



Omary Sy Anio (Hier et Aujourd'hui)

Review Author[s]:
Stephen Ellis

The Journal of African History, Vol. 22, No. 3. (1981), pp. 431-432.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0021-8537%281981%2922%3A3%3C431%3AOSA%28EA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-F>

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Les Arts des Sao, Cameroun, Tchad, Nigeria. Par JEAN-PAUL et ANNIE LEBEUF. Photographies Dominique Darbois. Paris: Chêne, 1977. Pp. 208, 94 plates. 160 F.

This book is extremely well produced and has beautiful illustrations (some in colour) of pots, terracotta sculptures and copper alloy castings from the area south and south-east of Lake Chad to which the authors have dedicated their working lives. The text introduces 'the environment and the people' and then 'the archaeology' before describing 'the archaeological material' which is the core of the book. The text is provided with a wide margin in which the reviewer could not resist writing his comments, often asking for the source of the assertions made in the text. We are told that the construction of Kano is attributed to the Sao – but not by whom. We are told that legend has made giants of the Sao, attributing to them most diverse origins and most fabulous exploits, yet the authors are prepared to accept, without explaining why, the interpretations of abstract geometric patterns on pottery and of the meaning of the sculpture offered, presumably, by these same unspecified informants.

The account of the archaeology I find baffling. The authors refer to 'the ancient cultures brought together under the name of Sao' by which they appear to refer to their division of the sites into a classification of Sao I, II, III and now IV by criteria which are only partly archaeological. At times the authors seem to imply that these divisions are in part chronological, though radiocarbon dates are given for only I and II and both these cover much the same time-span. One is forced to wonder whether the term Sao has any real meaning as a cultural term. The authors repeat their claim that smoking pipes, present from the eleventh century, were used for smoking *Datura* before tobacco was introduced. Yet they do not illustrate a single pipe, so that we cannot compare their forms with those from other parts of West Africa, especially Ghana, where they seem to develop from European prototypes introduced with tobacco. Since the book claims to cover Nigeria, it is strange that not only is no serious use made of Connah's important results from Daima, but it concludes by recommending the large-scale excavation of a carefully selected site – precisely what Connah has already done!

The book makes available a wide range of photographs, but the text will not be of much help to scholars.

University of Glasgow

FRANK WILLETT

Omalý Sy Anio (Hier et Aujourd'hui): Journal of the Département d'histoire, Université de Madagascar. Nos. 1-9 (1975-9). Annual subscription price: 64F (French).

Omalý sy Anio means 'Yesterday and Today' in the Malagasy language. It is the title of a periodical of high quality which is published by the history department of the University of Madagascar, in theory every six months. In fact the two issues for the year normally come out together. The journal is aimed at students of Malagasy history of all nationalities: articles are in either French or English, and the authors include Malagasy, French, Norwegian, British and American scholars.

Most issues are divided into four sections. First come the articles on Malagasy history, some of which will be of interest to students of countries other than Madagascar. To take an example from the first number, dating from 1975, Faranirina Esoavelomandroso's study of an anti-colonial revolt in the south of Madagascar might be useful for people who are interested in resistance movements in continental Africa. Next comes a section intended chiefly for consumption by students at the University of Madagascar or by teachers of history. It usually

contains more general discussions, especially of historical method. Some of these, however, are far from elementary. Thus Jean Fremigacci's essay on the structure of colonial government in nos. 7-8 (1978) is a most entertaining piece and deserves to be widely read. The third section is of edited material, mostly printed versions of important manuscripts relating to Madagascar. Finally come reviews of new work.

Omaly sy Anio already has an established reputation among the tribe of *malgachisants*. Those who want to dip into the history of Madagascar might find this a good point of entry, once they have become familiar with the main themes and dates – by reading, for example, H. Deschamps' *Histoire de Madagascar*. Africanists who have become wary of Madagascar might be agreeably surprised by the relevance and accessibility of some of these articles.

St Antony's College, Oxford

STEPHEN ELLIS

Guide to the Hoover Institution Archives. By CHARLES G. PALM and DALE REED. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1980. Pp. xii + 418. \$50.

The archival and manuscript holdings of the Hoover Institution totalled 3,569 accessions at the time of publication and occupy approximately 18,000 linear feet of shelving. They are mostly concerned with the fields of political, economic, social and military history since the late nineteenth century for most geographical areas. The holdings relating to Africa are only 1.1 per cent measured by volume, and 5.4 per cent measured by number of accessions. The African archival materials relate primarily to ethnic customs, colonialism and colonial administration, nationalism and revolutionary movements.

The present guide covers practically all archival and manuscript material accessioned up to the end of 1978. Entries are numbered consecutively and arranged in two alphabetical sections. The first and larger of these describes material maintained in the archives. These are mostly originals. The second describes microfilms of archival and manuscript materials held in private hands or at other repositories. These microfilms are held in the Hoover Institution Library, which is administered separately from the archives. The past twenty years has been the most productive period of archival acquisition. Items of particular interest in the African collection acquired since 1960 include the research files of S. Herbert Frankel relating to economic conditions in South Africa, Zimbabwe and East Africa, Lewis H. Gann on Central African history, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and German colonialism in Africa, René Lemarchand on the political development of Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi, Keith Middlemas on political events in Portugal and Southern Africa, and Frederick Quinn on the Beti society of Cameroun.

School of Oriental and African Studies
London

M. D. MCKEE