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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

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The Specter of Global China: Politics, Labour and Foreign Investment in Africa
by Chin Kwang Lee. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).
209 pp.+ xvi.

The first two decades of the twenty-first century witnessed increased interest and awareness of China's geopolitical and economic interests in Africa. Many in the West present China as a neo-colonial power out to extract the continent's natural wealth and as a malevolent investor that pays exceptionally low wages, has a poor safety record and employs thousands of Chinese nationals in jobs that locals could perform. In the mid 2000s, this narrative was adopted by African opposition parties seeking to wrest power from incumbent parties by presenting ruling elites as colluding with Chinese investors to exploit locals.

Nowhere was this more pronounced than in Zambia, where China's involvement in the mining and construction sectors became one of the key campaign planks of the then opposition Patriotic Front, led by Michael Sata. Using xenophobic language, Sata denounced Chinese investors as 'infestors' and embraced the Western consensus about China's role in Africa. His anti-Chinese rhetoric in turn provided raw material for a flurry of academic publications that questioned China's practices in Africa. This is the wider context that appears to have spurred sociologist Chin Kwang Lee to write her fascinating book, *The Specter of Global China: Politics, Labour and Foreign Investment in Africa*. If the central research question that motivated her study was clear – is Chinese state capital different from global (i.e. shareholder) private capital? – the choice of Zambia for her multi-year fieldwork was only logical.

Using a multitude of sources including company labour files, observations and interviews with workers, managers and politicians, Lee argues that Chinese state capital is more benevolent than global private capital and offers significant leverage to the host country in ways that global private capital, which is preoccupied with profit maximisation, does not. "Chinese state capital, rather than being more dominant and influential, has made more compromises to accommodate Zambian state and labour demands than global private capital has" (p. 28). To be sure, both are based on the export of capital and the exploitation of labour. A major difference is that while global private capital employs fewer local people at relatively higher wages, Chinese state capital employs more labourers, which helps reduce unemployment, translates into

more people with a steady income, and increases revenue for the host state (in tax payments). The net result is that Chinese state capital provides relative stability and allows for a synergy between its imperatives of accumulation and the development needs of the host society.

The Specter of Global China also corrects a misconception dominant in much of the conversation on China in Africa that Chinese state enterprises do not interfere in the political affairs of the host country. Lee demonstrates that they do. Their closeness to incumbent regimes is political and regularly finds expression through top-level deals. In other words, representatives of Chinese state enterprises who want government contracts or seek to invest in a sector typically go knocking on the doors of local state officials. This is a practice also shared by what Lee refers to as shareholder capital. The key difference, however, is that shareholder capital, stemming from a Euro-American sphere of influence, operates within various bilateral and multilateral guidelines that set political and ethical conditions such as on democracy and human rights. China does not set such conditions, in part because she lacks both the moral standing and the hypocrisy of her rivals who, while disparaging China's studied disinterest in local African politics, invest in undemocratic environments such as Saudi Arabia.

The book also rejects the popular characterisation of China's state-driven investment in Africa as neo-colonial or imperialistic. Lee explains that the use of such terms does not lend itself well to historical comparisons. "There is no military occupation by China in Africa, no chartered companies with exclusive or sovereign trading rights, no religious proselytizing – all things that typically accompanied colonialism over the past century or two" (p. xi). It is also misleading to frame China as an imperial power, the author insists, because "there is scant evidence" to support this assertion especially when one considers imperialism as "a form of political control of foreign lands that does not necessarily entail conquest, occupation, and permanent foreign rule but which presupposes the will and ability of an imperial centre to define as imperial its own national interests and enforce them worldwide in the anarchy of the international system" (p. 153).

While the West's relations with Africa have historically and today been framed as part of the "civilising mission", the continent's engagement with China has been characterised, including in this book, as "state to state relations". If the former is deeply problematic and colonial, the latter obscures the unequal power relations at play. In substance, Lee's argument is correct. Although it is deploying economic and soft power to maximum effect, China has neither imposed its language as the lingua franca, acquired any territories in Africa, nor admitted to a civilising agenda.

The Specter of Global China does have problems, however. One is that it underplays the leverage that the Chinese state corporations have on African states. The other is that of knowledge framing, especially in relation to the uncritical use of loaded concepts such as capital and state. Relations of capitalism are dominated by the state, which in the modern era controls and exports finance capital, as opposed to commodities. By framing the capital from Europe and the United States as 'global private capital', Lee downplays the hidden state power behind these multinational corporations and makes it seem as if the investment transactions are simply dictated by market forces. A key reason why global private capital is so powerful is that the shareholders are indirectly backed by the state infrastructure in their countries of origin and Western-aligned global institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the European Union.

In a sense, the narrative that 'China is a neo-colonial power in Africa' is overplayed by the West and reflects in part the attempt by the United States and major European countries to deflect attention from both their existing and continuing appropriations of Africa's natural wealth, especially in the extractive industries, and the very highly unequal relations that characterise the continent's relationship with Western countries. Embedded in an economic system and financial regulatory architecture that forces weaker states to capitulate to the whims of the so-called global private capital, Africa is still colonised by the West – in real economic terms and symbolically. China's entry into Africa threatens to disrupt these established relations of power and the unease of Western governments derives from the fear of losing a grip on countries that serve as a source of raw materials.

A brief discussion of these dynamics would have enhanced what is an otherwise insightful and fascinating work that enriches our understanding of China in Africa today.

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A New History of African Christian Thought: From Cape to Cairo.
Ngong, D.T. (Ed.) (New York & London: Routledge, 2017),
225pp.

Any scholar or student of religion will be attracted to this book and desire to read it because of its attractive title. Edited by David Tonghou Ngong, the book has thirteen chapters written by scholars based in both the global north and south. The book was in the making for six years, beginning as a course on African Christianity taught at Baylor University in 2010 by Professor Ngong.

Divided into two parts - early African Christian thought and modern African Christian thought - the chapters are logically connected and hang together very well. Together they address how particular theological expressions that have developed in the continent have addressed or failed to address the issues which Christians in particular and the people in general were and are still experiencing.

The introductory chapter by the editor explains the objective of the book. It describes the ideological context in which Africa has been constructed and gives the central organising principles of the book. It also provides the historical contexts of the chapters. This new history of African Christian thought from Cape to Cairo challenges the limiting of African Christian thought only to contemporary African Christianity, excising Ethiopian and Coptic Christianity and early Christianity in Egypt and North Africa, suggesting that the northern part of Africa is not properly Africa. In order to construct a history of African Christian thought that reflects the long history of Christianity in the continent, some important moments of the story of Christianity in the continent, beginning with the place of Africa and Africans in the biblical story of salvation and some expressions of early Christianity in Egypt and the Maghreb or Western North African (present-day Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco) are discussed. This is followed by a discussion of expressions of early Christianity in the Nubian Kingdoms and Axum and finally the encounter of Africa and the West and the Christianity that ensued from that encounter is discussed (pp. 5-22). This was too ambitious to deal with in an introduction, but the editor synthesised the central themes and provided several sources in the notes, which are quite useful for the reader. In dealing with early Christianity in Africa, the pivotal role of Alexandria in the development of Christianity is highlighted as well as the development of the monastic life. Further, a very significant early African Christian theologian in the name of St. Augustine of Hippo is accorded attention.

In introducing how Western Christianity became contemporary African

Christianity, Ngong draws the attention of the reader to the two phases of the Christianisation of sub-Saharan Africa, fifteenth century and nineteenth century. The introduction to the book ends with current Christianity in Africa derived from the nineteenth century renewal of Western Christian missions, but also driven partly by the colonisation of Africa after the Berlin Conference of 1884-5. In line with the argument on page 4, that Christianity flourishes on the continent when its life and thought are seen to address critical issues that face the Christians and peoples of the continent, the introductory chapter ends with the role of Africans in the promotion of Christianity which included the rise of African Independent churches; the development of a number of theologies such as Black theology, Inculturation theology and African liberation theology and African theology.

In chapter 1, David Ngong elucidates the theological significance of the presence of Africa and Africans in the Bible, which he highlighted in the introduction. Joel Elowsky looks at the “Early Alexandrian Theology as a Way of Life” in chapter 2. He confines his discussion to the theological issues. But as he states on page 40, he could only touch the surface of a few of the many different doctrines and practices engaged in Alexandrian theology. He points out that this theology was conditioned by various philosophies of the day. Notably, Elowsky shows how almost all Alexandrian theology is informed by Origen’s doctrine of God, more specifically the Trinity and Christology. Most interesting is the connection that Elowsky makes between the doctrine of the spirit formulated by Origen and African Traditional Religion. He argues that the tendency in African Traditional Religion and in much of contemporary African Christianity to attribute a disproportionate amount of what happens in one’s life to the spirit world, is no different from what was obtaining in second and third century Christianity in Africa.

Further, Elowsky argues that Origen’s Alexandrian African cosmology confesses with scripture that God is the one who indeed brings healing, but God may also use human instruments and tools to bring about that healing. We are reminded that in light of the continuing AIDS crisis, the healing of diseases and illnesses is very important to African cosmology. In concluding, Elowsky argues that early Alexandrian theology is early African theology because it reflects African values and patterns of thought, pairing right doctrine (orthodoxy) with right living (orthopraxy) and it celebrates diversity within unity, truth against heresy, spirituality grounded in the spirit, all within the context of a communal approach to faith and life (p. 50).

In chapter 3 Ngong addresses the topic “Africa and the Christian Doctrine of God”. It is an incontestable historical fact that the development of the Christian doctrine of God demonstrates that the language that came to determine how

Christians are to understand God as three in one and one in three (Trinity) was largely developed by African Christian leaders such as Tertullian, Origen, Arius, Athanasius, Cyril of Alexandria and St. Augustine of Hippo.(p.54). Ngong questions what he deems as a racist belief of missionaries who came to sub-Saharan Africa in the 19th Century that Africans had no idea of God. This is interesting because Ngong's position in this chapter provides an excellent opportunity for debate, especially since Sub-Saharan Africa was a totally different context from the Sahara. We can ask: What were the beliefs (especially concerning God) of the peoples of North Africa before Christianity? There is consensus on the fact that in sub-Saharan Africa, the idea of God among different peoples was unique and there is a huge amount of literature on this. In short, Ngong's position is a reminder that Robin Horton's (1971) theory of conversion as well as Okot P'bitek's (1971) thesis of African Traditional Religion in Western scholarship have not been completely dismissed.

What cannot possibly be contested in this chapter, nonetheless, is the contribution which Africa has made to the development of the Christian doctrine of God (p. 55). In discussing the Doctrine of God, Ngong could not, of course, avoid discussing the heresies of Arianism and Nestorianism. He suggests in conclusion that contemporary African theology needs to engage Arianism, Nestorianism and other "heresies" to broaden the sources available for the development of contemporary African Christian theology. Here, one regrets the absence of any significant discussion of how the heresies will contribute to the development of contemporary African theology.

In chapter 4, Youhanna Nessim Youssef from Egypt writes about martyrs and martyrdom in Christian Egypt. After a brief statement on the theology of martyrdom, and a brief overview of the categories of martyrs in the Coptic tradition, he discusses the tradition of veneration of martyrs and saints in Coptic Christianity. Youssef points to Ignatius of Antioch as having developed a theory about the theology of Martyrdom at the end of the first century. Early in the third century Tertullian added that martyrdom is a new birth. Origen saw martyrdom as a duty for all Christians (p. 68). This chapter shows that Egyptian Copts remain potential martyrs to date. Tertullian's teaching that martyrdom is new birth gives Copts the strength never to give in to their persecution, even to the point of losing their lives.

Elias Bongmba in chapter 5 argues that Saint Augustine's debates and battles with the Danatists involved an excessive and aggressive pursuit of unity that led to intolerance. Bongmba's question in this chapter is why Saint Augustine invested so much into the dispute and fight with the Donatists. In the end he concludes from different analyses of Donatism, that the Donatists' intransigence and Augustine's excessive desire to restore them into union with

the Church led to the suppression and extinction of Donatism which might have contributed to the eventual extinction of the North African Church.

In chapter six of the book, William Parsons analyses reflections on the psychological reception of Augustine's Confessions. The final part of the chapter offers ways to adjudicate between psychoanalytic literature and the historical, literary and theological perspectives. This is commendable. From the Confessions of Augustine, psychologists have concluded that his mother, Monica, hypermoral, frigid and hostile towards sex, fostered an erotic attachment in Augustine; and that she was domineering, controlling and ultimately won the battle with her submissive son. So, from the Confessions was derived a psychiatric personal history of Augustine. Studies of the Confessions went as far as establishing a link between his upbringing and his later theology. Parsons reports the responses from numerous quarters to the oedipal studies based on Augustine's confessions. Showing examples of critics of the oedipal approach in two and half pages provides an excellent summary of vast material. In sum, Parsons acknowledges that there is consensus that psychological analyses of Augustine's spiritual journey are worthwhile and should continue taking on board the multidisciplinary approach.

Part II of the book starts with Laurenti Magesa on Inculturation Theology in Africa. In defining inculturation Magesa makes use of Fr. Pedro Arrupes definition cited on p.110 of the chapter. After a lucid explanation of inculturation, Magesa brings us to Pope Paul VI, who, speaking to the African bishops in Uganda in 1969, encouraged them to develop "an African Christianity." The question is: Has there been inculturation after all? Only to some extent, Magesa concedes, because as he rightly points out, the most significant achievement in the inculturated practice of the faith can be observed, not in the mainline churches, but in the vast numbers of African Instituted Churches (AICs).

Gerald West in the eighth chapter of the book looks at African Liberation Theology; Inculturation theology, South African Black theology, Tanzania Ujaama theology, and African Women's theology. West uses the present tense when discussing African Liberation theology, but we are not quite sure how many of the theologies he has illuminated are active. However, the issue for West is that each of the variants of African theology could be considered a liberation theology, for they each reach beyond the academy and into local communities. This is incontestable indeed.

Chapter nine is written by Rothney Tshaka with passion. He demonstrates that the United Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) is not a genuine Black Church. He makes a bold claim that, "continuing a history of compromise with former oppressors and new governors, academic theology in South Africa today seems to have entered a compromised phase. Black Theology as a critical

theology has been replaced by contextual theology because whites who were involved in the liberation struggle felt left out by the idea of Black Theology" (p.136). What is Tshaka's problem? On page 136 he argues that, "it seems that in a democratic dispensation, black theological language is changed to some 'neutral theology' because the latter best embodies the spirit of a rainbow nation brought about by the negotiated settlement called the new South Africa". In conclusion, Tshaka argues that, today more than ever, Black Theology of Liberation must give answers to the questions of those on the underside who want to make sense of what their citizenship means in present-day South Africa if they are not able to gain access to the basic necessities of life (p.146). Tshaka has a point worth debating given the situation of the majority of blacks in South Africa.

In chapter 10 of the book, Mathew Michael discusses "African Evangelical Thought and its History, Trends and Trajectories". His point is clear: there are now more Christians with evangelical convictions on the African continent than there are in the traditional hinterlands of evangelical Christianity in the West; and African evangelical Christianity is not founded in the luxurious climate of wealth and affluence, but rather in a condition of pain and continuous suffering. This is a point that has been described by those who have written about Pentecostalism in Africa. Michael argues that through theological education, teaching and discipleship, evangelical missionaries left a vibrant evangelical heritage in postcolonial Africa. This is an important point and great missiologists from Henry Venn (1796-1873) and Rufus Anderson (1796-1880) down to David Bosch (1929-1992) have pointed out the importance of indigenisation of churches.

In mapping a pattern in African popular evangelical thought Michael posits what is all too familiar to us about evangelicals in Africa – literalism, use of the Bible as an oracle, vibrant worship with thrilling songs, passionate sermons and moving liturgy, etc. He also posits the dominant trajectories in African evangelical thought such as the dominance of evangelical theological expression in mainline churches. Additionally, he argues that African independent churches could be treated as an important evangelical trajectory and the most widespread trajectory being Pentecostal or/and Charismatic churches.

The eleventh chapter of the book is written by two women and entitled, "The Conception of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians: Is it African or Western?". We are informed about the "Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians" which was launched way back in 1989. The argument of the two authors is that the Circle is definitely African and that its agenda in respect of African women's liberation is consistent with African culture, and the fact that it was conceived in an ecumenical environment does not

imply that it had a Western origin. The chapter is essentially a reply to if not a rebuttal of Carrie Pemberton (2003) who alleged that the Circle had absorbed the ideas of white North American Women. The authors go to great lengths to show what shaped Mercy Amba Oduyoye's theological position. The argument is that the net effect of institutions, family and persons enabled Mercy Amba Oduyoye to establish the Circle with colleagues she was able to find between 1980 and 1987. Furthermore the two authors argue that in coming up with the Circle, Mercy Amba Oduyoye was informed by the African context regarding what was possible, as well as what was already being done, in Africa.

The twelfth chapter by Frans Wijsen is on African Roman Catholic Theology and its history and current issues. Of course Wijsen could only briefly deal with the topic. From the statement by Pope Paul VI: "You may and you must have an African Christianity" to the African Bishops in Kampala in 1969, Wijsen makes an apt point that maybe more than in any other Christian denomination, the tension between global and local is a feature of African Roman Catholic Theology (p.192).

Wijsen first addresses the question of African Theology as far as the Roman Catholic Church is concerned. He has a battery of questions about "African" and what makes "African" and what makes "African Theology" theology? It was when a group of young African priests, according to Wijsen, published *Des Prêtres noirs s'interrogent* in 1956 that Roman Catholic African Theology was well and truly born. We are not provided details or the content of this publication and for someone without any knowledge of French, it is impossible to figure out what the meaning of the title of the publication is.

In any event, after problematizing the use of words "African" and "theology", Wijsen goes on to interrogate the meaning of Roman Catholic Theology. In classifying Roman Catholic African theology, he identifies three methods, namely: interests and areas of specialisation; distinguishing between generations of theologians, or the stages of foundation (roughly between the Second World War and the Second Vatican Council), development (roughly between the first African Synod up to the present). Thirdly Roman Catholic theology could be distinguished between institutions which are run by dioceses and bishops' conferences and those which are run by religious institutes. In dealing with regional centres including the ones he calls "Preferal voices" in Africa Wijsen provides the reader with theological activities at each centre. In conclusion, Wijsen is of the view and quite rightly so, that beyond inculturation theology, there are other concerns in Africa, such as dialogue with charismatic, evangelical or Pentecostal churches. This is an excellent piece of advice to the Catholic Church priests and their bishops. Paul Gifford (2008) has elsewhere advised African theologians to move on from the theology of cultures to theology of development.

The final chapter by Masiwa Ragies Gunda is on contemporary African Christian thought and homosexuality. He explores the issues and trajectories of homosexuality in Africa revealing two dominant trends and trajectories: Outright rejection, and some voices such as Desmond Tutu's, Mercy Amba Oduyoye's, Musa Dube's and Women's theology. The anti-homosexual conception remains the dominant Christian thought on the subject in contemporary African Christianity and the "Foreign Factor" in the debate on homosexuality looms large because both pro-gay rights and anti-gay rights groups in Africa have developed partnerships with like-minded groups from other continents. This chapter also answers the question of how homosexuality is understood by Christians in Africa, through creative use of the Bible and Christian tradition, as well as a daft appeal to African culture which is presented as closer to the divine when compared to Western culture which is presented as anything but Christ-like. The use of the word 'daft' in reference to African culture is rather curious to those who may hold the view that African culture has huge influence on African Christian thought. And the argument that African theologians such as John Mbiti and ethicists like Benezet Bujo have expressed ideas that are central in the construction of the contemporary African Christian thought on homosexuality may be quite true, but the ordinary African opposed to homosexuality will likely not have read Bujo and Mbiti.

Conclusion

After reading the book two fundamental questions arise: Is it providing a new history of African thought from Cape to Cairo or proposing a new methodology of writing about African Christian thought? In other words, is it about historiography or a "new history"? The latter seems to be the case. The other question is: Did the African Christian thought of antiquity in the Sahara diffuse into the Sub-Sahara? Notwithstanding these concerns, this book is an excellent resource for African Christian history from Cape to Cairo.

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Roads Through Mwinilunga: A History of Social Change in Northwest Zambia
Iva Peša. (Brill, 2019)
429 pp.

Based on a year and a half of research in Zambia in the period from 2008 to 2010, Iva Peša's *Roads Through Mwinilunga* is an ambitious historical study of continuity and change in the remotest district of Zambia's North-Western Province over the period of a century, from the 1870s to the 1970s. This is a study that forgoes conventional historical periodisation in favour of a thematic approach emphasising the gradual nature of change, the endurance of existing patterns of social organisation and the deficiency of classifications such as precolonial/colonial/postcolonial that imply radical breaks with the pasts.

The book's overarching point about the coherent coexistence of both change and continuity in Mwinilunga District is elaborated in four thematic chapters that take up four areas of socio-economic life: agricultural production, labour migration, consumption and social relationships. The detailed discussions of these topics are preceded by a contextual first chapter that introduces the reader to the history of the Lunda ethnic group. This chapter also situates the study in relation to existing scholarship on the Lunda (or Lunda-Ndembu, as they are referred to in older studies), which as it happens is substantial, including Victor Turner's renowned anthropological studies from the 1950s and 1960s and continuing to more recent work by James Pritchett, also in anthropology.

As a historian, Peša does not revisit the work of these anthropologists, but engages with some of their ideas, specifically Victor Turner's predictions about the intensity and direction of future social change that he made based on observations in the 1950s. In each of the four thematic chapters, Peša investigates a hypothesis derived from existing scholarly narratives dating back to the work of Turner and the other anthropologists affiliated with the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. What these hypotheses have in common is an assumption of linear, unidirectional change, with a general course of transformation from tradition to 'modernity', 'capitalism' and 'development'. This is the modernist metanarrative familiar to scholars of Zambia that was identified and critiqued by James Ferguson and a number of other scholars. Peša makes a valuable contribution to the effort of eroding this tenacious narrative by disproving on the specific example of Mwinilunga some of the claims ensuing from it.

For agricultural production, Peša shows that there was no straightforward transition from subsistence agriculture to production for the market, but that

Mwinilunga farmers' efforts were focused on sustaining 'the foundations of production', i.e. ensuring stable and predictable livelihoods. This was expressed in people's lasting attachment to cassava, a crop whose popularity was unabated throughout the twentieth century despite the postcolonial state's occasional efforts to promote the growing of maize and other cash crops. Subsistence and market production were not mutually exclusive; instead, the former often created the conditions for the latter. Labour migration, in turn, was not an unprecedented phenomenon leading to the wholesale upheaval of a formerly sedentary society. To the contrary, it was embedded in a pre-existing culture of mobility among the Lunda and resulted in an array of different migrant trajectories. Often, the aim of migration to cities was to achieve 'self-realisation' and prestige in the rural community.

In the case of consumption, once again there was no clear transition from self-sufficiency to reliance on mass-produced, industrial goods. In the course of the twentieth century, imported consumer goods did increasingly infiltrate day-to-day reality, changing status from luxury goods to widespread necessities. Nevertheless, goods acquired meaning through their insertion in extant social relationships and did not necessarily create dependence on the market. Finally, social relationships themselves proved far more enduring than expected. Although kinship relations did change, they neither lost in importance nor transformed in ways emphasising the centrality of the nuclear family or individualism. Settlement in villages endured too. People continued striving to become the heads of prosperous village households in a society where individual personhood was best realised in relation to others, and where the wealthy were expected to help their kin and thus acquire a following. 'Wealth in people' remained as important as wealth in goods and money.

Weaving all these threads into a common theme, the book develops a nuanced argument about the incremental and contested nature of historical change in Mwinilunga. Seen from such a long-term perspective, the changes brought about by colonialism and the advent of capitalism in this geographically remote and in many ways 'marginal' area of Zambia appear less as radical ruptures or discontinuity, but as gradual changes negotiated and made sense of through surprisingly resilient local social relations and practices. This drives home another point that Peša reiterates about the importance of studying the specific local forms that 'global', supposedly universal, processes take. Observed in its specificity, Mwinilunga cannot easily be characterised through labels of 'poverty', 'underdevelopment' or 'development', but emerges as an area of relative prosperity that has managed, if not always to resist, to at least appropriate and redirect capitalist advances according to its inhabitants' own needs and understandings.

Peša is of course careful to acknowledge that her findings may not apply to other areas of Zambia or Southern Africa, especially, I would add, those that have been closer to centres of intense capitalist production and resource extraction. The question arises if it is perhaps precisely because of the ‘marginality’ of Mwilinunga District to capitalist and national interests in Zambia that its residents have been so successful in sustaining their tradition, albeit in flexible and ever mutable ways. The reader is left wondering if the pattern of change accommodated within general continuity identified by Peša has persisted into the twenty-first century in Mwinilunga itself, bearing in mind the opening of new copper mines in neighbouring Solwezi District, for instance.

If there is anything more to be desired in a study accentuating the agency of Mwinilunga residents in their constant confrontation with forces of change is a closer encounter with some of the people driving the processes it relates. Peša does present a few life histories of migrants in the chapter on mobility, but this reader at least was left wishing for more personal stories and passages of ‘direct speech’. Still, as Peša herself explains, the nature of the sources, many of them stemming from the colonial archives, and the time period in focus made accessing and including local voices difficult. Another question I would have liked to see explored is gender relations, especially how the imperative of ‘self-realisation’ might have functioned differently for women and men. Furthermore, Peša touches on some differences in wealth and resources when discussing mobility, but in general there is not much information on any divisions or hierarchies within Lunda society that might have made for different experiences of agricultural production, mobility or consumption. The picture she paints is of a society where almost anyone could strive to develop special skills and unique personhood that would place them in a position of authority. And with authority would come the responsibility of caring and providing for others.

Open questions notwithstanding, the ground this book already covers is striking. In fact, in its breadth and depth and as the first book of a young historian, *Roads Through Mwinilunga* is nothing short of exceptional. The author brings together a vast array of sources, both archival and oral, which she contextualizes and interprets with the aid of an impressive list of secondary literature, extending far beyond the field of Zambian history. With her meticulous and thoughtful approach, Iva Peša has set an example for students and scholars of African history alike.