X Africa
Paul Nugent

Bibliography  The quarterly African studies abstracts (Leiden, Afrika-Studiecentrum) provides timely abstracts in English of recent publications, which are broken down by individual countries.

General  Toyin Falola,Africa (Carolina Academic Press) is a multi-volume survey of African history, aimed at undergraduate students, which is scheduled to appear in full over the coming few years. The first two volumes cover everything up to 1885. The first volume adopts a broad regional and thematic approach, while the second addresses themes such as pastoralism, Islam, the growth of cities, medicine and written and oral literature. The chapters are engagingly written, but it is a slight pity that they often don’t explicitly address academic debates. From the title, a reader might expect David Anderson and Richard Rathbone (eds), Africa's Urban Past (Currey, £14.95) to be a book about the recent past, given the overwhelming rurality of Africa until the Second World War. However, roughly a third of the collection consists of chapters which address a much older tradition of urbanism: at Aksum in northern Ethiopia; along the Middle Niger; on the coast of East Africa and in Buganda; and on the Atlantic seaboard. The remaining two-thirds of the book deals with colonial urbanism. There is a consideration of urbanization as a process; the gendering of urban space; the urban economy; and the politics of the colonial city. There is comparatively little on post-colonial cities, which have mushroomed since the 1960s. The chapters are all on the short side, but that perhaps enhances the value of the book as a suitable text for students. Jeffrey Herbst, States and Power in Africa (Princeton U.P., £11.50) compares state building projects in Africa from the colonial period down to the present day, with a peremptory foray into the pre-colonial period. Although the author, a political scientist, is sometimes rather wayward in his treatment of history, his account of the manner in which colonial boundaries have become entrenched contains some valuable insights. Roy Bridges (ed.), Imperialism, Decolonization and Africa (Macmillan, £45) is a fitting festschrift for John Hargreaves. The pick of the bunch is an chapter by A.G. Hopkins which, drawing on a recent literature on nineteenth-century Asante, re-opens the debate about the partition for Africa.

Horn of Africa  Haggai Erlich and Israel Gershoni (eds), The Nile (Rienner, £46.50) is a collection dealing with the inter-woven histories of the diverse peoples living along the Nile in what is now Egypt, the Sudan and Ethiopia (with a slight bias towards the latter). The book begins in the medieval period and concludes with the hydropolitics of the Nile in the twentieth century. Some of the themes recur in Jay Spaulding and Stephanie Beswick (eds), White Nile, Black Blood (Red Sea P.) which is concerned with the southern Sudan. There are chapters dealing with military slavery and Egyptian-Sudanese wrangling over the Nile waters. But the greater part of the volume is concerned with the historical origins of the long-running civil war in the southern Sudan and its more recent manifestations. Violence and identity constitute the two main organizing principles. The contributors consist of many of the leading authorities on Sudanese history.

Paul Henze, Layers of Time (Christopher Hurst, £16.95) is the latest of a good crop of general histories of Ethiopia. The book begins with the first humans, and then turns
to consider the Aksumite empire and medieval Ethiopia, all in a reasonable offers more research detail. The bulk of the text deals with the period since the middle of the nineteenth century. This is an accessible history which will be of particular utility to students. An altogether more formidable proposition is Donald Crummey, *Land and Society in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia* (Currey, £45). This represents the fruits of some three decades of research on the notoriously complex question of land tenure and its relationship to power in Ethiopia. The study is based, to some extent, on documents which were pillaged from that country in the latter stages of the nineteenth century, but its real coup arises from the mining of documentation from the records of the Orthodox Church in different parts of the country. The net effect is mightily impressive. The study begins with the Solomonids in the thirteenth century and finishes in the twentieth century. Around half of the book deals with the period before the nineteenth century. It will stand as a historical landmark for a long time to come. Redie Bereketeab, *Eritrea: The Making of a Nation* (Uppsala University) does not cover very much new ground in charting the emergence of a sense of Eritrean identity under Italian and Ethiopian rule, but it is useful as a synthesis.

**East and Central Africa and Indian Ocean** Johannes Fabian, *Out of Our Minds* (California U.P., £12.50) takes the idea that colonial explorers were bearers (and indeed shapers) of Enlightenment thinking and turns it on its head. Instead we are presented with a picture of explorers who were drugged, fatigued and often teetering on the edge of insanity. His raw material is not the oft-repeated voyages of a Livingstone or a Nachtigal, but lesser-known ‘travelogues off the beaten path.’ The book raises some intriguing questions about how we should approach these texts now, and rather casts doubt on some of the rather literal readings which have tended to hold sway.

There has been something of an obsession with witches and the spirit world of late. The most recent contribution is Luise White, *Speaking With Vampires* (California U.P., £16.95), which is concerned with rumours about blood-sucking vampires in colonial East and Central Africa. The author does not merely seek to understand what lay behind these encoded understandings of the colonial experience, but goes much further in raising basic questions about the writing of history itself. The main case-studies are derived from Zambia, Uganda, Kenya and the Belgian Congo. Joanna Lewis, *Empire-State Building* (£19.95) is a rather overblown treatment of the interplay between welfarism and decolonization in Kenya. The author argues that while the Second World War brought a newfound concern with modernization and welfare in the colonies, there was a limited follow-through in Kenya where the local administration was unequal to the scale of the task and the settler population was often resistant. The book links these failings to the outbreak of Mau Mau, which had to be put down by means of brute force, and subsequent efforts to reinvent a developmental agenda in the context of decolonization.

**West Africa** Nemata Blyden, *West Indians in West Africa 1808–1880* (Rochester U.P., £50) yields the limelight to one of the relatively neglected stranger minorities in West Africa, and is set at a time when it was still possible for those ‘of colour’ to advance within the colonial system. Philip Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects* (Virginia U.P., ) returns to a subject which has been neglected for some time now, namely the emergence of
Pan-African and nationalist ideas amongst the intelligentsia of British West Africa, and especially Nigeria, from the 1840s onwards. Whereas an earlier literature on this subject was often rather turgid because of its narrow focus on the sayings and occasional doings of great men, this book is much more successful in contextualizing their actions and obsessions within a political economy of imperialism. It shows how the elites looked across the Atlantic, but increasingly became concerned with prescriptions for communal self-improvement at home. As a study of the roots of Nigerian nationalism, it is much the best book around. David Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation* (Currey, £16.95) is a re-consideration of what is in some respects a well-worn theme of Senegalese historical writing. It deals with the evolving, and often difficult, relationship between the French authorities and Sufi orders in Senegal and Mauritania between 1880 and 1920. The first half of the book treats thematic issues, while the second focuses on particular individuals, including Ahmadu Bamba who was founder of the most pro-active of the Senegalese brotherhoods in the twentieth century.

Kofi Affrifah, *The Akyem Factor in Ghana’s History* (Ghana U.P./ABC, £14.95) is a unadorned political history of an important pre-colonial kingdom in what is now Ghana. Relations with Asante and the British inevitably loom large. John Parker, *Making the Town* (Currey, £14.95) is a social history of Accra from the 1860s to the 1920s. Part of the book deals with the intersection of new forms of economic and political power at a time of profound change. There is also an interesting discussion of the clash between Ga traditional religion and Christianity. The relationship between town and countryside is equally central to T.C. McCaskie, *Asante Identities* (Edinburgh U.P., £14.95), which is an illuminating exercise in ‘micro-history’ by the only person holding the a Chair of Asante history. It deals with one village, located on the edge of the Asante capital of Kumasi, between the 1850s and the 1950s. This was no ordinary village, given that it was originally founded by an Asante official who was elevated by the Asantehene Kwaku Dua in the 1840s. This means that it has stuck to the historical record in a way that few Asante villages would have. For the later period, McCaskie has gone back to the field notes arising from an anthropological survey carried out by Meyer Fortes and others over 1945–46. Whereas much of the more interesting detail was left out of their report, McCaskie has mined the interview notes in order to reconstruct the earlier history. The book shares with the author’s first monograph a determination to write Asante history from within. Jean Allman and Victoria Tashjian, *‘I Will Not Eat Stone’* (Currey, £16.95) comprises a series of essays on women in colonial Asante. The authors pay particular attention to the changing nature of marriage and child-rearing practices. Some of the chapters have been previously published, but it is useful to have them brought together in this fashion.

It seems that research on colonial chieftaincy is once more in vogue after decades of being consigned pretty much to the margins of research. Richard Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs* (Currey, £16.95) is the first systematic treatment of Kwame Nkrumah’s difficult relationship with traditional authority in Ghana. Despite the inclusive title, the book deals principally with two southern case-studies, those of Ashanti and Akyem Abuakwa. The findings of the study confirm the impression that the Nkrumah regime, which was overtly modernist in outlook, was above all pragmatic in its dealings with chiefly authority. A.E.A. Asiamah, *The Mass Factor in Rural Politics* (Ghana U.P./African Books Collective) is a study of the Asafo movement which attacked chiefly authority in the interwar period. Chieftaincy also receives an airing in many of the contributions to Carola Lentz and Paul Nugent (eds), *Ethnicity in Ghana* (Macmillan, £45). The collection addresses the construction of ethnicity during the colonial and post-colonial periods. Part of the objective is to consider whether the various insights derived from southern and central Africa shed light on the Ghanaian case-study material. The chapters, which deal with Asante, the Ewe and the peoples of northern Ghana, tend to conflict with the suggestion that ethnicity was purely a colonial ‘invention’ and they tend to place much greater emphasis upon indigenous agency. Sarah
Stockwell, *The Business of Decolonization* (OUP, £45) addresses the pro-active and creative manner in which British business adjusted to the realities of decolonization in the Gold Coast. The author looks at significant differences in the behaviour of the manufacturing, commercial and service sectors.

Toyin Falola and Akanmu Adebayo, *Culture, Politics and Money Among the Yoruba* (Transaction, £45.50) is a wide-ranging examination of the place of money in Yoruba history. Some of the chapters which deal with changes in currency forms in the pre-colonial and colonial periods fall squarely within the field of economic history. Those which address the uses and abuses of money are more of an exercise in social and cultural history and are perhaps the most interesting. The concluding chapters deal with the social effects of the oil boom which has created unprecedented social inequalities in Yoruba society. It is a tall order to create an integrated account covering such a long time-period, and it has to be said that the book reads more as a collection of essays than a monograph. John Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Indiana U.P., £35) is the co-winner of the prestigious Herskovits prize for the best book published in African Studies this year. It is based on a in-depth reading of the Church Missionary Society Archives, and may be usefully be read against the two-volume study of Jean and John Comaroff, entitled *Of Revelation and Revolution*. Whereas the Comaroffs were concerned with the remoulding of the Tswana by the London Missionary Society, Peel is more interested in his Yoruba subjects who, he argues, appropriated Christianity on their own terms. The book makes a substantial contribution to a long-running debate about the nature of conversion.

Olufemi Vaughan, *Nigerian Chiefs* (Rochester U.P., £55) is an important contribution to the study of chieftaincy. Despite the title, it is really a study of the relationship between Yoruba chiefs and the colonial and post-colonial states. It confirms the skill with which ‘traditional authorities’ have managed to defend their position against the odds.

Southern Africa

A.S. Mlambo et al., *Zimbabwe: A History of Manufacturing 1890–1995* (Zimbabwe U.P., £12.95) addresses a relatively neglected aspect of Zimbabwean economic history. It begins at the end of the nineteenth century when mining capital was all-conquering and then traces the slow expansion in manufacturing activity until the Second World War when it grew very rapidly. Jocelyn Alexander, JoAnn McGregor and Terence Ranger, *Violence and Memory* (Currey, £16.95) is an excellent collaborative study of dispossession and resistance amongst the Ndebele over the past century. A vigorous debate has been joined for some time now on the relationship between peasants and guerrilla fighters, but the research has tended to concentrate exclusively on ZANU areas. This is the first in-depth study of an area which was loyal to ZAPU. The findings are broadly commensurate, but the authors also observe that rural nationalism in Matabeleland also had its own unique dynamic. The later sections of the book deal with the experience of violence in the aftermath of independence when the Mugabe government despatched the notorious Fifth Brigade to flush ‘dissidents’ out of Matabeleland.

Linda Heywood, *Contested Power in Angola* (Rochester U.P., £40) is essentially a history of the Ovimbundu people from the 1840s up until the 1992 elections. In its coverage of the later period, it provides some useful contextualization of Jonas Savimbi’s long-running guerrilla war. Merle Bowen, *The State Against the Peasantry* (Virginia U.P., $19.50) is a revisionist history of agrarian relations in Mozambique which is firmly grounded in local-level research. The author argues that for all the apparent rupture, there was in fact a continuity in the peasant experience from the Portuguese period, through the days of FRELIMO’s socialism to the market reforms of the present. The supposed continuity lies in the expropriation of peasant land and labour and a failure to credit the peasant option as a serious one.

Clive Glaser, *Bo Tsotsi* (Currey, £16.95) is a fascinating study of the intersection between criminality and politics in Soweto from the 1930s. The author deals with the
emergence of the *tsotsi* sub-culture as an expression of youth alienation. He explores the attitude of successive liberation organizations towards *tsotsi* activities, which was ambivalent at best and often overtly hostile. He finds that the *tsotsis* were drawn more towards the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) than the African National Congress (ANC) because the former accepted the necessity of engaging in acts of violence. Glaser adds a fresh insight into the politicization of gangs in a chapter devoted to the 1976 uprising. Allison Drew, *Discordant Comrades* (Ashgate) is a welcome history of the South African left. The early chapters examine the impact of socialist ideas from further field. One chapter is devoted to the impact of the Revolution Revolution and another to the Comintern’s hand in the ‘Native Republic’ thesis. The Trotskyites, who were well-represented in South Africa, also receive their due. The rest of the book deals with the history of the Communist Party in its various incarnations as well as its rivals. C.J. Driver, *Patrick Duncan* (Currey, £16.95) is a biography of the first (and probably only) white member of the PAC.

For some years, there has been a need for a proper study of the role of the United Democratic Front in hastening the demise of the apartheid regime. Like the Number 9 bus, two have come along at once. Jeremy Seekings, *The UDF* (Currey, £14.95) slices the subject matter along a spatial axis, charting the evolution of the UDF as a national, regional and a local phenomenon. The author avoids any temptation to overplay its coherence and political significance, and thereby finds a convincing place for it within the larger story of the liberation struggle. Ineke Van Kessel, *Beyond our Wildest Dreams* (Virginia U.P.), the other hand, is constructed around three fairly detailed case-studies, some rural and others urban in nature. In a particularly interesting chapter on Sekhukhuneland, which was one of the main foci of rural resistance in the 1950s, the author argues that it was no longer migrant workers but alienated youth who provided the local leadership. Because they are engaged in a rather different exercise, these two meticulously researched books actually complement each other rather well. The issue of identity is currently at the centre of much current debate in South African studies. Thiven Reddy, *Hegemony and Resistance* (Ashgate) filters the history of racial domination and resistance through a prism which is an eclectic mixture of Gramsci, Foucault and Said. It follows a recent trend in South African historiography to treat apartheid as a form of discourse. Courtney Jung, *Then I Was Black* (Yale U.P., £25) addresses the shifting contours of ethnic identity since 1980. It compares Zulu, Afrikaner and Coloured identities, each of which has become a focus of some public debate in post-apartheid South Africa.

**Slave Trade and Slavery** Ludewig Ferdinand Rømer, *A Reliable Account of the Coast of Guinea* (British Academy/OUP) is a translation (by Selena Winsnes) of a Danish text written in 1760. The Danes were important players in the trade of the Gold Coast, including the slave trade, and Rømer observed its operations first hand in the 1740s and 1750s. The book deals in part with European commerce, but also contains detailed observations about indigenous religion and society amongst the Ga and neighbouring Akan states. As such, it is an invaluable primary source for the eighteenth century. Paul Lovejoy (ed.), *Identity in the Shadow of Slavery* (Continuum) is a collection which teases out some of the cultural connections between Africa and the New World. A number of the contributions deal with the Yoruba and the Ewe of West Africa at home, and their cultural influence on the Americas. Christopher Fyfe (ed.), *Anna Maria Falconbridge: Narrative of Two Voyages to the River Sierra Leone* (Liverpool U.P.) is a collection of primary sources together with the editor’s annotations. It combines Alexander Falconbridge’s ‘Account of the Slave Trade’, a classic abolitionist text, with a sharply contrasting collection of his estranged wife’s letters from Sierra Leone. The latter sheds its own light on the internal politics surrounding the Sierra Leone Company in the late eighteenth century. Pier Larson, *History and Memory in an Age of Enslavement* (Currey, £16.95) is a weighty study of the impact of the slave
trade, in the direction of Reunion and Mauritius, on the little-studied peoples of Madagas-
car. The suggestion that the gender division of labour was altered by the trade will
be of interest to historians of the slave trade on the mainland who have tended to reach
similar conclusions. Deryck Scarr, *Seychelles Since 1770* (Hurst, £16.50) furnishes a
valuable survey of the turbulent history of these islands. An important part of the book
deals with the slavery and emancipation. Lawrence Jennings, *French Anti-Slavery*
(CUP, £45) is mostly concerned with debates in the metropole and in the French West
Indies, but limited coverage is accorded to Senegal. The study is useful for an under-
standing of the perceptions which underwrote subsequent French policy towards
slavery in the African colonies.

**Religion**  Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa*
(CUP, £85), represents the life’s work of the late Sundkler, a highly respected theolo-
gian and academic. The book, which runs to more than 1,200 pages, aims to be com-
prehensive in its coverage of region, theme and period. Although it is compendious,
the material is sufficiently well-organized for it to be usable other than purely as a
reference work. For historians interested in the history of the African Church, it will
be an essential port-of-call. While at Uppsala University, Sundkler supervised a large
number of pathbreaking studies of Evangelical missionary activity in Ethiopia. Øyvind
M. Eide, *Religion and Revolution in Ethiopia* (Currey, £14.95) situates itself within
this corpus. It deals with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY)
which grew very rapidly after its formation in 1959. This is a study of how the Evans-
gicals were affected by, and responded to, the revolution in 1974. After many mem-
bers initially embraced the revolution, the EECMY was subsequently persecuted as a
‘foreign’ church and one which was perceived to be in league with the Oromo Liber-
ation Front. This is a book which has much to impart about the church in Ethiopia,
whilst shedding further light on the revolution.

Nehemia Levtzion and Randall Pouwels (ed.), *The History of Islam in Africa* (Cur-
rey, £16.95) is a vast, and elegantly produced, tome intending to offer a synthesis of
the current state of historical knowledge about Islam in Africa. Its contributors include
many of the leading scholars in the field of African Islamic studies. The twenty-four
chapters are divided into four sections. The first deals with the two main pathways of
Islam into Africa: namely the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, and North Africa. The
second section focuses on West African Islam. The third looks at East and Southern
Africa, about which much less has been written. The final section takes up a number
of broader themes, namely women, Islamic law, education, Sufi brotherhoods, litera-
ture, music and material culture. The brushstrokes are inevitably broad, but as a collect-
ive work of synthesis the book is very impressive. It is an invaluable teaching tool.

**War and Society**  Melvin Page, *The Chiwaya War* (Westview P., £44.95) is a history
of Malawian participation in the First World War in the shape of both soldiers and
labourers. It also considers the wider impact of the war on Malawian society. Peter
Alexander, *Workers, War and the Origins of Apartheid* (Currey, £14.95) is a revisionist
account of white and black working-class militancy during the Second World War. It
cautions against reading history backwards, arguing that white labour displayed some
sympathy for the struggles of black workers at this time. Ironically, while acute labour
unrest weakened the Smuts regime (which was seen to side with capital), this merely
opened the doors to the National Party. After the victory of the latter in the 1948 elec-
tions, racial labour policies and the attack on leftwing organizations helped to break
the cross-racial alliances which had begun to be forged. David Johnson, *World War II
and the Scramble for Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe 1939–1948* (Zimbabwe U.P./ABC,
£12.95) examines the manner in which wartime exigencies resolved the labour short-
ages of white settlers as the Rhodesian state resorted openly to the use of coercive
mechanisms. The book also deals briefly with post-war African labour protests, notably
the 1945 railway workers’ strike and the 1948 general strike. The impact of sanctions after UDI is also addressed.

I.A. Nass, *A Study in Internal Conflict* (Fourth Dimension/African Books Collective) is an account of the intervention by the Economic Community of West African States in the Liberian crisis. Surprisingly, it draws on comparisons with colonial insurgencies and other international peacekeeping operations. The author is a Nigerian officer who served in Liberia. Festus Aboagye, *The Ghana Army* (Sedco/ABC, £16.95) is a handy historical source book for that most secretive of institutions, the Armed Forces.