

This characteristic of the book sits oddly with its interpretation of the expansive state at Antananarivo as an empire, for one would like to learn about the economic life of that empire in more specific ways in its various locations and among its many peoples, inquiries that might lead away from the state as a near-exclusive focus. But the author ignores a vast literature on empire. One concludes that "empire" appears here merely as a descriptive term. In part, Campbell's eye on the state at Antananarivo may stem from the polemical conflict he enters with scholars he believes form a "Nationalist School" (p. 3) and who, he claims, refuse to consider Antananarivo as having been the center of an exploitative empire. The unity and perspectives of these "nationalist" scholars is dramatically overstated. And rhetoric for and against empire serves to continue focusing historical narratives on the state of highland Madagascar or on resistance to it, a circular project that defeats the purpose of advancing the histories of those who were not at that state's pinnacle or who organized their lives by other principles. This is a collective predicament of Madagascar's historians that Campbell's book brings to the fore.

For an economic history, there are serious problems with numbers. The chapter on population (six) draws fitted curves to foreign estimates of Imerina's population, producing a figure of under 25,000 in the late 1820s for the region as a whole, while the single city of Antananarivo—within this region—is shown at nearly 800,000 (Figures 2 and 3). Besides presenting an impossibility, the numbers are wildly incorrect. Similar anomalies pop up in comparisons across Campbell's numerous tables, which seem not to have been internally reconciled. A recourse to the censuses conducted beginning in the early 1840s by Antananarivo and currently in the precolonial section of the National Archives of Madagascar would have begun to clear things up here and elsewhere in the book. But Campbell seems not to have read in the records of the very state his book considers, or to have discounted them without explanation. Only reference to a single item in this huge and unique archive for the nineteenth century graces his bibliography. It is like writing the history of the Cape without recourse to the Cape archives.

One of Campbell's most original contributions is his work on the slave trades between Madagascar and southeast Africa (chapter nine), poorly known before. New global estimates of East Africa's and Madagascar's external trades will have to reckon with them. But in his figures for additional slave trades in the western Indian Ocean also developed there, Campbell charts a lonely course, failing to link or to reconcile his calculations with the work of many other scholars. He finds more than two million departing the Swahili coast and Portuguese East Africa in the nineteenth century (Table 9.3), whereas Paul E. Lovejoy discerns 849,000 (see *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* [2000], p. 156). Figure 12 suggests fewer than 25,000 Africans departed southeast Africa for the Atlantic in the nineteenth century, whereas calculations from the

Transatlantic Slave Trade Database by David Eltis, Stephen D. Behrendt, David Richardson, and Herbert Klein supply a figure of more than 400,000. And how does Campbell reconcile his estimated nearly 400,000 arrivals in the Mascarene islands in the nineteenth century (Table 9.3) with the work of Richard B. Allen, who finds maximum arrivals in that period of less than half that figure? Campbell's numbers here and elsewhere often float unmoored to other scholarship, like snowflakes twirling in a storm. His many estimates are unlikely to be taken seriously until internally reconciled, explicated in greater detail, and carefully compared to those of colleagues laboring in the same field.

PIER M. LARSON

Johns Hopkins University

HEIDI GENGEBACH. *Binding Memories: Women as Makers and Tellers of History in Magude, Mozambique*. New York: Columbia University Press. 2005. Electronic Book. Site access \$49.50.

Magude was a dangerous and difficult place to work when Heidi Gengenbach arrived there in 1995. It took some courage to undertake nearly eighteen months of fieldwork in this part of southern Mozambique so soon after the end of the civil war. It also took some courage to compare the discipline of history as it is taught in American universities with the way the past is conceived by elderly women in this part of rural Mozambique. The book's electronic format provides exciting sound bites and visual images but it also challenges existing narrative traditions. Its unorthodox approach will appeal to the adventurous but it might prove frustrating for those in search of the social history of a global underclass.

The thirteen elderly women at the center of Gengenbach's eighty-odd informants stressed the importance of female networks and family ties in their view of the past. Unlike their male partners, they showed little concern for politics, work, or chronology. Gengenbach attempts to capture this worldview in chapters that may be read independently of each other. The structure of this book does not turn around documents that "recapture" the past or a narrative that "unfolds" seamlessly. It views the records of missionaries and colonial officials, and even the oral testimony of male informants, as expressive forms that share few of the concerns with the past held by Magude's women. Professional historians are also guilty of arranging oral or textual evidence into narratives that follow their (male, western, elite, professional) concerns with the chronology of economic and political change, impersonal structures, and modernity rather than those of the rural women at the center of the study. These women talked about the past in ways that served to reinforce social ties of kinship and experience; and they inscribed their memories in activities such as pot making, naming, tattooing, and life storytelling.

The book is made up of a grid of twelve sections that includes a long introduction and separate chapters on

historiography and methodology. These are followed by six chapters that, clearly linked on the screen, investigate the ways in which elderly women remember the past in rural Magude. The first focuses the reader's attention on Magude as a geographical area and on the various forms of knowledge that have "mapped" its social contours. The author's informants build their notions of history and identity against this background and establish themselves as makers of history. In the next chapter we follow the author to Magude and experience some of her confusion when confronted by the ways in which women conceive of themselves and of their place in the past. This includes a long and interesting section on the naming practices through which women situate themselves in shifting social networks. In the following chapter verbatim interviews provide the life histories of three individuals who talk about their experiences as girls and women and who recall stories recounted by their mothers and grandmothers. Through these life stories women educate the youth, lay claim to specific identities, and stress female agency.

Chapter four examines the webs of community constructed through pottery. Pots are embossed with decorative markings that constitute forms of "female storytelling about the past." As women marry out, or move for political or economic reasons, their historical memories are embodied in their pottery styles. The next chapter examines another form of marking controlled by women: body tattoos. Women adopt(ed) tattoos, like names, at various stages of their trajectory through life and, like shared pottery styles, shared tattoos serve(d) to outline the contours of community and experience. The final chapter turns to the struggle amongst women for land, particularly in the period following the end of the civil war. Land alienation, new and modern forms of land allocation, as well as the demands made by internal refugees undermined the authority of women in Magude and eventually gave rise to serious disputes and a spate of witchcraft accusations. As elder women

lost their ability to mobilize "webs of female relationship," they scratched field boundaries into the soil that divided the land into ever-smaller lots. Like the proliferation of tattoos and puberty-names, the division of the land into smaller units marked a shift in power from older women to the younger generation. Through their life stories and their attempts to conserve traditional ways of making pots, older women attempt to limit the forces of change and maintain their authority.

This book provides a valuable lesson in the way "history" may be read from actions and artifacts. Borrowing heavily from the methodologies of anthropology and archaeology, it creates a powerful picture of the very subjective ways in which rural women negotiate their visions of the past. But the author's picture of herself as a "conduit" for the views of her informants, and of her book as some kind of coproduction, seem exaggerated. Like any historian, she has chosen to stress certain forms of evidence at the cost of others. There is nothing in this book on women's songs as a genre of historical evidence, and no attempt is made to examine gendered linguistic practices as expressions of history. Gengenbach's sympathy clearly lies with the elderly women who guard "tradition" rather than with the movers and shakers associated with evangelical Christianity or disturbing urban practices. Nor does she show much concern for the structures that drive agency or for the experiences of the men who infringe on the world of women.

The strength of this book lies in the very subjective experiences of its informants and in its vivid portrayal of women as both makers and tellers of history. It is an innovative and courageous work that will appeal to African historians, gender specialists, and historiographers. But its evangelical novelty will deter readers and its high price will, I fear, deprive the women of Magude of an important view of their past.

PATRICK HARRIES
University of Basel