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INDICE / TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARTICOLI / ARTICLES

- Patrick Y. Whang, *"We pray that they should never win elections":
The Basutoland Congress Party as Opposition in the Late Colonial
and Early Post-Independence Lesotho, 1960-1970* 5
- Federica Toldo, *La danse de xinguilamento entre mise en scène patrimoniale
et conceptions locales de la possession (Luanda, Angola)* 27
- Pietro Repishti, *Land for the People, Land for the Gods: Property
and Appropriation of Urban Space in Porto-Novo
between the 18th and 19th Century* 49
- Carolina Domina, *Kutuku: Anthropological Insights into the Nzema Gin* 69
- Alessandra Brivio, *Domestic Slavery and Domestic Work in the Gold Coast
(Ghana): The Invisibility of Women's Labour* 87

RECENSIONI / REVIEWS

- Nicola Camilleri, *Staatsangehörigkeit und Rassismus. Rechtsdiskurse und
Verwaltungspraxis in den Kolonien Eritrea und Deutsch-Ostafrika*
(Roberta Pergher) 105
- 'History of Ashanti' by Otumfuo, Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II, edited
by T.C. McCaskie (Richard Rathbone)* 111
- Arrigo Pallotti, *La decolonizzazione dell'Africa australe. Il ruolo
della Tanzania (1961-1980) (Giacomo Macola)* 115

AUTORI / CONTRIBUTORS 117

RECENSIONI / REVIEWS

Nicola Camilleri, *Staatsangehörigkeit und Rassismus. Rechtsdiskurse und Verwaltungspraxis in den Kolonien Eritrea und Deutsch-Ostafrika*, Frankfurt, Max Planck Institute for Legal History and Legal Theory, 2021, XIV + 297 pp.

This German-language publication, part of the series “Global perspectives on legal history”, traces the legal and administrative history of citizenship in the Italian and the German colonial empire, and specifically in Eritrea and German East Africa. Focusing on the period between 1882 and 1919, before the demise of the German Empire and the rise of fascism in Italy, it asks where and how the two empires drew the line between citizens and subjects. The book’s starting premise is that empire-building led to dissimilation in the colonies while nation-building encouraged homogenization in the metropole, and it examines legal discourse and administrative practices to show how scholars, politicians, and administrators grappled with the legal status of colonial populations. The study builds on the by now substantial scholarship on Italian and German colonialism and on a solid tradition of comparison between the two countries, though this is one of the few comparative studies devoted specifically to colonialism. Regular references to the French and British empires do help situate the practices of Germany and Italy in a broader context but are too cursory to allow for systematic comparison beyond the two cases under review.

The first two chapters provide a historical overview of the two colonies, showing how in each case the terms and logic of conquest in turn shaped administrative and legal approaches to the colonial subjects. Chapter 1 traces the Italian presence in the Red Sea and the establishment of a colony, parsing parliamentary debates in which Italy’s socialist opposition took an anticolonial stance. The central legal question was how far and in what way land and people would be part of Italy, and the debates, as the author’s extensive citations (the Italian originals can be found in the footnotes) confirm, revealed remarkable uncertainty and tension over the status of the territory and its inhabitants. Despite this ambivalence, the eventual regulations placed the indigenous population in a clearly inferior condition, in terms of not only political but also civil rights. Camilleri examines various legal codes and administrative decrees for Eritrea and how they differentiated between “Italian citizens” (and foreign citizens) on the one hand, and “indigenous subjects” on the other. The difference in status came with a clear division in legal systems: Italian law was only for Italian citizens, while the indigenous populations were to follow their traditional statutes. Exclusion from Italian law also meant denial of political rights, an exclusion that the author argues arose

from Italians' view of Eritreans as racially inferior and on a lower civilizational level. Camilleri pays particular attention to the categories with which various pieces of legislation designated the local and non-local populations: "native subjects" (*sudditi indigeni*), "native Italian subjects" (*indigeni sudditi italiani*), "Italians" (*italiani*), "Italian citizens" (*cittadini italiani*), "foreigners" (*stranieri*), "Europeans in general" (*uropei in genere*), and the "assimilated" (*assimilati* – more on these in a moment).

The second chapter presents an overview of German East Africa, where Camilleri follows the same blueprint as for the first chapter, highlighting among other things the violence associated with the colony's creation. Commercial interests were at the heart of Germany's involvement in Africa, and juridical categories and legislation reflected this aim, with commercial contracts used to overcome uncertainties about sovereignty and legitimacy. German East Africa, like other African territories under German control, was designated a protectorate (*Schutzgebiete*) and thus under German "protection" but not part of Germany, and the same was true of the indigenous population, which was excluded from the metropolitan legal sphere. Again, the perception of cultural backwardness and racial inferiority helped justify the exclusions. The early application of taxes necessitated distinguishing between population groups, and as in chapter 1, Camilleri examines the categories used: "natives" (*Eingeborene*), Europeans, Indians, Arabs, and others. A useful, short summary at the end of the first two chapters compares the two settings: Germany's empire in Africa was driven predominantly by economic considerations; Italy's, by political ones. Both claimed a civilizing mission, and in both cases exclusion and segregation were driven by racial thinking. For Camilleri, the perceived level of civilization was the "decisive factor" determining the legal status accorded the colonial population (p. 88). Yet, as we will see, while the racial underpinnings are beyond doubt, the book at times fails to identify the tension between arguments based on biological race and those on culture and civilization. Moreover, by focusing so heavily on race and civilization, other considerations influencing lawmaking are given too little attention.

It is in the third chapter that Camilleri engages more closely with the legal status of the colonial inhabitants. The chapter explores legislation and juridical ordinances in both colonies, positing citizenship as the instrument used by both colonial powers to divide the population according to race. In other words, racism as the "key principle" of colonialism (p. 93) determined the legal status of the colonized. In 1903 the Italian legislator passed a system of laws (*ordinamento*) for Eritrea whereby those metropolitan laws approved by the governor would also apply to colonial territory. The governor also had the power to issue new laws specifically for the colony. The local population would continue to live by their customary legal codes. The *ordinamento* moreover foresaw the promulgation, within 18 months, of legislation regulating relations between Italian citizens and colonial subjects. A penal code for Eritrea was finally drafted in 1908, followed by a civil code in 1909. Though neither entered into force, the Italian authorities

used them as reference. The civil code adopted the language of “colonial subject” (*suddito coloniale*) for the indigenous African population and envisaged four different categories of colonial inhabitants: citizens, foreigners (citizens from other “civilized” states), colonial subjects, and the *assimilati ai sudditi coloniali*, namely inhabitants born in “non-civilized” states who were to be treated like the colonial subjects. Those who were not Italian citizens or foreign citizens and were born in the colony were considered colonial subjects. The status of Italian subjecthood was ascribed like that of Italian citizenship: by birth (*ius sanguinis*), marriage, residency, and meritorious service to the state. Moving from the category of subject to that of citizen was difficult and rare: if a local woman married an Italian, she became an Italian citizen; and a colonial subject could become an Italian citizen by royal decree if they had distinguished themselves, but this honor did not come with political rights (p. 102).

The category of the *assimilati* merits a few words. In this grouping fell the Indians, Egyptians, and Arabs who previously had been classified as “foreigners” and as such treated like other citizens of foreign European states. When initially proposed, this downgrading was controversial among Italian legislators who saw the “civilizationist” status of Indians, Egyptians, and Arabs as superior to the one of colonial subjects. The differentiation between western foreigners and other foreigners created in fact paradoxical distinctions that did not align with what one would generally have expected to be a hard and fast division, namely that between Italian citizens and Jews in the colony. The Jews living in Asmara hailed from Smyrna, Aden, and Yemen. While those from Smyrna were considered foreigners and thus equated to Italian citizens, those from Aden and Yemen were treated as *assimilati* and thus equated to colonial subjects. Here origin mattered more than the kinds of “racial” distinctions generally made by the early 20th century. Interestingly, colonial subjects in some cases asked for a certificate of subjecthood, mainly when seeking to move between colonies and reside in other colonial empires. A lengthy footnote on page 114-115 presents such an interesting case that would deserve further discussion. The limitation of racial-civilizational explanations is evident again when Camilleri turns to the difference between the Eritrean status and that of the Libyan populations under Italian rule. Emphasizing the higher civilizational status of the Libyans in the eyes of the Italian colonizers, the author fails to recognize the importance of the international context or of the strength of the anticolonial movement in Libya.

In German East Africa, neither the German legislator nor the authorities on the ground defined the legal position of the “native subject”. However, the question became relevant when the citizenship law was extended to the protectorates and people there could request citizenship. The discussion centered around who was “non-native” (*nicht Eingeborenen*) and thus qualified for German citizenship: namely the *Schutzgenossen*, i.e. those under German consular protection, and members of other “civilized” states (p. 120). Camilleri shows that neither legal experts nor colonial administrators gave a definition of the “natives” (*Eingeborenen*) or specified who counted as “native”. What was clear was that

they could not become German, even though they were supposed to navigate under a German flag. Indians and Arabs were generally included in the *Eingeborenen* category, though exceptions existed. Demands from Indians wanting to become German citizens led to the creation of a special status for German East Africa, the *deutsch-ostafrikanische Landesangehörigkeit*, in 1903. With it, Germany wanted to tie “colored” foreigners living in the colony to the German state. The acceptance of applications was at the discretion of the governor, and in any case, this status, even if granted, did not confer German citizenship: the selected were to be treated like the *Eingeborenen*. It is unclear if anyone thought it worthwhile obtaining. Camilleri could not find any archival traces of applications from Indians and Arabs and dubs it a “failed experiment” (p. 127). In legal speak the indigenous populations were also defined as *Schutzgebietsangehörige*, as belonging to the protectorate, but this was not a formal status. In practical terms, the *Eingeborene* were those who lived permanently in the colony and were not legally tied to another power. They were thus subjects of the Reich (*Reichsuntertanen*) but not members of the Reich (*Reichsangehörige*) (p. 134).

This massive chapter also explores whether and how colonial experience affected citizenship legislation in the motherland, where Italy and Germany passed major new citizenship laws in 1912 and 1913 respectively. Citizenship, according to Camilleri, was wielded as a tool of both homogenization and differentiation. In both countries, *ius sanguinis* was confirmed as the principal determinant of citizenship. In both cases, the law made citizenship harder to lose and easier to gain – though not for the colonized, who were however not prohibited by law from acquiring it. The colonies appeared in the legislation insofar as it confirmed that naturalization was possible also for those residing in the colonies. In that respect, the colonies were equated to the national territory. Though only marginally present in the legislation, the colonial experience was at the heart of racist and anthropological theories hailing citizenship as a tool of racial segregation; the focus of the legislation, however, was on emigrants and Germans and Italians living abroad. One key difference was that the Italian colonized had a clearly defined legal status, but the native population in the German colonies did not (p. 157).

Chapters 4 and 5 look at the application of the laws, and specifically regarding naturalization (ch. 4) and the place of women and mixed-race children (ch. 5). Camilleri followed cases of naturalization requests in the two colonies from 1892 to 1919 to show the perceptions and expectations of applicants and of the administration. Nearly all applicants were European or from the Ottoman empire, with one single application from an African subject (more on that below). In Germany most applications were accepted, in Italy only a few. In both countries, applications were submitted locally, then moved through the administration to the metropole. Knowledge of language was often taken as proof of belonging, though not all applications were submitted in the language of the administration. All applicants were men, and they had to provide proof that they could support themselves and their families. In the Italian case, police gave an opinion on

applications. Here too, Camilleri's emphasis on race sometimes feels too schematic. For example, he reads the negative assessment of a Syrian applicant by the local police as racially motivated, but the police comment indicating lack of service to the nation in fact aligns with the legal requirement (p. 169). Likewise, when an Indian British subject was rejected in 1908, Camilleri blames it on racism, even though this might well be an early case in which the new categorization of the *assimilati* was being applied (p. 184). The First World War upended naturalization requests, especially when applicants were enemy aliens. Military service for the national community was now a prime criterion, yet African soldiers were not given citizenship. The one exception was the Eritrean subject Sängal Wärqəñäh. What counted, apart from his military accomplishments in the war, was the fact that he was working at the university in Naples and living an Italian bourgeois life. In the colonies, naturalization was "instrumentalized on both sides", by applicants and the administration (p. 197). For example, some employees of the civil administration in Eritrea were granted citizenship who would never have been recognized had they applied in Italy proper. In both colonial contexts, efforts to exploit the system could go either way. Applications for German citizenship from some Austrian employees of the administration seeking to gain a pension were successful. But another application was rejected because the authorities read it as a ruse to get citizenship and move to Germany for someone who would not qualify for citizenship in Germany itself (p. 201-2).

While in earlier chapters Camilleri had highlighted the status of the colonial subjects as "ambivalent" and in the case of Germany as legally undetermined (p. 157), he starts out chapter 5 by stating that the legal status of colonial citizens was "firmly fixed" in both colonies (p. 207). What was of course firmly fixed was the status of inferiority, both social and legal, even when legal definitions were absent. There were a few cases in which for the native population the move from subjecthood to citizenship was possible in spite of their race: one was for women when they married an Italian citizen, another for the children of mixed descent. The idea that a woman's citizenship would follow her husband's led to quite some discussion in the preparation of the civil code for Eritrea. Ultimately it was seen as acceptable, but the code also determined that marriage between a citizen and a subject required the permission of the governor. Subsequent legislation made local administrators responsible for the decision, and in fact threatened them with dismissal if they allowed for such a marriage. In German East Africa, mixed marriages were initially possible (and even encouraged by some missionaries), but after 1891 rendered almost impossible, requiring the emperor's permission. In 1906, the Governor prohibited mixed marriages, even though they were not interdicted inside Germany. Though they were exceedingly rare and eventually prohibited, there was lively discussion of mixed marriages and relations in the German public. Italy continued to allow mixed marriages and mixed sexual relations until 1937. In Eritrea, mixed-race children with Italian fathers became citizens when recognized by the father, which generally did not happen outside of marriage. The civil code for Eritrea did however specify that physical markers

could allow even illegitimate children to become citizens. This was different from the law in Italy, which accepted all fatherless children as citizens. In German East Africa, there was no special law for mixed-race children, and they were treated as “natives”. In comparing the two countries, Camilleri sees a “particular rigidity” in German colonialism, not just in its rule but also in public debates over questions of mixed marriages and mixed-race children, even though they were far less common than in the Italian case. He attributes this to a more “organic model” of nation at play in the German colonial project (p. 255).

The book is a fine study of the legal exclusions enacted by Italy’s and Germany’s liberal states in their colonial realms. In both colonies the native population was excluded from membership in the national community and from metropolitan jurisdiction. While Italy created the legal category of the “colonial subject”, Germany operated with the notion of *Eingeborene* and *Nicht-Reichsangehörige*, without legally defining its African populations. While it was generally impossible for native Africans to change their legal status, Germany was “particularly rigid” (p. 261). Italy seems to have been more “utilitarian” on some occasions, accepting for instance mixed-race children as citizens to fight in World War I. The conclusion posits a continuity in approach from liberal to Fascist Italy but does not elaborate on this point. Throughout the book, Camilleri emphasizes racist and civilizational thinking to explain the legislative choices made by the two colonial powers. The tensions between race and civilization as categories in the eyes of the colonizer remain however under-illuminated. Similarly, a range of factors that shaped the approach to citizenship receive short shrift, including legal traditions, power relations in the colonies, the agency of native peoples (for example in demanding the retention of separate local codes), the colonizers’ fear of rebellion, or even the emulation of other colonial powers practices. Exploring such historically contingent considerations would give us an even clearer sense of what was distinctive about German and Italian colonial rule.

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'*History of Ashanti*' by Otumfuo, Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II, edited by T.C. McCaskie, Oxford, Oxford University Press (for the British Academy), 2022, xv + 709 pp., 12 pp. of plates.

In 1896 the British colonial government exiled the ruler of the Akan state of, Asante (Ashanti), Asantehene Agyeman Prempeh I, to the Seychelles. In 1907 he began to supervise the research and drafting of a written history of his state. A version of this, edited by a distinguished group of specialists in the history of Asante, was published in 2003. Prempeh I's successor, Prempeh II was prompted by political apprehension and dynastic pride to generate a more extensive account. He appointed a hand-picked committee and from their work between 1937-1946, there emerged the *History of Ashanti*. The core of this remarkable book is a narrative of this extensive West African forest kingdom and a genealogical history of its ruling dynasty from its literally miraculous origins in the seventeenth century to the installation in 1931 of the *soi-disant* author himself as, in effect, Asante's paramount ruler.

On its own, it is a rather unyielding read, demanding detailed prior knowledge and cultural empathy to get close to possible meanings and authorial intention. The great strength of this edition is that the reader is helped to navigate the enormous complexity of the warp and woof of family and polity over time by a scholar who it is fair to say is the only person capable of doing justice to that task. Professor Tom McCaskie's extensive editorial contributions demonstrate his unequalled command of Asante history.

The edited text consists of 16 chapters of varying length. The first and weirdest chapter concerns the origins of Ashanti and it was the last to be drafted. Most of it was, it seems, "plagiarized from *Hebrewisms of West Africa: from Nile to Niger with the Jews* [...]" by an American Jesuit ethnographer, Joseph J. Williams (pp. 68-69)¹. The final chapter is perfunctory, somewhat matter of fact and like the last chapters of many books, suggests that it does not quite know how to end the whole enterprise. The book does not, however, end there; thirty pages of ethnographic appendices and an unusually valuable 38 page of bibliography follow. The appendices were attached to a version of the manuscript by an industrious Ghanaian scholar and conservator of Asante traditions, Alex Kyerematen in the middle of the twentieth century. And lastly McCaskie provides the reader with an immaculate, extensive index. The editorial difficulty of compiling this index which seeks to be culturally sensitive and accurate is spelled out; the detail reflects the hard work put into the Asante Collective Biography Project which McCaskie co-directed with the late Ivor Wilks; but it is also a long, scrupulously compiled index because it respects the Akan belief in what the editor calls "the continuum of ancestors-living-unborn" (p. 635) in which no one is omitted and

1. J.J. Williams, *Hebrewisms of West Africa: From the Nile to the Niger with the Jews*, Baltimore MD, Black Classic Press, 1999 [1931].

no one forgotten; accordingly all those men and women mentioned in the core text, and they are legion, are included.

For those interested not only in the histories of Africa but also in the evidential building-blocks upon which these should be based, this compressed description only begins to suggest its importance. Its rarity is obvious; but, for example, while Ethiopians also bequeathed to us dynastic histories, none of them is plausibly attributed to the active participation of a royal author. What makes this edition special is partly explained by the many layers of scholarship the editor brings to contextualising a relatively short document which, in the course of this process, becomes a book of over 700 pages in length.

Firstly, the original typescript, now happily housed in the museum in the Manhyia Palace in Kumasi, merits and receives an intriguing biography of its own. It is a biography that could have been but happily was not written by Dan Brown. It has been lost and found, has existed in more than a single version and has been misidentified; some of the rumour and counter rumour which swirled about it owed much to the belief that it was potentially politically explosive in Gold Coast/Ghana and especially within Asante. After its long gestation, its royal author conduced at the image of the *History* as something of a sword of Damocles to be dangled over the heads of those who might challenge his legitimacy and hence his authority; he made no secret of its existence while enjoying the sense of apprehension many might have about “possibly unwelcome facts” in the secret text (p. 38). As with Prospero’s books, did the *History* record dangerous knowledge and hence hidden power which could be suggested so long as it remained un-published? The book does serve to legitimate the succession of its author, it also, of necessity, intrinsically faces down claims by alternative aspirants over time. Accordingly, the stories about the lives and deaths of kings, of wars won and wars lost, are charged with contested meanings. McCaskie’s mastery of this less immediately apparent world of innuendo and accusation is immediately helpful if occasionally overwhelming. It is the result of many years of immersion and hard work in archives and especially in the courtly world of Akan kingship, a world of nuances, of secrets, loaded silences and a formal courtly language which is not that of the street or the marketplace. His intimacy with this world is evident not least in the frequency with which he cites his own numerous published works in footnotes.

Like all good editions, this volume needs to be valued for its duality. On the one hand scholars now have access to another rich historical source to add to Asante’s comparatively immense literature. On first reading it, stripped of the introductory and running remarks of the editor, it has all the rather deadening “one damned thing after another” quality of numerous chronicle accounts of the histories of many parts of the world. It is, however, transformed by the awareness that this is a text generated by discussions between a king, aristocrats and courtiers. It is of course about what he sanctioned and his aristocratic informants believed or wished to have others believe had happened to his state over the centuries. Possibly even more importantly, it is about how these Akan aristocrats perceived “history” and as such this book is a significant contribution to our understanding

of an elite Akan intellectual world view. It is a “l’etat cest moi” view of the past. McCaskie tucks away in a footnote (p.115, fn 4) the revealing fact that Prempeh II owned the 1902 edition of John R. Green’s *A Short History of the English People*, a book in which its author triumphantly eschewed concentration upon kings and queens². Prempeh angrily pencilled in, next to this claim, that “The past is the history of kings” implying that kings were central to national histories. Those who thirst after the ring of sea-green “authenticity” from a “time out of mind” will be, deservedly, disappointed in that this history has been nuanced by the cultures with which Asante had been contact; for example, while Prempeh behaved in ways expected of an Akan monarch, he was also a Wesleyan Methodist.

An important source in its own right, this history is only the core of a volume which, I believe, should be read by anyone interested in the historiography of Africa. McCaskie’s scholarship honours the initial intentions of the pioneers of the study of African history. The best of them shared an ambition that histories of Africa should be about Africans, their historical agency over time and, built upon where possible, their own understandings of the past. To bring that off was not a simple matter in an historical area where, for the most part, an absence of contemporary written sources was a constraint upon deeper understandings. Mastery of ancillary disciplines such as anthropology, archaeology, art history and above all African languages constituted some of the ideal toolkit for anyone undertaking the “work of history”, a scholarly, usable unravelling of the histories of the kingdoms and cultures of the African past. McCaskie provides us in this edition, a masterclass in the results of the intellectual effort that goes into a satisfactory reconstruction of not only what happens in history but also of what it meant to those who lived it.

What might we draw from the text and McCaskie’s editorial work upon it? The text of the *History* is a very revealing discourse. It is written in English, and the drafting Committee’s debates were in English so that court servants would be unable to understand the frequently sensitive discussions. Unsurprisingly we learn from it about the intricacy of courtly understandings of royal over-rule, a world of manners, the niceties of necessary politesse and spiritual purity and the threat of dire consequence when any of this was forgotten or subverted. Some of it echoes Kwesi Yankah’s fine study *Speaking for the Chief*³. Importantly it is a much more believable world than that conjured in Robert S. Rattray’s classic description in his *Ashanti Law and Constitution*⁴, which can, in its formality, betray its author’s background as a trained British lawyer. This world was one of intimacy derived from the ambiguous hurly-burly of family lives and the closeness and lifelong animosities generated by limited physical space but one at the same time ordered by the intense formality imposed by the spiritual universe in which

2. J.R. Green, *A Short History of the English People*, London, Folio Society, 1992 [1876].

3. K. Yankah, *Speaking for the Chief: Okyeame and the Politics of Akan Royal Oratory*, Bloomington IN, Indiana University Press, 1995.

4. R.S. Rattray, *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1929.

royals communed with their unforgotten ancestors. It was an often suffocating and class-ridden world in which everyone knew one another's business and also knew his – and her – place. The *History* is unsettlingly poker-faced. There is no recording of ironies or of jokes; little of the material is even remotely amusing. A grim exception is a tale told to Meyer Fortes by the sitting Asantehene about a past event but voiced in the present tense: "So I ordered my people to cut off the head of the corpse, and they played football with it all the way to Kumasi" Fortes added "he ended with a grin" (p. 37). There is throughout an unflinching willingness to share with the reader the fact that this was a harsh state in which royal displeasure could and often did end with death, both quick and long-drawn-out. The number of beheadings make Tudor history feel like a Quaker meeting. The unapologetic honesty of the text and its inherent sense that it was a proud history is memorable.

This is a work and an edition which deserves to be regarded as a great contribution to the historical study of not just Asante but also of the Akan world. I do however wish that the copy sent for review had not literally fallen to bits, page by page, as I read it. The book is published by Oxford University Press and was subsidised by the British Academy and it is not an unreasonable expectation that an expensive work from that stable might stay intact.

Richard Rathbone

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Arrigo Pallotti, *La decolonizzazione dell'Africa australe. Il ruolo della Tanzania (1961-1980)*, Florence, Le Monnier Università, 2021, 329 pp.

In the 1970s, as Henry Kissinger wrote in his memoirs, Julius Nyerere “had an influence in Africa out of proportion to the resources of his country” (cit. on p. 6). Nyerere’s international standing, of course, had everything to do with his and Tanzania’s role in fostering the liberation of southern Africa from lingering European and settler colonialism. This very role lies at the heart of *La decolonizzazione dell'Africa australe*, a deeply researched book which eschews the celebratory tones of much of the existing literature with a view to providing a rounded and empirically defensible account of Nyerere’s foreign action during the first twenty years of his presidency.

Pallotti’s volume is subdivided into two parts, with the key watershed between them being the “Carnation Revolution” of 25 April 1974 and the subsequent ending of Portuguese rule in Angola and Mozambique. The first part of the book, consisting of three chapters, is noteworthy for analysing the often overlooked “Tanganyikan” period of Nyerere’s foreign policy and, especially, his changing appraisal of armed struggle, which he only came to regard as inevitable in 1964, as a result of the obduracy of Portugal and the white regimes of Rhodesia and South Africa, the pressures brought to bear on him by such national liberation movements as the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) as well as the need to retain the initiative vis-à-vis Kwame Nkrumah’s push for continental leadership. No less comprehensive is Pallotti’s treatment of the diplomatic rupture between Tanzania and Britain following PM Harold Wilson’s refusal to sanction a military intervention against Ian Smith’s Rhodesia after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence of 11 November 1965. This break-up (which would not be mended until the summer of 1968) provided the context for Nyerere’s alliance with China and turn to the left in internal affairs.

The four chapters included in the second part of the book are also organized in a loose chronological order, focusing primarily on the new geopolitical landscape ushered in by the demise of Portuguese colonialism and the maddeningly complex manoeuvres and negotiations that, eventually, would lead to Zimbabwean independence in 1980. Thanks to Pallotti’s expert handling of a wide array of diplomatic sources, Nyerere’s agency comes sharply into view, both in his dealings with the other leaders of the so-called Frontline States – beginning with Kenneth Kaunda, whose decision to support the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA), instead of the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola - Partido do Trabalho (MPLA), in the early phases of the Angolan civil war and continuing commitment to the policy of détente towards South Africa were castigated by Nyerere in 1975 – and with the Ford and Carter administrations with respect to their (ultimately unworkable) plans for bringing the Rhodesian and Namibian conflicts to an end in 1976-1978.

The sources employed by the author shape his overall perspective and make *La decolonizzazione dell'Africa australe* a study in international relations – or, as

it is no longer customary to say, diplomatic history. There is nothing wrong in this: the house of history has many rooms, all of equal value. However, Pallotti's conventional, top-down approach will not prove to everyone's liking. Africanists of a more openly socio-historical bend, in particular, may have wished to learn more about how Nyerere's foreign engagements were understood and assessed by his home constituents. If the case of neighbouring Zambia – where opponents to Kaunda made systematic capital of the “high price of principles” both before and after the inception of the United National Independence Party (UNIP) one-party state in 1973¹ – is anything to go by, then the strength of the internal consensus seemingly enjoyed by Nyerere might well have warranted taking a second look. The book would probably have benefited from a fuller discussion of Tanzania's armed forces (Tanzanian People's Defence Force from September 1964), whose plight after the mutiny of January 1964 accounted for Nyerere's positive response to China's initial offer of military aid and which were one of the main tools through which the Tanzanian president sought to achieve his foreign policy goals, not least by extending training and support to the various liberation movements hosted in Tanzania. Here, Pallotti could have profitably engaged with the work of Charles Thomas². But these are minor qualms, and we should be grateful to Pallotti for providing a solid, Italian-language account of Tanzania's international activism at a critical juncture in the history of southern Africa.

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1. Here, of course, I am referring to Richard Hall's dated *The High Price of Principles: Kaunda and the White South*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969.

2. See, especially, his unpublished (but easily available) PhD thesis: “The Tanzanian People's Defense Force: An Exercise in Nation-Building”, The University of Texas at Austin, 2012.