

BOOK REVIEWS

THE CRIMINALIZATION OF THE STATE IN AFRICA. Jean-François Bayart, Stephen Ellis, and Béatrice Hibou. Oxford, Bloomington & Indianapolis: James Currey & Indiana University Press, 1999. 126 pp. cloth \$ 39.95. paper \$ 18.95.

The study of corruption and various forms of criminal activities in Africa is not new. Since the early days of independence, the subject of criminology (including corruption, smuggling, the plundering of national resources, kleptomania, money laundering, etc.) has been the focus of fierce debates in many academic circles. As many sought to provide a comprehensive explanation for the origin and operation of various forms of infractions in Africa, explanations tended to remain as controversial as they were doctrinaire. At the end of the twentieth-century, these problems have been magnified, transcending national territorial boundaries and assuming an international dimension.

Consequently, the study of various criminal activities in Africa has shifted from analyzing the individuals' roles to group responsibility. Thus, the subject has been approached and observed from various dimensions. Jean-François Bayart, for instance, gave a fascinating account of group responsibility for this problem in his 1989 book, *L'État en Afrique: La politique du ventre* [*The State in Africa: Politics of the Belly*].

In *The Criminalization of the State in Africa*, Jean-François Bayart, Stephen Ellis, and Béatrice Hibou expand the study of corruption to include the most recent incidents of state-supported criminal activities in Africa. Whereas many studies on corruption in Africa often reveal individual responsibilities, these scholars include the role played by the state in aiding and abetting corrupt practices. It is this process that they call the "criminalization" of the state.

The Criminalization of the State in Africa chronicles in fascinating detail the totality of state-supported criminal activities. The book analyzes the impact of criminal activities on African nations. It examines the future of public life in Africa, and reveals how African states have become vehicles for organized crimes. It addresses the manner in which African states, through criminal means, cover up the corrupt practices of those in power. The book exposes the linkages between government and institutionalized fraud: smuggling, the plundering of natural resources, the growth of private armies, the privatization of state institutions, and the development of "economies of plunder." The result is an incisive and authoritative exposure of Africa's entanglement in a web of internal and international crimes. More innovative than anything else is the analysis of the internationalization of crime in Africa from two fronts. First, the study deals with criminal activities initiated in Africa by corporate officials, employees of parastatal organizations, and government officials at both the national and continental levels. Secondly, the book examines Africa's role in the internationalization of certain criminal activities involving non-Africans, but supported by African entrepreneurs and policy-makers.

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v4/v4i1reviews.pdf>

Although originally written in French, the book's scope is not limited to francophone Africa. It dwells on the involvement of all African nation-states, south of the Sahara, in the international drug trafficking, money-laundering, currency counterfeiting, credit card fraud, conversion of cash of dubious origin into legal goods, and theft of international food aid, just to mention a few. Throughout the book, the authors contend that "politics in Africa is becoming markedly interconnected with crime" (p. 25). They examined six main indicators of the criminalization of African politics (pp. 25-26) and, interestingly, conclude that "only Equatorial Guinea, the Comoros and Seychelles could be correctly classified as criminal states at the moment." The majority of other African states, write the authors, exhibit classical symptoms of what Bayart calls "la politique du ventre," a Cameroonian popular adage that means [loosely translated], a goat eats where it is littered.

On the whole, the book is a beautifully conceived, richly textured work. Powerful, intriguing, and essentially transcending national territorial boundaries, it offers an important analysis of state-supported corrupt practices in contemporary Africa. The authors might have further explored the varied levels of democratization in specific African nations, and discussed how the leadership of those nations either promoted or discouraged state-supported criminality. Such an exercise would likely reveal the emergence of a "moi je m'enfou" (colloquially translated as "I don't give a damn") attitude among some African leaders. It is this "moi je m'enfou" attitude, resulting from the gross lack of accountability in the performance of government duties, that weakened rigid press censorship imposed by totalitarian governments and now gives a false sense of democratization. Regardless, each chapter pulls the reader deep into the innermost circles of corruption, kleptomania, criminal actions by governments in power, and the resultant destitution of independent Africa.

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Agencies in Foreign Aid: Comparing China, Sweden, and the United States in Tanzania.
Goran Hyden and Rwekaza Mukandala (eds.). New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. 256 pp.
Cloth: \$ 69.95.

Foreign aid researchers have endured a frustrating decade since the Cold War. It was widely expected in the early 1990s that the many problems associated with foreign aid, particularly its manipulation by donors and recipients in the East-West ideological struggle, would give way to a new era of "sustainable development." Unfortunately, the aid regime confronted a new set of obstacles during the decade: widespread cynicism and resentment stemming from the Cold War experience, cutbacks in aid budgets among most OECD donors, and regional economic crises that shifted attention from development aid to damage control, largely in the form of massive IMF bailouts. At the same time, neo-liberal calls for private investments to replace government transfers fueled the backlash against aid while only selectively bringing foreign capital into the world's poorest economies.

Among other lessons of the 1990s, the need for effective development aid was again made clear in areas that could not attract large-scale private investment. This included much of sub-Saharan Africa, which was still reeling from the "lost decade of development" in the 1980s. As many African governments struggled to implement democratic reforms, along with market-driven economic reforms recommended by the OECD and other international organizations, the reduced aid flows hampered their efforts to lay the groundwork for long-term development. Education programs went unfunded, technical assistance to farmers was cut back, environmental reforms were delayed or canceled, and steps to reduce population growth fell victim to religious debates among donors and within some recipient governments.

Into this morass comes the informative, if not uplifting, edited volume by Goran Hyden and Rwekaza Mukandala, *Agencies in Foreign Aid: Comparing China, Sweden, and the United States in Tanzania* (New York: St. Martin's, 1999). Their comparative case study brings well-deserved attention to Tanzania, the "darling" of aid donors during the Cold War whose government somehow managed to attract large-scale aid from such diverse sources as the communist government of China, the kingdom of Sweden, and the hotbed of global capitalism based in Washington.

This volume succeeds in several ways. First, its focus on Tanzania is justified for the reasons already noted. Second, the cross-national approach offers a wide variety of lessons for all members of the current aid regime, including donors and recipients. Scrutiny of the Chinese program is especially illuminating given the lack of attention previously paid to China as an aid donor. Third, the longitudinal coverage allows readers to assess the successes and more common failures of aid programs to Tanzania during an extended period (1965-1995). Finally, the volume goes beyond the "macro" level of aid as a foreign-policy instrument and explores the role of government agencies in devising and implementing aid programs. This is particularly helpful because, as we learn in reading the six chapters, these agencies often played a crucial independent role in determining the shape and outcome of aid projects.

The case study on U.S. development aid to Tanzania most aptly makes this point. Stephen L. Snook examines the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) and finds that the agency's work in Tanzania often departed from the government's general foreign policy goals, which were based on the realism of the Cold War. "Much altruism came from within," notes Snook (p. 107). The AID mission throughout this period was "replete with expressions of humanitarian concerns. AID's officials and the private contractors and consultants who work for the agency do not appear to be driven by narrow self-interest."

The point here is not to exonerate the U.S. government, whose aid program frequently rewarded military dictators at the expense of development. Snook instead illustrates the book's central thesis that aid agencies serve not merely as conduits of aid, but as vital instruments of aid policy development and delivery. A similar lesson is advanced by Ole Elgstrom, who describes how the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) enjoyed "considerable freedom of manoeuvre" (p. 122) and frequently changed direction in administering aid to Tanzania. Specifically, SIDA's early emphasis on solidarity with social democracies yielded in the 1990s to concerns for efficiency and market reforms that had become central to IMF, World Bank, and OECD officials. In this respect SIDA moved from the "solidarity trap," as outlined earlier by Hyden and Mukandala, to the "coordination trap." In neither case, however, was the success of SIDA-funded projects adequately safeguarded.

The Chinese case provides a less convincing example of bureaucratic autonomy. According to Ai Ping, China's government initially viewed development aid as a vehicle for exporting its program of "proletarian internationalism" (p. 158). In the 1980s and 1990s, however, Chinese aid to Tanzania, as elsewhere, became infused with enhancing its own economic self-interests and integrating the PRC into the "donor community." The evidence put forward in this case suggests a more determinant role by Chinese government officials, and less flexibility for the agencies involved with delivering the aid to Tanzania. But again, the results for development were disappointing. "By first and foremost transplanting its own experience from home, Chinese aid did not have much incentive to develop a full understanding of Africa's social formation and economic characteristics" (p. 200).

In the concluding chapter Hyden is joined by Kenneth Mease, a colleague at the University of Florida. They review the diverse experience of the three donors and argue again for the central role of aid agencies as "front-line organizations" in the struggle for Tanzanian economic and political development. Taken together, the case studies reveal the agencies to be "part not so much of the solution as the problem" (p. 228) either by falling into the two traps noted above, or by succumbing to the "accountability" and "insularity" traps outlined in the introductory chapter. Hyden and Mease conclude that not all of the blame for Tanzania's poor economic performance should be directed toward the donors. Tanzania's government routinely failed to make use of the massive inflows of aid that came from almost every developed country during the three decades under review.

Taken together, this important volume sheds much-needed light on one of the world's most complex networks of aid delivery. Although instructive, the depiction of foreign aid to Tanzania as a "tainted enterprise" (p. 232) may only add to the cynicism that provoked rampant withdrawals of aid from sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s. In the years to come, one hopes that temptations to let the Africans "fend for themselves" are overcome by leading members of the aid regime. The humanitarian disasters that have plagued Africa in recent years--from Somalia and Sudan across central Africa to Nigeria and Liberia--make it painfully clear that the world's affluent states can and must seek a more constructive role in this embattled region.

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Globalisation, Human Security and the African Experience. Caroline Thomas and Peter Wilkin (eds.). Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publications, 1999. 211pp. Cloth \$49.95.

This book aims to explore "security from a *human* perspective" (as opposed to the more orthodox *state* perspective) and "to illustrate this perspective by drawing on case material from sub-Saharan Africa" with the objective to help generate "an alternative debate and understanding of security in a global economy" (p.1). The human security perspective (HSP) is put forward as emancipatory, focusing on the household (as opposed to the neo-liberal individual) and collectivity (rather than individual market choice). It centres on both basic

survival needs and liberation from oppressive structures as necessary for human security (p.3). Broadly speaking this approach is designed to "encompass non-conventional concerns such as ecology, human rights, and social capital" (p.127).

The book is divided into two main sections. The first part deals with the concept of security and globalisation. The second part demonstrates the human security experience of specific African societies. These case studies make a grim but informative reading if human security is to be positively effected. In the introductory chapter, Caroline Thomas highlights how globalisation affects human security by compounding inequities of power and resources. In the process "power is located in global social formations and expressed through global networks rather than through territorially based states"(p.2).

Africa's plight is complicated by a variety of factors which "have served to undermine the possibility of legitimate states developing around an inclusive politics." The conventional state-centric security approach did not help. For one, the assumption of state as a provider of security rather than a source of citizen insecurity was misplaced. Indeed states happened to be instruments that destroy the security of populations.

In conceptualising the alternative approaches, Peter Wilkins offers a critique to orthodox security by questioning the past assumptions about the relationship between security and state in international relations. He also explains why Africa is chosen as an object for such a debate. It is because Africa "stands as the most marginalised continent in geopolitical terms in orthodox international relations and represents perhaps the most dramatic area of concern for those focusing on human security" (p.23).

In Chapter Three, J. Ann Tickner discusses gender, globalisation and human security. Though the approach is broad to confirm a global, modern feminist perspective, the author correctly points out that women in Africa, as elsewhere, "face multiple oppressions" (p.49). In Chapter Four, Jan Aart Scholte deals with the crucial but insufficiently addressed aspects and effects of globalisation on communities. Aswini Rays deals with the topic of justice and security in Chapter Five. The author is optimistic that at this age of globalisation, a wider consensus might emerge in the form of democratised UN, reinforced human rights, regional development and support with "the NGOs monitoring the process" (p.97). Yet it remains to be seen if any of these elements are new and how far non-governmental organisations could avoid the problems associated with their governmental counterparts.

In the second section of case studies, Ann Guest argues that the governments of Senegal and Mauritania did not seriously consider the human security of the adjoining valley populations (p.105). The study reveals the interconnections, the pressures and influences of the local and the global, the displacement and violence, as well as the partisan attention of the states towards their *ethnie* in the apportionment of "economic goods in the state" (p.116). Guest is of the view that while the said governments had the chance to listen to their citizens they chose not to, and therefore posed a more immediate challenge to the population of these valleys than any global forces.

Michel Chossudovsky's brief analysis dwells on the case of Rwanda, arguing that economic liberalisation is contributing directly to anarchy and civil war. Chossudovsky argues that "Rwanda's plight highlights the malign impact of neoliberal policies on the current world order in stark and brutal fashion" (p.118). He relates the colonial legacy and the impact of neo-liberal donor policies on the economic structure and social fabric. The author counters the widely held

belief that blames "deep-seated tribal hatred" for genocide. In fact such a belief "exonerates the great powers and the donors" while distorting the "exceedingly complex process of economic, social, and political disintegration affecting an entire state of more than seven million people" (p.126).

Writing on the Horn of Africa, Mohamed Salih argues that the state can be the source of citizen insecurity. He notes with dismay that the end of the Cold War in the Horn of Africa did not lead to prosperity "as the result of reduced military expenditure" and the end of super power rivalry. In other words, globalisation and interdependence did not bring desired political stability of decreasing the utility of force (p.128). Indeed state actions led to more human insecurity, human rights abuse, and absence of democracy and general political discontent. Salih further opines that the end of bipolarity created new forms of polarisation along ethnic, religious, and economic ones. Thus, the deterioration of human security is one of the major drawbacks of the New World order (p.139). He rightly concludes that the end of the Cold War failed to induce significant changes in the Horn of Africa or to improve the mutual security of states and citizens (or subjects) causing "real struggles and wars fought by the dispossessed, the displaced, the hungry, and the victims of human rights abuses" (pp.142-43).

Moving to West Africa, Max Sesay details the historical, social and political factors at work in Sierra Leone and Liberia. In both countries, economic decline and state collapse were exacerbated by global capital accumulation (with enclave mono-economies exacerbated by debt accumulation and external intervention). The eventual civil war and state collapse instituted the gravest form of human insecurity in both countries.

Ali Mazrui offers a final touch to the topic of African security in the nineties as he described the African condition in the eighties. He is of the opinion that the place of states and races has shrunk. This assertion seems superficial but in a stylistic Mazurian way he keeps on asking more questions and, in the process, invites the aspirants to jump on the answers. The problem is that the questions are simpler than the answers. What to do with Bismarck's legacy? Why states collapse? Can the UN do better? How can human security advocates turn their attention to where their mouth is, as opposed to the Orthodox preoccupation with militaristic national security, balance of power, and terror?

True, Africa needs alternative solutions. But what alternatives? Regional integration, recolonisation or self-colonisation? African pax-Africana? Five African states-cum-big brothers "who would oversee the continent?" The employment of an associated "African commissioner for refugees linked to UN high Commission" etc. (pp.166-7)? The trouble with seemingly limitless choices is that most of these were tried at different times but failed. The author is definitely concerned with human security in Africa, but the mixture of his approaches weigh more heavily towards the orthodox conception of state security than the remainder of the book.

All considered, the book demonstrates that neither market nor state "has attended adequately to the human security of Africans" (p.179). Moreover the case studies bring to attention the impact of the policies and actions of the World Bank, IMF, the former colonial powers, regional governmental co-operation arrangements, etc. The gap in human security needs is projected to be filled by "micro-communities" at the village level supported by global political activism drawing from the pool of gender, environmental, and human rights concerns. The analysis in the book calls for a new agenda, with new aims, new methods and results. There is also a demand for fair trade, instead of free trade for African human security (p.181).

In sum the book is readable and a timely contribution on human security, democracy, both globally and in Africa. It comes at a time when much of the promises of the end of the Cold War and the fervour of globalisation have but reinforced generalised misery and uncertainty in Africa.

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People Are Not the Same: Leprosy and Identity in Twentieth-Century Mali. Eric Silla. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1998. 220 pp. Paper: \$26.00.

People Are Not the Same is an excellent examination of the social and political experience of leprosy patients (Hansen's disease) in colonial and post-colonial Mali. Eric Silla's book is based on an extraordinary variety of oral and written evidence. The author conducted extensive interviews with "lepers," indigenous healers, African and European doctors and nurses, and missionaries. He also examined French colonial archives in Mali, Senegal, and France; Catholic missionary records in Rome; and selected Arabic manuscripts drawn primarily from the famous collection at the Centre de Documentation et de Recherche Ahmad Baba in Timbuktu. Silla synthesizes this rich variety of sources into a very readable and engaging account of the social, political, and medical history of leprosy during an extremely dynamic period of regional and global change.

Silla sets for his book the difficult task of examining both the patient's personal experience of leprosy as well as the broad political, administrative and medical histories that affected those personal experiences. He succeeds in this task and even reveals much about how individual lepers and leper organizations were able to influence government policies towards them, and to participate in broader historical events. But the double focus on the personal and institutional leaves its mark on this book. Much of it is organized by topics, such as the process of being diagnosed and socially labeled as a leper; the process of becoming a leper patient in indigenous and colonial health systems; the development of colonial medical institutions and the influence of administrators, missionaries, and the broader European medical establishment on those institutions; and finally the development of a leper community. These topics constitute mini-narratives of their own that as the reviewer of *Choice* magazine pointed out, interrupt the narrative flow of the book. For example, each of the middle chapters (3-5) begins in the early colonial period and ends in the late colonial period. Yet, despite this problem, Silla made the correct choice in organizing the book as he did. The processes that he examines in individual chapters would have been obscured if they had been buried in a single, broad narrative. The book's organization disrupts the chronological progression of the larger story, but it also enhances the coherence of its disparate elements.

Certainly the most compelling mini-narrative in *People Are Not the Same* is the first chapter, which tells the story of Saran Keita, a Malinke woman born sometime around 1915 in a rural village in Mali. Saran Keita contracted leprosy as a young woman and was progressively exiled

from her husband's household and later his village. After returning to her mother's village, Saran lived for a time with her older sister Hawa, also a leper, in their mother's house. There they led lives of internal exile, unable to marry and enjoying little contact with others in the community. They were even segregated from family members, as they were forced to sleep and eat alone. Hawa soon left the village to seek treatment in a big town. Saran finally left home in 1939, after several years of treatment by local healers in and around her mother's village. She resettled in Bamako, the colonial capital, at the invitation of European administrators. In Bamako Saran became part of a leper community that formed around the Institut Central de la Lepre, and was reunited with Hawa, who had married a fellow leper in the community. Saran likewise married a patient and had children. Saran and her husband survived by farming a small plot of land obtained from a local chief associated with the colonial government. In the late 1960s Saran lost her husband and sister to the complications of leprosy. Later she suffered additional economic and personal hardships, some of which were the effects of rapid urbanization on Saran's small community.

The most important contribution of *People Are Not the Same* is its description of the process by which leprosy victims were labeled and marginalized, as well as their personal and collective efforts to resist, and to form families and communities. This process is best revealed in the personal histories of patients such as Saran Keita. But the chapter on Saran Keita is brief and leaves the reader hungry for more details about her life and struggles. Silla also paints brief portraits of a few other patients, chief among them Aldiouma Kassibo and Fousseyni Sow, who reappear, as does Saran Keita, in several chapters, helping to weave together the various narrative threads in the book. *People Are Not the Same* is extraordinary because it humanizes leprosy patients while also placing them in a broader history of large events and processes, but it also leaves the reader wishing to learn more of their stories. Africanist teachers are in particular need of detailed biographies and autobiographies, similar to Charles Van Onselen's study of Kas Maine and Mary Smith's edited version of Baba of Karo's life story. One would certainly welcome such a biography of one of the patients introduced in *People Are Not the Same*.

Another measure of the quality of this book is that it raises as many questions as it answers, effectively pointing the way for future research in the social and political history of illness. Although Silla's narrative of Saran Keita's life demonstrates some of the ways in which the experience of leprosy was shaped by gender, much more could be done along these lines. Did leprosy and migration affect women's view of their own femininity and their role in the family and society? How were they changed by their exposure to European doctors and missionaries? Also, precisely how did one's identity as a leper mediate one's occupational and ethnic identity? What significance did ethnic identity retain in the relationships among individuals within the multi-ethnic leper community? It seems that very few 'Moors' and Tuareg became part of the community around the Institut Central de la Lepre, and relatively few Songhay. Why was that? One would hope that Silla will continue to draw on his extensive interviews to answer these and other questions in future work on leprosy in Mali.

In summary, *People Are Not the Same* is an excellent and unusual study of the personal and political experience of leprosy in twentieth-century Mali. It should be of interest to anyone teaching graduate or advanced undergraduate courses on 1) West Africa, in history or the social sciences; 2) medical history or the social history of health and illness; 3) the history of

colonialism and the role of secular and missionary medical policies in colonialism; and 4) the history of migration and urbanization in twentieth-century Africa.

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UNESCO General History of Africa Vol. IV: Africa from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century (abridged). Joseph Ki-Zerbo and Djibril Tamsir Niane (eds.). Paris, Oxford and Berkeley: UNESCO, James Currey, & University of California Press, 1997. 316 pp. Paper: \$16.95.

One sign of the maturing of African history has been the publication over the last twenty years of two massive eight volume collective histories -- the Cambridge History of Africa and the UNESCO General History of Africa. They differ in several ways. The Cambridge volumes were produced by scholars, most of whom were linked to the School of Oriental and African Studies. The volumes were divided into a small number of long chapters, usually fifty to eighty pages long. The volumes thus have a greater unity and maintain a consistent standard. They are available only in English. The UNESCO History has a very diverse set of authors. Like most UNESCO enterprises, a lot of politics were involved in the assignment of chapters. They are, however, shorter, and the volumes often seek to present different perspectives. More importantly, although the list of contributors is truly international, the UNESCO project is dominated by Africans. Both the scientific committee and the list of authors are over half Africans. Thus, when published, they represented an effort by African historians to present a predominantly African view of the African past. Given the domination of agendas in the field by non-Africans, and the difficulties scholars within Africa have in publishing, this is important.

The UNESCO volumes were also designed to reach a larger audience. Initial publication was to be in three languages (English, French and Arabic) with the hope of eventual publication in thirteen other languages, five of them African. Equally important, abridged editions of several volumes have been published. In volume IV, the bibliography was cut from forty-one to ten pages, the number of plates were reduced, footnotes eliminated, and chapters reduced in length to a little over a third of the original. There is also no author listed for any of the chapters, but rather a separate list of the authors of the originals. One can only assume that the original authors were not involved in the abridgement and not willing to put their names on the chapters that resulted. This is understandable. Most of the abridgements are atrocious. They are fact-laden and often incomprehensible to a reader not already familiar with the subject. There is little attention to causation and little effort to delineate processes of change. Although the chief editor, Niane, lays out some methodological concerns, discussions of methodology are brief and rare. There is little sense of the larger questions and the debates that mark the history of the period.

Since this is not a period on which a great deal of research or synthesis has been done, a more elaborate discussion of problems and questions would have been useful. In addition, it is

dated. One of the problems with large collaborative histories is that chapters submitted early are often out-of-date when the volume comes out, but in this case, thirteen years passed between the original and the abridged edition. A lot has been written since 1984 and even the questions being asked have changed. The selection of themes and the division of chapters also reflects a West African orientation, both in the amount of space accorded West Africa and in the central themes Niane lays out in his introduction: the triumph of Islam, the expansion of trade and trade relations, and the formation of large empires.

Some chapters survive abridgement better than others. Mahdi Adamu's chapter on the Hausa deals with causation and nicely sums up the views of the Abdullahi Smith school on processes of change. Tadesse Tamrat's discussion of the Horn is a coherent picture of process. B.A. Ogot's chapter on the Great Lakes shows that the complicated mosaic of that region can be dealt with coherently. The same is true of A.F.C. Ryder and Yves Person on different stretches of the Guinea coast and Jan Vansina on equatorial Africa. Ogot stresses different patterns of pastoral-agricultural interaction and state formation, but he also underlines that decentralized societies have a history, which is as important as the history of large empires.

The editors' introduction rightly stresses the importance of oral tradition, but the few references to it stress its limited applicability to the period covered in the book. This being true, it is disappointing that few authors use language data. This deficiency is particularly striking in V. Matveiev's treatment of the Swahili. Authors often give language classification, but few use language as a source. Most rely heavily on documentary sources, although Fagan's article on the Zambezi and Limpopo valleys is based almost exclusively on archeology.

The result is a volume that presents basic facts on a period of African history not yet well studied. Some chapters are useful, but there is little reason for anyone to buy or use this book. Students should be directed to the original volume where ideas are developed more fully and there are detailed references that would send the student on to other sources. The original is also uneven. Some chapters stress naked data with little analysis, but many are still excellent. They also present African views of the past, written by outstanding African scholars. Anyone teaching African history should try to come to grips with that. The abridged version of this volume will not help them very much.

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White Slaves, African Masters: an Anthology of American Barbary Captivity Narratives. Paul Baepler, (ed). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999. pp. 310. Cloth: \$46.00. Paper: \$19.00.

White Slaves, African Masters is a collection of nine narratives written by Americans who were held captive in North Africa. Those narratives included are: Cotton Mather's *The Glory of Goodness* (1703); John D. Foss's *A Journal, of the Captivity and Sufferings of John Foss* (1798); James Leander Cathcart's *The Captives, Eleven Years in Algiers* (1899); Maria Martin's *History of the Captivity and Sufferings of Mrs. Maria Martin* (1807); Jonathan Cowdery's *American Captives in*

Tripoli (1806); William Ray's *Horrors of Slavery* (1808); Robert Adams' *The Narrative of Robert Adams* (1816); Eliza Bradley's *An Authentic Narrative* (1820); and Ion H. Perdicaris's *In Raissuli's Hands* (1904).

The anthology begins with an introduction by Paul Baepler, in which he outlines the historical circumstances of the capture of these Americans, most generally the political tensions between North Africa and the United States that included the Tripolitan War of 1801-5. Baepler traces the development of several themes throughout these narratives. The nine authors all have a very strong pro-Christian, anti-Muslim message, a notion of racial "othering," and a condemnation of slavery and captivity, which may or may not be applicable to the slave system in the United States.

The Barbary captivity narrative flourished alongside the American slave narrative, the Indian captivity narrative, and the Christian conversion narrative. Various rhetorical tropes and strategies can be found in all of these narrative types, including a search for God's divine will as a reason for the captivity and minute descriptions of the captors, the surroundings, and the tortures of the captivity itself. Because of these striking parallels, *White Slaves, African Masters* would work well in an early American literature or history course, a course on slavery or slave narratives, or a course on conversion or confessional narratives. Moreover, the texts in the anthology provide excellent comparative resources for those working in any of the above-mentioned fields.

For instance, the Barbary narratives might be read in conjunction with Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845). One may wish to juxtapose William Lloyd Garrison's "Preface" to that narrative, in which he declares that white men who have been held in slavery in North Africa lose their language skills and their trappings of civil humanity, with Jonathan Cowdery's *American Captives in Tripoli* and William Ray's *Horrors of Slavery*, allowing for fruitful investigation into the strategies of American abolitionists. It is also interesting to note that Robert Adams is the only African American included in the anthology and that the white scribe who took down Adams' story indicated that he was speaking an odd mixture of Arabic and English when he was captured, a trauma specifically mentioned by Garrison as happening to white slaves in North Africa.

For this reason, one may want to read Adams' narrative alongside other American slave narratives. His views of the continent appear to be, by and large, similar to the dominant white American culture of the nineteenth century, possibly owing in part to his white scribe. However, Adams does note that he and a fellow slave of Portuguese descent appear to have gotten special treatment from the Africans. Adams assumes this treatment comes from being lighter skinned than the Africans themselves (Adams was of mixed race origins) but not as light as the northern Europeans who were captured with them. In fact, Adams claims that he excited "uncommon curiosity" among the Moors who captured him because they "had never seen [a white man] before" (229). At the same time, the scribe parenthetically notes that Adams was "a very dark man, with short curly black hair" (229). By including Adams in this anthology, Baepler exposes multiple levels of racial ideology and prejudice existing during the 1800s.

Interestingly, the social class of the captive was used by the North Africans to determine the treatment the captive received in slavery. Cowdery's and Ray's narratives read together produce a clear picture of this system. Cowdery was a naval doctor, became the personal physician to the Bashaw of Tripoli, and spent his days treating his patients and strolling in the

personal gardens of the Bashaw. Ray, on the other hand, was an enlisted seaman aboard the same vessel as Cowdery. His narrative is a corrective to the vision of North African slavery that Cowdery produces. Ray proclaims, in fact, that "when the Doctor says *we*, it is the very same as if he had said *we officers only*" for the enlisted men suffered from hunger, cold, and abuse that the officers knew nothing of (189). The officers and upper class passengers that were captured fared far better in North African slavery than the common people.

Of course, differentiation among slaves emerged in the American system of slavery. This classification system, however, was imposed on the captives by their oppressors and had no reference point in the captives' own social systems. In fact, the American system existed only to distinguish house slaves from field slaves or female concubine slaves from others. An interesting comparison may be drawn between African American women's slave narratives, such as Harriet Jacobs's and Mary Prince's narratives, and the narratives of Eliza Bradley and Maria Martin. Neither Bradley nor Martin claim to have been sexually assaulted, while a great deal of Jacobs' and Prince's stories detail their maneuverings around the sexual advances of their owners. Bradley's narrative is generally acknowledged to be fictive; the author liberally borrowed sections of the narrative from an account authored by James Riley. One must keep in mind, however, that Jacobs's narrative was also thought to be fiction (or written by a white woman) until the 1980s.

While this collection is by no means exhaustive, *White Slaves, African Masters* can be considered a welcome addition to early American literature and early American history. Baepler has assembled these narratives from a racially and economically diverse group of men and women cutting across many centuries. Those studying American racial or religious ideology will find his collection a convenient starting place for an archaeological comparison of dominant American thought about Africa and Africans, about Muslims, and about slavery.

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Juan Maria Schuver's Travels in North East Africa 1880-1883. Wendy James, Gerd Baumann, and Douglas H. Johnson (eds.). London: The Hakluyt Society, 1996. pp. 392. Cloth: \$ 63.00.

The youthful Juan Maria Schuver's detailed descriptions of the Sudanese-Ethiopian border region in the early 1880s constitute an extremely valuable and exciting new contribution to the travel literature of late nineteenth-century Africa. Published by The Hakluyt Society, this lengthy volume is a sort of "recueil de textes" assembled, introduced, annotated, and, in some cases, translated by the editors with great care. They most appropriately dedicate the book to Richard Hill, one of the great scholars of modern Sudan.

The editors open with an essay of a hundred pages. They introduce Schuver, provide political and geographical background about the regions he visited, describe his almost embarrassingly self-conscious efforts to make his mark as a major traveler with a blockbuster of a story to tell, and situate him in his time. Shorter items follow presenting Shuver's texts and

manuscripts, a concordance to guide the reader through their various versions in various languages, an outline chronology, a glossary of Sudan Arabic, notes on ethnic and place names, and biographical sketches of major historical figures in Sudan at the time. Several of Schuwer's maps are also reproduced to illustrate his text, but because they are not enlarged, they are not very useful (between pp. 52-53, 180-181, 255).

Schuwer's two major texts are entitled *Between the Two Niles* and *On the Abyssinian Frontier*. Written in English and French, and meant to be two versions of a single account, they appear here for the first time in their totality, although abridged versions were published in German the year of Schuwer's death (Gotha: Justus Perthes, 1883). The tale of their modern discovery is the stuff of historians' fantasies. Long lost, they were found in Amsterdam in 1985, in a space above folding doors which pierced thick double walls between the dining and living rooms of a house belonging to a son of Schuwer's cousin, Jan Schuwer (pp. xiii-xiv, 361).

In addition to these accounts, editors James, Baumann, and Johnson have assembled a third book, *Last Journey South*, from extant letters written by Schuwer in the course of his final and fatal expedition to the White Nile region. The volume also includes eight appendices made up of Schuwer's shorter texts-letters, journal entries, vocabulary lists for languages that remain even today little-known, along with record books, and autobiographical materials--either written to geographical societies in Europe, or found among his papers in Cairo and elsewhere.

Schuwer's *Travels* are valuable for several reasons. First, he visited the volatile border region between the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and Ethiopia during a very critical few years. In the early 1880s, the region lay between the sphere of English and Egyptian authority, and that of the expanding imperial Ethiopian empire. Aware of this "big picture," because the support of the Anglo-Egyptian authorities in Khartoum and regional centers was vital to the success of his expedition, and yet attentive to the realities of local power, because his survival depended upon it, Schuwer offers numerous examples of how local chiefs and warlords maneuvered to maintain their independence, while at the same time avoiding retribution by Sudanese colonial authorities. Indeed, Schuwer walked the same tightrope--identifying himself with the "Turkish" (or Sudanese) authorities when it was required, and condemning them when it helped him to gain access to a chief or a region otherwise off limits. Schuwer also records specific examples of tactics adopted by Ethiopian rulers and their local governors to extend their authority over the Oromo (Schuwer's Galla) in the Blue Nile region. Ethiopian incursions set the stage for the incorporation of the area into the Ethiopian empire in the years that followed.

In addition, Schuwer traveled "between two Niles" during the years when the rise of the Islamic fundamentalist movement called the Mahdiyya in central and western Sudan increasingly threatened Anglo-Egyptian rule. The Dutchman records the comings and goings of Mahdist emissaries--usually Islamic clerics--who brought news of the Mahdiyya's successes in the west and encouraged local people and their chiefs to reject Anglo-Egyptian authority. Finally, the traveler documents the abandonment of vast areas by people fleeing the "ghazzias" of slave raiders, includes vivid mini-biographies of slaves given to him by his hosts or purchased during his travels, and estimates that slaves "constitute at least one half of the population" (p. 11).

Second, Schuwer's writings are of interest because they offer several examples of how he strategized to make his mark as a professional traveler. A young man, Schuwer was ambitious and eager to identify the errors of his elders: "The larger animals have disappeared from these

parts during the last 20 years. [...] I do not disbelieve travelers, if they affirm to have seen lions in parts where they may be found, as is the case on the banks of the Blue Nile, but I know Matteucci cannot have met one between Beletava and Fadasi, because there are none in the whole Berta country" (p. 14). Or: "The forest is nowhere heavy; notwithstanding the enthusiastic descriptions of some of my predecessors in these parts, there is nothing in this quarter of Africa to rivalise [sic] with our splendid Northern oakforests" (p. 23).

During his travels, Schuver also clearly sought to pave the way for the eventual publication of his account. He wrote letters to the major European geographical societies--usually in their national languages; furthermore, he exchanged "notices" and letters with their officers and prominent members. He also may have tailored the various versions of his "récits" to different European audiences. A comparison of the English and translated French texts of "Between the Niles" and "On the Abyssinian Frontier," for example, suggests that Schuver adopted a much more dramatic style in French than he did in English--perhaps because he thought it more appealing to his Romance readers. Of many, I cite but two examples; the first in English: "However, I had made it a principle never to furnish the natives with means of destroying each other. The Arabs import into Central Africa the most loathsome of diseases; shall it be said that the European makes himself the apostle of the demon gunpowder?" (p. 39). The second is in French: "[...]of the one Beelzebub, who will survive all the believers in invented demons, of the great Satan who has the name 'The Powder,' of the infernal God adored by all oppressors and the ambitious, of him who reigns over the unhappy human species he calls his cannon fodder?" (p. 59).

Finally, a letter written to the Royal Geographical Society in 1880, and included in an appendix, demonstrates Schuver's efforts to acquire the training deemed necessary for a successful explorer: "Dear Sir, I wish to receive instruction in practical astronomy, which might enable me to be of some use during my intended protracted journeys through Asia Minor & Mesopotamia. Could I be allowed to receive this instruction from the R. G. Society's instructor?" (p. 251).

The third major reason that these writings are valuable is because they offer a clear example of European ambivalence about Africans. To Schuver, local, non-Muslims were, in turn, docile infants, ignorant savages, and trusted fellow travelers. He writes in defense of the Amam (probably today's Mao-speakers or Kwama-speakers): "Let me just correct a few others of his hallucinations regarding these poor, calumniated negroes. They are not 'the Patagonians of Africa'. [...] They do not 'prefer raw meat.' [...] "They do not wear loincloths of human skin ..." (p. 48). Shortly thereafter, however, he denigrates African intelligence: "But neither the penetrating cry of the muezzin, nor the disciplined exercises and almost military appearance of the Muslims have generated in the negro's heart the need to search for more clearly and strongly formulated ideas about supernatural powers than the fainter notions he already has" (p. 62).

Moreover, Schuver's antagonism towards Muslims and Islam is palpable. This antagonism also was shared by many fellow travelers. Such scorn and xenophobia characterized the French in particular; hence, it is not surprising that Schuver's French account is particularly virulent:

Can it be said that the negro turned Muslim shows himself superior in a moral sense to the black who is pagan, or who has such vague ideas about a supreme being, that they must be classed among those ineffectual dreams which have never had significance for human action?

For myself, I say No! I have observed thousands of blacks professing Mohammedanism, and never in a single case have I been able to find the least trace of humanitarian sentiments, of justice, or morality, of family duties, of brotherhood, of respect for the truth, which develop in the rays of what I have heard called: the spiritual sun of monotheism. This monotheism, introduced under the sign of the Crescent, on the contrary has seemed to me a dark cloud, extending its somber veil over the serene sky of negro primitivism" (p. 59).

Juan Maria Schuver's Travels in Northeast Africa should find a prominent place in the library of European travel literature on the continent. However, this authoritative edition is useful not only for understanding a pivotal period in the region's past, it is also relevant to the contemporary world. The editors underscore this point in the preface: "As the editorial work progressed and the translation became more lucid our fascination grew for the way in which Schuver's writings evoke a North East African past which resonates in so many striking ways with the present" (p. xx). Researchers at Human Rights Watch/Africa and Amnesty International would undoubtedly agree.

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The Rise and Fall of Swahili States. Chapurukha M. Kusimba. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1999. Pp. 237. Paper: \$27.95. Cloth: \$55.00.

The purpose of this book is to document the growth of Swahili civilization on the eastern coast of Africa, from 100 B.C. through the European colonialism in the sixteenth century. By using archaeological, anthropological, and historical information, Dr. Kusimba endeavors to describe the origins of this unique and powerful culture, including its Islamic components, architecture, language, and trading systems. He combines the results of his own anthropological surveys and archaeological excavations, providing a comprehensive study of the origins, rise, and collapse of societies on the Swahili Coast and their broader influence on African history.

Dr. Kusimba definitely views the origins of the Swahili States as distinctly African in nature and he offers historical, anthropological and archaeological evidence in support of this idea. The underlying basis of Swahili societies were long-established populations and cultural mores of African origin. Despite other scholars suggestions supporting extensive Arab settlement and even colonization along the Swahili Coast, Dr. Kusimba maintains that Swahili culture was not simply imported or derivative, but a rich fabric of African manufacture, one woven with threads spun from local fiber as well as imported yarn (p 26). The author repeatedly emphasizes that the ancestors of modern Swahili settled in East Africa long before the ancestors of many ethnic groups. The evidence presented in this book suggests that the Coastal peoples are not biologically different from other East African groups. The cultural diversity of Coastal peoples is similar in magnitude to the general diversity one finds among African peoples. The author proclaims such diversity should be celebrated rather than demeaned by who believe that the Swahili states originated from foreign settlement (p. 202).

The author maintains that the Swahili elite (during the Omani regime) wished to be associated with places from which power and authority emanated. Therefore, they emphasized traditions of blood ties to Oman and Persia while minimizing their African roots. They even claimed to be Sharifs, the reputed descendants of the prophet Mohamed (p. 174). Because of this myth that Swahili states originated from Arab settlements, many modern Africans consider the story of the Coast to be outside the African experience. Thus, the descendants of that colonial heritage occupy only a marginal position in the current order of things. Anti-Swahili sentiments among post-colonial East Africans have arisen from an under-appreciation of the relevance of Swahili history and culture (p. 202).

Dr. Kusimba's book is very well organized. The geography, resources, languages and peoples of the coast are described in detail. The earliest settlements and those that followed between 300-1000 are well documented and clearly described. The role of iron working, the importance of interregional trade, and the impact of Islam prior to 1500 are all discussed at length. Dr. Kusimba also examines the hierarchy of Swahili Coast society. This book not only provides for a better understanding of the complex Swahili polities between 100 B.C. and the sixteenth century, but also lends itself to an appreciation of the relevance of Swahili society and culture in East Africa today.

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Religious Ethics in Africa. Peter Kasanene. Kampala: Fountain Publishers (distributed by ABC Ltd. Oxford, UK), 1998. Pp.110. paper \$11.25.

For teachers eager to whet the appetite of undergraduates for religious ethics, this is a good text. The author presents the positions of African traditional religion (ATR) and three world proselytizing religions on moral issues for a largely African readership. The book provides a basic discussion of the teachings of ATR, Christianity, Islam and Baha'i Faith. It is an adequate elementary text for explaining each religion's position on moral issues such as sacredness of life, smoking, abortion, the use of contraceptives, euthanasia, fornication and adultery. Kasanene manages to distill the various sectarian or denominational views on these moral issues and presented a representative account of an otherwise cacophonous plurality of positions. It informs the reader about the culture of Africa and the pressures exerted by Christianity, Islam and Baha'i Faith on African ethical systems. However, it does not engage any new theoretical discussion or contribute significantly to the literature on religion in Africa.

The book has nine chapters. Chapter One provides an overview of the value of morals to the individual and society. Chapter Two guides the reader through the fine distinctions between ethics and morality, and makes explicit the various internal and external guides to moral decision-making. Chapter Three opens with a discussion on the interconnectedness of religion and morality, and closes with the differences between African traditional religious ethics and those of the three imported religions. The next five chapters are concerned with specific moral issues and the position of each of the four religions on them. The final chapter

makes a plea for the return of Africans to their original worldview if they want to maintain their identity in the face of modernization.

However, Kasanene provides no scholarly evaluation of each religion's position or even a comparative analysis of each of them. Merely listing each religion's position on issues is not what one expects from a book that purports to educate university students. Moreover, the book discusses smoking and alcoholism, but is surprisingly silent on dietary rules. Dietary theory is an important aspect of every religious system and its analysis is central to understanding, at least, the connections between ethics and classifications in any society. Mary Douglas (1966 & 1992) has shown the relationship between systems of knowledge and the systems of society by examining dietary rules and projections from diet to health. Often the vast rules of food prohibitions in Africa are the projection or extension of rules from human life to animal life and are also a reflection of principles of social and political relationships. "Eating the right foods and abstaining from the wrong one publicly exemplifies the system of social categories" (Douglas 1992:265).

Kasanene's book would have yielded more benefits if the author had also discussed the conversion process, especially in light of his call for Africans to go back to their traditional worldview in the face of activities of foreign agents. An analysis of the conversion process would have provided historical context for his argument, and perhaps reveal whether the dominance of the universalistic concept of God over the indigenous African concept of localized spirits is concretely related to the whole process of economic development or is just a reversible fad. Indeed Robin Horton (1971) has explained the 'conversion' of African peoples to Christianity and Islam as a result of economic/societal development and increasing exposure to the outside world. He has suggested that "acceptance of Islam and Christianity [in Africa] is due as much to development of the traditional cosmology in response to other features of the modern situation as it is to the activities of the missionaries" (1971:103). What Horton argues is that the conversion to world religions does not represent a rejection of traditional African religious cosmology. Instead Islam and Christianity played the role of 'catalysts,' that is, stimulators and accelerators of religious changes and conversion which were 'in the air' anyway for purely indigenous reasons (p.104).

Horton's anthropological theory is affirmed years later by Nelson Goodman's philosophical analysis. Goodman (1978) has argued that the conditions for distinguishing right from wrong--the stuff of ethics--and the remaking of world version are not based on comparison with a "world undescribed, undepicted, unperceived." Goodman's (1978:138) idea that "rightness" and "wrongness" or "true" or "right" version is a matter of fit with practice; "that without the organization, the selection of relevant kinds, effected by evolving tradition, there is no rightness or wrongness of categorization, no validity or invalidity of inference..." is key in understanding why foreign pattern of moral order prevailed over the indigenous pattern. In the light of Horton and Goodman's ideas that worldmaking (whether through conversion or scientific paradigm) is from worlds already at hand, Kasanene's failure to examine how existing African worldview interacted with the foreign ethical systems and the kind of synthesis that ensued undermines the value of his book.

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Griots and Griottes: Masters of Words and Music. Thomas A. Hale. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999. pp 410. Cloth: \$35.00.

This study brings together widely scattered information on the griots and griottes, traditional artists who have survived for more than a millennium in West Africa. Thomas Hale examines these artists in order to understand how verbal art is created and used in African societies to achieve personal or social goals.

Apart from the introduction and the appendices, the work is composed of ten chapters. These chapters easily sort themselves into two groups: the first group is a summary and confirmation of results by scholars spanning the fields of folklore, oral literature, anthropology, literature, etc. Indeed, Hale explains in his introduction the need to summarize what scholars have previously found in the course of studying the griot. Clearly, the art of the griot is one of the oldest to be found on the African continent. Yet despite such an ancient lineage, this art and its practitioners should not be perceived as trapped in some traditional past. Instead, the art and the artists consciously evolve in response to the demands of their age, constantly making themselves relevant to the needs of the society without compromising their original mandate (serving as the memory of the society). Hale also confirms, as many have done before, that difficulties arise when trying to study African poetics in translation (pp. 114, 145). This is especially problematic if the researcher assumes an external perspective that fails to surmount the barriers griots and griottes erect around themselves (p. 191).

A second important aspect of this work are the insightful new contributions to the study of griots and griottes. This group includes Hale's meticulous discussion of the origins of the word griot, revealing that it is not indigenous to the communities in which griots and griottes are found. In fact, he states that there are many indigenous artists and scholars who find this term offensive and would rather avoid using it all together. Hale points out convincingly, and with numerous examples, that there are many other terms in indigenous languages that are used by these artists to refer to themselves and their craft. The name griot has, however, tended to stick because scholars, largely Western and foreign, have found it more convenient than having to learn relevant indigenous names. Thus, Hale demonstrates the powerful impact of the external researcher upon the subject under scrutiny. The retention of the term "griot" continues despite the objections of both artists and their societies.

The most appealing chapter is "A Job Description of the Griots" which thoroughly demonstrates the socio-political importance of these artists and their "multi functional role" (p.17). It also exemplifies some of the broader characteristics of African art (socially-based, public, and multi-disciplinary). "Griottes: Unrecognized Female Voices" is also a contribution of some significance. It raises the issue of an urgent need to study the role of gender in performance arts in Africa. The evidence in this chapter illustrates that the male emphasis in most studies of the griot has been created by the researchers' own biases rather than a true reflection of gender relations in society. Indeed the author stresses that "women are viewed as more talented" than their male counterparts when it comes to discussing music and griots (p.165).

This work is a culmination of Hale's research which he began in 1964 and, with few interruptions, has continued for more than three decades. The study reflects the author's extended experience in West Africa. Hale has interviewed, talked to, and interacted with hundreds of artists and other scholars in this field. Yet he is quick to admit that without certain skills--a knowledge of music, a better understanding of the many cultures, and overall acceptance by the griot society--a researcher in his position finds it difficult to penetrate beyond the superficial when studying this important group of artists.

The target audience of this work is primarily a Western academic audience. Because of this, the actual contribution of the griots and those most familiar with their work, remains muted. The author points out the need to include contributions from the griots themselves for a more in-depth understanding. Hale reiterates that "we need to reframe the perspective on griots by including them in discussion" (p.317). This perspective is appropriate, since there is growing recognition of the need to approach African art forms through the artists who create them.

The other area of the text's strength lies in the extensive and valuable appendices. The richness of this topic can be seen in the various audio-visual media that Hale utilizes to create the multifaceted approach required to study African artists. The detailed sources/contacts the author provides will be of value to anyone interested in carrying out library and field research in West Africa or the United States.

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Guinea: Malinke Rhythms and Songs. Famoudou Konate. Budamusique, 1998.

Famoudou Konate's latest CD "Guinea: Malinke Rhythms and Songs," while long overdue, has been well worth the wait. This is Famoudou Konate at his very best - at home in the music with a family of master musicians, "L'ensemble Hamana Dan Ba." For *djembe* aficionados throughout the world, Konate is something of a living legend. Now, for the first time on a commercial label, this legacy comes to life.

Born and raised in the Hamanah region of Guinea, Konate was recruited by *Les Ballets Africains* at its inception in 1958. For 26 years, he was first soloist for this world-renowned national ballet before setting out on his own to make a name for himself on the European circuit. Since the mid-eighties, he has been establishing a reputation in Europe as the foremost Mande master drummer. This has contributed greatly to the legitimation of Malinke music as a formal, complex musical tradition by introducing it to the curriculum of Western institutions of higher learning. In 1996, he was awarded an honorary degree by the Hochschule der Künste in Berlin.



Konate's music is as much story as it is song. As co-producer Nassar Saidani explains in the liner notes: "His music is primarily language. Like a griot making us live out a story with accurate details in his gestures, words and even silences, Famoudou makes his drum talk." These words come to mind, particularly so on "Borokoni", where Konate himself speaks while playing the *borokoni*, or "sorcerer's harp." Inasmuch as Konate's solo techniques can be likened to language, he is not a man of many words. He speaks with clarity, precision, and the power of understatement. The solo phrasing accentuates the melody created by the rest of the ensemble; it does not overwhelm or blur it. His is a subtle song -- refined, not flaired. The result is spellbinding.

Konate's solos on this CD leave no room for doubt about this: there are at least twenty-five distinct sounds emanating from the drum in his hands. On track six, "Könönari," a series of slaps in the solo seem like sounds from somewhere else. Of course, Konate's tones do more than punctuate the pieces -- indeed, they carry them. But what seems most striking at times, for example on "Siwe," a song from the Konyan people, is the depth of the bass tones Konate draws from the *djembe*. Non-initiates might even be led to believe a fourth bass drum has been added to the weave. But this is the deep bass of the *djembe*.

The "dundunba" selections, clearly identifiable based on the pronounced emphasis of the *kenkeni* in the off-beat, are more refined by comparison to the "dundunbas" on the 1996 release, "Hamanah," which features both Famoudou Konate and Mamady Keita. On "Malinke Rhythms and Songs," we encounter the softer side of this form in "Donaba," an ancient Dunun piece combined with a contemporary version of the song to honor a beautiful woman whom the

community had chosen as the village princess. What really comes to the fore here is the youthful spirit of play that has marked Konate's career, from its village beginnings in Sangbarala and throughout the quarter-century he spent touring the world with *Les Ballets Africains*. The sharpness and accuracy of the beat is irresistible. More so here than anywhere else before, the complex interplay between *dunun*, dance and *djembe* drum emerges. This is the first recording in which Konate has enjoyed complete artistic freedom to "choreograph" and direct an ensemble of his own choosing, according to his own aesthetic standards.

One cannot help but note the conspicuous presence of women and children on this recording. They feature prominently and Konate has placed them in the foreground. Indeed, many of the musicians -- Nankouma Konate, Fode Konate, Bijou Konate, Cadet Konate, joined by the Kourouma's and Keita's cited in equal number -- are Famoudou's "children," literally and figuratively. One special featured artist is Konate's nephew, Nansedy Keita, who came down from the village of Sangbarala especially for the recording to solo on several cuts, "Dibon II," "Sirankuruni," "Donaba," and "Lambe".

Most striking perhaps about this 73-minute release is the strength of song throughout. A capella vocals set the tone on the opening track, "Damba", where praises are sung for a young woman about to be married. A splendid blend of versatile voices in varying constellations carry the celebratory spirit of song on this CD and underscore the element of (his)story. There isn't one purely instrumental selection in the 13 story-songs recorded in Simbaya, Guinea. At the same time, the instrumental diversity of the Malinke tradition is displayed here with the inclusion of lesser known instruments like the *borokoni*, the *kodo-kodo*, the *dönsökoni*, the *bolon*, and the *djabara*. The track "Könönari" even includes a rare recording of Konate playing the *tumbadoras*.

This release promises to become a milestone in the Malinke musical tradition. With any luck, it will finally provide recognition for a master musician who has gotten far too little exposure this side of the Atlantic. It is perhaps fitting that this long-established *djembe* master should be the one to make clear to Western listeners that the *djembe*, while it is a solo instrument, does not stand alone. Rather, the collective effect of story, song, celebration and a skilled ensemble of musicians makes up the magic of Malinke music.

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