross River region of Nigeria. Readers interested in the ethnographic problem may prefer to revisit the original 1968 monograph, which is closer to the literate and non-literate primary sources.

David Dmitri Hurlbut, *Boston University*

Erin Pettigrew. 2023. *Invoking the Invisible in the Sahara: Islam, Spiritual Mediation, and Social Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 344 pp.

Invoking the Invisible in the Sahara: Islam, Spiritual Mediation, and Social Change presents a chronicle of ethnographic esoteric Islāmic phenomena throughout precolonial French Mauritania, Western Sahara, and the Moorish-Arab Maghreb. Erin Pettigrew offers fluent insights into intersectant ideological interpretations of spirituality understood through the physical realm via Qur'ānic and Islāmic-based explanations. Moreover, Pettigrew intricately weaves a historic juxtaposition of how the practice of l'hjāb (Ḥassāniyya term for the Islāmic esoteric sciences, p. 282) conflicts with the fundamentals of Islāmic jurisprudence, and questionably accompanies pre-French socio-politicisms of eighteenth and nineteenth century Mauritania. Pettigrew describes l'hjāb as a term that "connotes veiling, hiding, or concealing" and is an "umbrella term for a range of techniques applied to communicate with and manage unseen spiritual agents." (p. 7).

Invoking the Invisible in the Sahara can objectively be observed as a cultural examination of the unseen and of the psycho-social impressions spirituality had upon precolonial practicing Mauritanian Muslims. The context of Pettigrew's scholarly analysis on l'hjāb seeks to develop an understanding of historical esoteric thought for contemporary Islāmic and North African Studies curricula. However, plausibly, the scholarship of this monograph inadequately sustains historical engagement because the chronological arrangement of l'hjāb is inadvertently overshadowed by the ethnographic research of numerous intersecting Saharan Islāmic cultures. In contrast, Pettigrew effectively introduces the principles of l'hjāb, and its societal influence on social norms and political power in pre- and postcolonial Islāmic Republic of Mauritania.

Analytically, the ethnographic records throughout *Invoking the Invisible in the Sahara* challenges modern researchers to comprehend the schism between esoteric and orthodox Islāmic beliefs. Also, Pettigrew applies oral traditions, recorded interviews, and social media to garner an understanding of often assumed incomprehensible spiritual forces. Though, it stands to reason, because the perception of spirituality is exceedingly subjective, challenging the historical validity of l'hjāb yields incontestable. The metaphysical occurrences documented in Part I: Knowledge and Authority in Precolonial Contexts, and Part II: Rupture, Consonance, and Innovation in Colonial and Postcolonial Mauritania give credence to the power of faith and juxtaposed thought via new age study and social media. However, Part III: Articulating Race,

Gender, and Social Difference through the Esoteric Sciences historicizes religious hierarchy. For example, precolonial Mauritanian Muslims who were classified as a lower social class were associated with animism or sorcerous practices rather than being expert in l'hjāb. This was referred to as racecraft—where skin color was used as a social determinant for behavior characteristics and accessibility to esoteric knowledge.

Due to the religious references, classism, and gender dynamics, and the then social normalcies, it is incumbent upon the reader to receive the documented spiritual history at face value. According to Pettigrew, “arguments about the permissibility and legitimacy of the esoteric sciences within Islam that began early on in Islamic history would later be used as supporting evidence by scholars on both sides.” (p. 50).

In summary, *Invoking the Invisible in the Sahara: Islam, Spiritual Mediation, and Social Change* is a thoroughly referenced and thought-persuading ethnographic literary work. Furthermore, the demonstrated historiography is extensive research of relatively neglected Maghrebian Islāmic psycho-ethics. Though a formidable read, the monograph demonstrates a cultural clash between Arab and traditional African ritual systems perhaps unbeknownst to the modern Islāmic world. Pettigrew's scholastic contribution illustrates how Islāmic mysticism and esoteric interpretations of al-Qur'ān will continuously evolve in the scholarly Muslim world. The academic appeal of this monograph will likely serve as most attractive towards graduate students enrolled in Middle Eastern and North African Studies, Sociocultural Anthropology, Social History, and Religious Studies programs stateside and internationally.

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Jill Rosenthal. 2023. *From Migrants to Refugees: The Politics of Aid Along the Tanzanian Border*. Durham: Duke University Press. 336 pp.

How have refugees helped to transform host countries? How has humanitarian aid for forced migrants evolved since the end of colonial rule in Africa? *From Migrants to Refugees: The Politics of Aid Along the Tanzania-Rwanda Border* is an innovative study that shakes easy assumptions about the social and political impacts brought about by the movement of refugees. Rather than focusing mainly on the individual experience of refugees themselves, Jill Rosenthal considers how local border communities, the Tanzanian state, and international humanitarian agencies increasingly viewed refugees as a group that needed to be domesticated, managed, and even expelled from the nation. In the single district of Ngara that is the setting of this study, local communities had long moved for economic advancement well before the advent of Rwandan refugee migration in 1959.

On the periphery of the kingdoms of Burundi and Rwanda and then German colonial expansion in the late 19th and early 20th century, the circulation of people in this region only began to lead to state intervention after World War 1 and the British occupation of Tanzania. Though Belgian and British officials tried to demarcate sharp distinctions between borders, people in Ngara and neighboring Rwanda regularly worked and traded across colonial boundaries. The 1950s marked significant changes in state policies through promoting more control over Ngara people in the name of agricultural development,

prefiguring the ideology of development promoted by Julius Nyerere's regime after independence. Rosenthal convincingly shows how Ngara people increasingly defined themselves as citizens of a new nation with aspirations for economic opportunity, no matter how few people managed to enjoy this prosperity.

The entrance of Rwandan and Burundian refugees to the district in the wake of the political upheavals in those two countries between 1959 to 1962 set off ad hoc interventions by UNHCR and the Tanzanian state. UNHCR's confidence in its improvisational management of Rwandan settlements were often rejected by both refugees and Tanzanian officials in the 1960s. Many Rwandan refugees, divided in part by loyalties to separate political parties, left in 1963. International agencies such as the Lutheran World Foundation and UNHCR provided aid to Rwandans, who increasingly were viewed as outsiders by Ngara people who identified with the Tanzanian government. Rosenthal notes the distinction between popular Rwandan views of seizing power from elites compared to how Ngara people's acceptance of Nyerere's egalitarian ideals of citizenship (no matter how much the Tanzanian state failed to actually accomplish them). At the same time, UNCHR and LWF staff had to negotiate with the Tanzanian state and Rwandan refugees. For example, Tanzanian authorities pushed UNHCR to force refugees to sign refugee permits and become naturalized Tanzanian citizens, even as Rwandans repeatedly refused to do so.

The last two chapters examine the massive influx of refugees into Tanzania during the 1994 Rwandan genocide and subsequent exodus of Hutu people. Using archival research in state and international agency records and interviews with people in Ngara, Rosenthal engages with the perspectives of a wide range of stakeholders. International agencies clashed over resources, approaches to aid, and even where to place locations. With so many NGOs involved in assistance, new job opportunities and resources emerged for Ngara people. So did squabbles between international agencies with each other and with the Tanzanian government. Ngara people considered refugees as potentially dangerous threats as they sought food and resources. This strengthened a sense of national identity imperiled by foreigners, a forerunner of 21st century anxieties about asylum seekers in Europe and North America. The Tanzanian government effectively forced most refugees to return to Rwanda in 1996, leaving Ngara people suddenly cut off from the largesse that humanitarian aid had brought.

From Migrants to Refugees is a very important introduction to research on refugees in Africa for several reasons. It is well organized and well written, able to be used in undergraduate as well as graduate courses on refugees in history. A *long durée* approach to migration and refugees brings out the motivations and the legacy of previous events that would be lost if one just concentrated on a particular moment (such as the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide). The emphasis of many refugee case studies on contemporary events or the work of a single agency leaves out a great deal of the negotiations that shape humanitarian crises and especially attitudes of host communities. Rosenthal's study also brings out a central challenge of research on many refugee experiences: how can one write about refugees if most refugees themselves are no longer in a former host country? Despite

not having access to Rwandan refugees themselves (now “home” under a government clearly not willing to have researchers disturb its own narratives of national reconciliation), this study effectively captures the complexities of border communities that should serve to inspire research around the continent.

Jeremy Rich, *Marywood University*

Riina Turtio. 2023. *State-Building and National Militaries in Post-Colonial West Africa: Decolonizing the Means of Coercion, 1958-1974*. Suffolk: James Currey. 360 pp.

State-Building and National Militaries in Post-colonial West Africa, authored by Riina Turtio (University of Helsinki), attempts in a comparative manner to unmask the endogenous and exogenous factors that shaped the formation of national militaries in Francophone West Africa. Her book has six thematically arranged chapters. In the introductory chapter, she robustly provides a general overview of the *raison d'être* for the book, as well as teasing out the conceptual framework that guided the analyses in all the chapters. The second chapter examines the extent to which post-independent states' elites in Francophone countries were autonomous in taking decisions that impacted the national militaries. Building on the classic work of Charles Tilly, Turtio affirms the extroversive manner that post-colonial states emerged made them dependent on external agents and patrons in their quest for development. These realities, the author notes, impacted the contours of state-building and the development of national militaries. However, Turtio would seem to have insisted that despite these realities, Francophone African leaders exercised reasonable doses of autonomy in defense decision-making.

The author's core preoccupation in the third chapter is to examine the strategies that the immediate independent Francophone leaders adopted to control their territories and populations. Turtio informs the readers that depending on available resources, each statesman adopted the strategy that suited the situation. She notes that while the leaders of resource-buoyant countries like Senegal and Ivory Coast succeeded in controlling their populations via “coopting” of individuals (Houphouet-Boigny's model) and collectively (Senghor's model), leaders of countries that depended heavily on external aid (Guinea and Mali) adopted a strategy anchored on coercion and manipulation. In the third category are leaders that received few economic or military resources. These leaders (Diori of Niger and Yameogo of Upper Volta) neither resorted to coercion or cooption but rather centralized power and resources in the capital cities.

How the Francophone leaders responded to the challenge of legitimizing the inherited extroverted state institutions, especially the coercive apparatuses and their functionaries, is the focus of chapter four. The author advances the thesis that irrespective of the sizes of the national militaries, Francophone leaders immediately after independence not only faced the challenge of integrating the colonial soldiers into the national armies, but also how to balance military spending with the demands of economic development. In resolving this dilemma, she notes that while many Francophone countries, especially those with strong affinities with France, adopted the continuity approach, the few revolutionary countries sought to ensure the loyalty of soldiers by carefully selecting those who served in the national militaries.

How the post-independent regimes in Francophone West African countries governed, controlled, and commanded the armed forces is the focus of the fifth chapter. Specifically, the author would appear to have attempted to show why the regimes in Guinea, Senegal, and Ivory Coast survived coups until the 1980s, while others did succumb to them. Turtio notes that while the regimes in Senegal, Ivory Coast and Guinea had enough resources to control and manage their armed forces, the regimes in Upper Volta and Niger did not. Beyond resource availability, Presidents Toure, Houphouet-Boigny and Senghor (of Guinea, Ivory Coast, and Senegal respectively) succeeded in stemming coups via coercion, cooptation, and repression. To be sure, Turtio writes, despite the similarities in the approaches of these leaders, Toure's approach in taming the military was more openly coercive than those of Houphouet-Boigny and Senghor. In the final analysis, the author would seem to argue that even though the regimes of Toure and Houphouet-Boigny succeeded in keeping the military in the barracks until they left offices by virtue of death, due to personalized nature of their rule they could not institutionalize stable civil-military relations in Guinea and Ivory Coast. It was only President Senghor who did. In the concluding chapter Turtio brings to fore her major arguments and findings which challenge the extant interpretation that has presented Francophone leaders as stooges of external powers in defense decision making. As she argues, "despite appearances to the contrary, governments in Francophone West Africa did have a significant degree of authority in making defense decisions" (p. 341).

Overall, Turtio's timely book is a worthy addition to literature on the African military. Each of the chapters, chronically arranged, discusses in systematic and logical style civil-military relations, as well as military cum diplomacy of Francophone West African countries vis-a vis France and other powers over the course of the three decades after independence. Another beauty of the book is the author's use of tabular representations. Of course, book is not without a lacuna, for it does not include Togo, Mauritania, or Dahomey (Benin) in its analysis. This would appear to be a weakness. If the reason for this was purposive, that could have been justified in the methodological section of the introductory chapter. Notwithstanding, Turtio has written an historically-grounded masterpiece that should be of immense value to the academic community, especially students of History, Political Science, International Relations, and African Studies.

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