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Das Jahr des Stieres: Ein Opferritual der Zulgo und Gemjek in Nordkamerun



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and how words, phrases, and even sentences were begun. His extensive knowledge of Africa and its languages help him to develop a fascinating portrait.

Similar readings are presented by composer Isabel Aretz and Brazilian musician Jorge de Carvalho. Both of them show how current dance forms as well as musical sound and rhythm were derived from the African presence. For Aretz, African music is especially prevalent in ritual dance, and it is often produced by musical instruments such as bamboo tubes and drums that were and are popular in Africa. In Brazil, as de Carvalho observes, African sound, rhythm, and instruments can be found everywhere.

Rene Depestre, Pierre Verger, and Sidney Mintz demonstrate how Latin America and the Caribbean have started to influence African culture. Depestre discusses the "Négritude" movement of the 1930s and 1940s, and how this movement provided impetus for African consciousness in a colonized time. Verger shows how many freed slaves returned to the African continent and brought with them new religious practices, languages, and artifacts.

Apart from the many fine essays, there is extensive bibliographic material, giving the curious and the serious researcher much with which to work. For those of us who have an interest in the forced migration of Africans to Latin America and the Caribbean, this book is recommended with enthusiasm.

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Charlotte von Graffenried. *Das Jahr des Stieres: Ein Opferritual der Zulgo und Gemjek in Nordkamerun*. Schweiz: Universitätsverlag Freiburg (Series Studie Ethnographica Friburgensia, 11), 1984. 308 pp.

On the border of North-Cameroon and the North-Eastern State of Nigeria, several tribes, mostly small, live on the slopes of the Mandara mountains. It is a densely-populated region, where people mainly rely on subsistence sorghum cultivation, complemented by some ground nuts as a cash-crop. The elaborately terraced fields indicate a long occupation by these or similar horticulturalists. In between the villages of cultivators live some nomadic Fulani who as cattle raisers and former enemies maintain an ambiguous relation with the sedentary peoples. The object of Charlotte von Graffenried's book is to describe and analyse one curious and important ritual among two minor cultivator groups, the sacrifice of a bull. In a way this study sprang from the wonder of various earlier researchers: How does a society that is based almost exclusively on cereal cultivation happen to have a central sacrificial rite focusing on a bull? How does such a ritual complex function in and relate to that particular religion and society?

This bull sacrifice is of considerable importance in the Mandara region; not only the Gemjek and Zulgo (small groups numbering just over 10 000 for the two of them)

but also the much larger Mafa and the various Mofu groups practice the sacrifice. The custom even is important further south, where I witnessed the sacrifice in the northern part of the Kapsiki / Higi complex.

Von Graffenried briefly describes the basics of the religious system of which the bull sacrifice is part. The three categories discerned – a Creator God, ghosts, and the ancestors – are addressed in each sacrifice. Rituals fall into four cults, three of which are closely integrated with cultivation and one which is the *via zla*, the bull sacrifice.

Von Graffenried analyses the ritual, using Turner's symbolic approach as well as the descriptive scheme put forth by Fuchs in his treatment of Hadjerai sacrifice (Tchad). The symbolism in the bull sacrifice is fairly straightforward, the bull represents the landlord, linking in his demise people's death, life, and fertility. At the same time, the sacrifice has to ward off a host of dangers, a function towards which Hubert and Mauss have drawn attention long ago.

The culture-historical question terminates the book: Why a bull sacrifice among a strictly horticultural people? On closer inspection cattle do play a fairly important role among the Mandara mountain dwellers, even beyond their contacts with the pastoral Fulani. The mountain area knows its own brand of non-humped cattle which figure in many aspects of their culture. In any ritual instance, a "true bull" is called for. The author then wanders into a comparison with the Nuer and the Lugbara, which is a little unfortunate as these examples seem to be chosen more for their availability than for their relevance. The last theory is the most far-reaching one – the view of Zulgo and Gemjek culture as an offshoot of a large and ancient palaeonigratic civilisation which has been lost in most areas but has survived in the Mandara mountains. Actually, this is the aspect which I like least, as culture history on this scale has long since lost its respectability in cultural anthropology. In my view, there is no need to hypothesize a palaeonigratic "Kulturkreis."

Nevertheless, the book is a sound, well-written description of a central rite. A few points raised merited more thorough treatment. One is the social organisation's intertwining with the territorial organisation and with marriage which gets only a scant treatment. Women are notably absent from the book; despite the author's sex, it is essentially a "man's book." In the analysis of the lineage system, the term "matrilineage" is used, a very awkward term for a patrilineal segment of a patrilineal clan. Differentiation of lineages via founders co-wives does not warrant such a terminological confusion. Perhaps the author has not taken enough distance from the native terminology, a general trend which makes the book sometimes difficult reading.

The various theories of sacrifice are treated as separate and more or less mutually exclusive paradigms. In fact, they are not, being fairly complementary as they easily can be translated into one another. Hubert and Mauss' "communication" focus does blend well with Robertson Smith's "commensality" or Turner's "communitas."

Any critique runs the risk of calling for another book, which is not wholly fair. The author did a good job in providing the North-Cameroonian Mandara ethnography with a solid description of a central ritual and with an inventive analysis. Most of the issues mentioned above actually are general problems triggered off by her book. So in

the end, she succeeds not only in giving an exact and detailed description but also in being very stimulating for further discussion, publication, and research, a feat for which any scholar should be commended.

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Khair El-Din Haseeb, ed. *The Arabs and Africa*. London: Croom Helm and Centre for Arab Unity Studies, 1985. 717 pp.

Since the beginning of decolonization in Africa in the late 1950s Arab countries have found it necessary to reconnect with Africa south of the Sahara. An Arab leader like Gamal Abdel Nasser argued in his *Philosophy of the Revolution* (1954) that Africa constitutes the second circle in Egypt's three concentric circles of identity, the other two being the Arab and the Islamic. Nasser's preoccupation with what he and his fellow Arab nationalists called the "Israeli menace" drove him to seek allies and friends in Africa. This he did in a number of ways. But Nasser was not the first Arab leader to deal with the Africans. The Magrebiens and the Arabians to the east also dealt with Africa in the years before the primacy of Europe in African political life.

The book under review is one of a series of studies that have come out in the last decade. What distinguishes this work from those before it is its focus and its authors. In the early 1970s, when the Afro-Arab caravan began to move rapidly along the pathways of international politics, many Western and Third World intellectuals and scholars began to examine the nature of what was then believed by many to be a new phenomenon in international politics. Africa and the Middle Eastern states coexisted in the Bandung Movement; they journeyed together to the United Nations General Assembly. But up until the mid-1970s, closer bonds, which resulted in the greater coordination of policies in major international politics, did not develop. In fact, prior to the 1973 massive defection of African states from the Israeli camp, most of the independent African states were locked in diplomatic and political embrace with the Hebrew state. Indeed, Africa was unique in the sense that it was the only part of the Afro-Asian world where the Israelis received undisputed welcome. Israeli leaders tried hard to win friends and influence people in Asia but without success. It is indeed against this background that the present book can be adequately reviewed.

The work is the proceedings of a major conference held in Amman, Jordan on 24-29 April 1983. Organised by the Centre for Arab Unity Studies, it brought together some sixty participants. Though the conference itself was conducted in Arabic, many of the participants suggested that the proceedings be published in English and French. This book is the English version of what transpired in Amman and tries to capture the various points of view expressed at the meeting as well as the spirit that animated the individual participants. The introduction by Samir R. Boutros treats us to twenty-three pages of summary and analysis.

In looking into the contents of this book, seven points strike the attention of the reviewer. First of all, unlike the studies done by Western and non-Western scholars, this book seeks to cover the entire gamut of Afro-Arab relations. Whereas Anthony