to have become thoroughly dependant on maize as a staple. The last chapter considers African maize in the context of global markets. The middle chapters, however, follow a more conventionally Africanist focus on the internal dynamics of the continent. Sometimes this perspective seems a function of the subject matter. For example, when the American rust began devastating the maize crop of West Africa, crop scientists in the British colonial service were extremely cautious about letting Americans get involved in the search for resistant varieties and sought a British colonial solution to the problem. But the focus is definitely Africanist in the middle chapters of the book. That aside, this book fills a major lacuna in the history of the Columbian Exchange and should be of interest to anyone interested in the story of New World crops in the Old World.

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Edward M. Spiers, *The Victorian Soldier in Africa.* Manchester and New York, NY: Manchester University Press, 2004. xii + 212 pp. ISBN: 0-7190-6121-0 (hbk.).

The Victorian Soldier in Africa sets out to recount several well-known military campaigns of the late nineteenth century, ranging from the Anglo-Asante war of 1873-74, via encounters in South Africa, Egypt, and the Sudan, to the South African War of 1899-1902. Framed by an introduction and an epilogue, the book is organized into nine chapters, regionally separated and chronologically arranged. The opening chapter, 'Fighting the Asante', is the only one dealing with West African affairs. Four chapters are then dedicated to both South and North Africa. 'Campaigning in Southern Africa' (Chapter 2) deals with the Anglo-Zulu conflicts of the late 1870s, followed by an account of 'Battling the Boers' around the same time. A very short 'Trekking through Bechuanaland' in 1884-85 (Chapter 7) and the final chapter, 'Re-engaging the Boers' in the years 1899-1902, are the other parts related to Southern Africa. Regarding Northern Africa, three chapters treat Sudanese affairs between 1883 and the end of the century, 'Engaging the Mahdists' (Chapter 5), 'The Gordon relief expedition' (Chapter 6), and 'Reconquering the Sudan' (Chapter 8), while the fourth chapter is about the British 'Intervention in Egypt' in 1882.

Spiers' intention is to look for 'the human experience of Victorian warfare' (1). To this end, he relies heavily on a broad basis of hitherto widley neglected sources, namely numerous letters written by soldiers from the field. What is of interest to Spiers are not least 'the hardships, dangers, fears and exhilaration of active service' (7), and indeed, the letters of the soldiers – whether written in private adressed to families and friends or sent home with the intention to be published in local newspapers – provide for many insights. Besides, the letters from the rank and file sometimes contain 'detailed descriptions of major battles and vivid accounts of hand-to-hand-fighting, [...] descriptions of native allies and adversaries, comments on other fighting units, newspaper reporting, and [...] even critical remarks about commanding officers' (11). Spiers' book is full of quotations, which vividly illustrate these points. Moreover, various motives leading British soldiers to serve in Africa are lively presented in course of the book and, at one time, laconically summarized: 'Campaigning in Africa [...] afforded an opportunity to serve "Queen and Country", to do their duty, and to earn honours for their regiment [...], promotions in the field, and medals for themselves' (13).

In all these respects, Spiers' enterprise, which belongs to the field of military history, bears witness that the 'cultural turn' experienced by so many branches of history since the 1960s made, at least recently, a certain impact on this field as well. The problem, however, is that this impact has not been profound enough, both regarding military history in general and the book under consideration in particular. In a recent

number of the *Journal of Contemporary History* (2006) entirely devoted to various aspects of military studies, Tarak Barkawi accuses military history to suffer from a double Eurocentric orientation. Barkawi criticizes the 'overwhelming' interest in military matters of the West typically shown by military historians, thereby unduly narrowing the field of study. Even worse, according to Barkawi, their '[c]ategories and assumptions are derived from European histories', yet used as if universally applicable.[1] As a matter of fact, these two critical aspects, adequate as they seem to be with regard to military history, point to the more general difficulties of any serious effort to study different cultures. Consequently, a great deal could be learned by considering the vast literature on 'culture' and 'culture contact' produced by anthropologists, historians, and, of course, Africanists.

The Victorian Soldier in Africa raises, by way of its title, the expectation that it would touch on this issue and make use of the available expertise. However, in this respect, the book is a disappointment. Although a study of a peculiar imperial army, namely the 'British', 'the colonial' as well as the African actors with whom British soldiers came into contact are either remarkably absent or, as is the case where it is impossible to ignore them, whether they came into play as suitable foes (the Asante, the Zulu, the Mahdists, etc.) or allied friends (e.g. the Fante) or even as parts of the own forces (e.g. the Hausa), their role is at best superficially sketched. We read that '[r]elations with native peoples were a feature of all campaigns as expeditionary forces required assistance in labouring, transportation, carrying messages through enemy lines, gathering intelligence and providing supplies' (185), but nothing about how these relations were structured and how they came about. Next we read that '[n]atives sometimes fought alongside British forces, albeit with differing degrees of enthusiasm' (185), however, the reasons responsible for such a lack of willingness to collaborate remain unnoted.

There is a certain revisionist element in Spiers' discussion of the relations between British and 'natives'. E.g., to continue a sentence stating that '[t]he capacity of ordinary soldiers to forge good relations with friendly natives en route or near camp sites [...] was well documented' with the following words sounds more than odd: 'and their sexual liaisons, if rarely mentioned in print, found confirmation in the numbers hospitalised with veneral disease [...]' (185). Where is the evidence for the voluntariness of such intercourse? Does sexuality, given the conditions of war, really indicate 'good relations'? Similarily, his discussion of the Asante campaign embodies a sharp – and stereotyped – contrast between the high grade of British organization of food supplies, medical support, technical and military skills set against the alleged 'incapacity' of African supporters, both 'native' bearers and 'native' allies. 'Soldiers and sailors were mightily impressed by the organisation on their behalf [...]. *Yet the entire network depended upon native bearers, whose incapacity continued to bedevil the operation*' (24, my emphasis). Or, a few pages earlier, '[Sir Garnet] Wolseley's scepticism about the resolve, reliability and martial prowess of the coastal tribes [...] was widely shared by British officers and men' (21). Unfortunately, it seems that Spiers stillshares these sentiments.

To summarize, Spiers gives detailed accounts of British military campaigns in Africa during the late Victorian age. The campaigns chosen are the well-known cases, leaving few space for new insights. David Killingray's concluding judgement, in his review of Spiers' work, that it is '[a] useful book, campaigns and battles well told, but occasional irritants for Africanist readers with references to "natives", "tribesmen", and "Bantu"',[2] is true but, nevertheless, must be qualified. The irritation for Africanists is not simply a matter of words, but stems from the narrative as such. It follows traditional ways of recounting Victorian campaigns in Africa, taking into account adequately neither the African responses nor the support of those Africans engaged in

the British case. Yet its originality lies in the effort to account for these campaigns through the letters of the Victorian soldiery. The bottum up perspective indeed is the main contribution, pointing historical research to important, yet often underused sources, and looking at past confrontations less through the official accounts than through the lens of common people. Yet it is to be wished that future writers on this topic will subject the same sources to more thorough analysis and make much more critical use of them, especially with regard to the traps of Eurocentric viewpoints implicitly presented as well as explicitly stated in them.

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Notes

1 Tarak Barkawi, 'Culture and Combat in the Colonies: The Indian Army in the Second World War', *Journal of Contemporary History* 41/2 (2006): 325-355, cited 325.
2 David Killingray, 'Review of *The Victorian Soldier in Africa*', *English Historical Review* 120 (2005): 1092-1093, cited 1093.

AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, AND THE PACIFIC

Dirk Moses, ed., *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History*. War and Genocide 6. New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2005. xiv + 325 pp. ISBN: 1-57181-410-8 (hbk.); 1-84545-411-6 (pbk.).

Often edited collections contain chapters that are of uneven quality and at least a few essays that do not fit thematically with the volume. *In Genocide and Settler Society*, editor and contributor A. Dirk Moses has compiled an excellent set of first-rate essays all of which shed some insight on the book's themes; the fate of the Australian Aborigines, the dynamics of settler societies, ethnic cleansing, and absorption and assimilation as possibly genocidal policies. The chapters in this book are well written, well edited, and very thought provoking. This volume is a contribution to the growing literature on genocides of indigenous people that has blossomed as the field of genocide studies has moved away from it principal focus on the Holocaust and to a lesser extent the destruction of the Ottoman Armenians.

Moses opens the volume with a chapter entitled 'Genocide and Settler Society in Australian History'. Works on genocide nearly always wrestle with the interminable and irresolvable questions of the definition of genocide and Moses does not depart from this path. Still, he presents the reader with some important distinctions that are useful to the study of colonial genocide and even more so to the special concerns of this book, settler society genocide. Settler societies do not exhibit the sort of government directed genocide exhibited most famously in the Holocaust, where the perpetrators held the infamous Wannsee Conference in January 1942 to coordinate the implementation of their Final Solution. Moses posits an alternative view of intentionality as it applies to a settler society such as Australia.

Referencing nineteenth-century English law, Moses argues that consequences of an act are intentional if the actor might have perceived those consequences as result of his act. European governments knew the results of their imperial projects and they were not deterred by the decimation of the indigenous populations by a combination of outright murder, forced migration, and disease. Moses goes on to seek a new path between those who insist that what happened in Australia was near total genocide and those who claim that the settlement process was largely benevolent. He argues that the Europeans were pushed in a genocidal direction by their ideological pre-conceptions, fear of aboriginal resistance, economic imperatives, and their own land use