

## Editors' Introduction

Histories of the intersection of African colonial consumption cultures and commodity advertising often tilt in the direction of colonial advertisers while ascribing various degrees of passivity to African consumers. In her article in this issue, **Katie Carline** analyzes the convergence of local commodity imaginaries, femininity, modernity, and rural practices of newspaper dialogic literacy in the marketing and consumption of Ambrosia tea in 1930s Eastern Cape, South Africa. Here, in segregationist, pre-apartheid South Africa, Carline demonstrates how a white-owned tea brand adopted and adapted to a vernacularized medium of textual advertising. This platform was the bilingual newspaper, *Umlindi we Nyanga*, which published testimonials of rural, literate female tea drinkers espousing the ethos of respectability and wise womanhood as virtues associated with tea drinking. Published photos of some of the women complemented the textual rendering of their testimonials, producing a genre of personalized commodity advertising that resonated widely in the Eastern Cape.

Carline's analysis reveals much that is new, notably the rural women's inventive repurposing of their participation in the Ambrosia tea advertisement campaign into the founding of home improvement societies. These home improvement societies in turn allowed the women 'to offer their own analysis of rural women's duties as leaders of the home and of the nation'. This is not a story of the unintended vernacularization of a colonial advertising campaign, argues Carline. Rather, she contends that the mutually complementary initiatives of leaders of home improvement associations, testimonial writers, the Ambrosia tea company, and the editor of *Umlindi we Nyanga* point to ways in which commodities, consumption, and the construction of local meanings around them disrupted and complicated the familiar racial segregationist logics of 1930 South Africa and produced a zone of commerce and consumption that was deeply embedded in local practices of modernity.

The 'success' of the advertising campaign was underwritten by three crosscutting factors, she argues. Ambrosia's newspaper advertising campaign coincided with and deftly tapped into rising labor migration, urbanization, and increased spending power among Blacks. Secondly, the campaign had the support of the Tea Market Expansion Bureau, the promotional arm of a consortium of white tea growers and distributors, who increasingly explored new marketing avenues as global demand for tea slumped during the Great Depression. Finally, Carline argues that the 1930s was a period in which feminine respectability had become associated with 'literacy, education, temperance, and monogamous motherhood', all neo-Victorian virtues of femininity onto which tea drinking as a domestic leisure could be credibly grafted.

Another article in this issue explores the theme of African engagement with organs of mass media. In this case, **Danielle Del Vicario** situates the discursive and propaganda wars between different factions in Sudan's second civil war (1984–91) in the dueling deployments of radio technology. Radio broadcasts and radio-enabled mass communication, Del Vicario argues, allowed John Garang, the leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), to circumvent and counter the more established, state-backed propaganda of the Sudanese government, which defined the South Sudan struggle in a politically narrow way as a 'Southern problem'. Del Vicario's analysis demonstrates that a sophisticated and elaborate enterprise underpinned the use of radio as a strategy of persuasion and political mobilization, making the airwaves a site of intense struggle over the past, present, and future of a fractured Sudan. The establishment of a new radio station enabled Garang to articulate an alternative interpretation of Sudanese history, communicate his vision of a new Sudan to local and international audiences, and present a message of righteous, insurgent anger that helped him to both mobilize South Sudanese people and reassert his control

over the SPLM/A and its territories. Del Vicario argues, however, that Garang's radio broadcasts, effective for his purpose as they may have been, opened a new wave of contestations over the war, over the history of the Sudan, and over claims on belonging, inclusion, sovereignty, leadership, land, and rights. Notably, Garang's broadcasts provoked his opponents in both the Khartoum government and the SPLM/A to use the same medium of radio broadcasts to contest his political claims and his control over the South Sudanese struggle. These airwave debates and contested claims not only splintered the SPLM/A but also exposed Garang to withering sonic attacks from a variety of enemies.

Radio made Garang into the international face and voice of the South Sudanese struggle but also undermined him. Radio provided Garang with an instrument to disseminate his message, but it was also, Del Vicario contends, a dialogic space where multiple, conflicting, and converging narratives of the war coexisted in creative tension. The new radio frequencies and broadcasts of all parties in the conflict mediated complex, multilayered interests and positions, intensifying contestations over truths, personalities, styles, and visions. Radio, with its mass communicative potentials, was a powerful instrument for political underdogs and insurgents to enter discursive spaces dominated by entrenched entities and paradigms and disrupt an existing metanarrative by setting new terms of engagement.

If African actors deftly appropriated and exploited radio technology as a politically useful infrastructure in Sudan, the fate of Germany's infrastructure projects in its East African colonies between the 1890s and 1907 was somewhat different, **Andreas Greiner** shows. His article recounts that in the early days of German colonization, the persistence and continued quotidian functionality of existing African roads and pathways complicated and in most cases doomed efforts by colonizers to build and maintain new road networks as part of a broader process of transforming existing caravan routes into highways of colonial commerce. Focusing on African residents of communities around new colonial roads and African transportation workers, Greiner's analysis reveals that Africans not only scoffed at colonial expectations that they would use and maintain new roads but that they also, as an act of everyday resistance to colonial control, upheld existing techniques of spatial ordering and mobility. Greiner's article is yet another case study that challenges historical narratives that amplify and reify infrastructures as instruments of imperial control. He contends that 'vernacular structures', far from being subsumed or erased by colonial infrastructures, endured in two ways: as utilitarian objects and as new, material referents for African resilience.

In her article, **Elizabeth Jacob** takes the argument about African resilience and resistance in colonial settings in a novel and exciting direction. Her article explores how a march by two thousand Ivoirian women at the Grand Bassam prison in December 1949 to protest the detention of anticolonial militants of the Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) changed the course of the anticolonial nationalist struggle in Côte d'Ivoire. The march, Jacob argues, was not only significant because of its status as the first recorded mass protest by West African women against French rule, but also because this late colonial female militancy extended a long tradition of what Jacob theorizes as 'public motherhood'. Jacob's insightful framing argues that the women's public anticolonial intervention was enabled by a socially constructed moral authority that derived from their status as 'biological and symbolic caregivers', which conferred moral authority on them in community affairs. Jacob does not exaggerate the instrumentality and enduring influence of this moral economy of female activism, however. In fact, she notes that the women protesters were subsequently excluded from the 'elite negotiations' of the Ivoirian anticolonial movement and their pathbreaking intervention was absorbed into a larger narrative of a purportedly gender-neutral political awakening, illustrating both the possibilities and limits of women's role in the Ivoirian anticolonial movement. The insights in this study hold comparative resonances for histories of women's participation in other African anticolonial movements.

**Jessica Reuther's** article on investigative and judicial processes around the sexual assault of teenager female street hawkers in Dahomey makes an important new argument: that, in this French colony, it was elder African females who both produced formal, litigable grievances out of young girl hawkers' rape experiences and provided care and trauma support to the victims. Analyzing over two

hundred cases of sexual assaults against teenage and younger girl hawkers adjudicated in colonial tribunals between 1924 and 1941, Reuther contends that the urban colonial space in Dahomey was rife with gendered threats to vulnerable girl hawkers and that the colonial judicial system struggled to respond to sexual crimes against the girls until elder female caregivers, market women, and guardians became activists for justice on behalf of the girls. Reuther's analysis compellingly shifts the focus away from the dominant, familiar theme in much of the literature on sexual violence in Africa: the response of masculine and patriarchal authorities and institutions to incidents of child rape and gender violence. She demonstrates that, in colonial Dahomey, female elders drove both the societal conversations and judicial processes on how best to stem sexual crimes against girl hawkers.

**Wallace Teska**, in his article, takes up the question of the capacity of French colonizers to provide justice in the face of scandals and wrongdoing. He argues for a recognition of the political expediency of notions and practices of colonial justice, and against a tendency to ascribe post-scandal judicial reform to colonizers constrained by multiple interests and considerations. Analyzing one such scandal, the M'Pésoba Affair in French West Africa between 1913 and 1918, Teska analyzes how the imperative of colonial control in a colony known for crisis and anticolonial revolts meant that scandals infrequently reached metropolitan arbiters and publics let alone provoking reactions that might have led to the kind of reformist colonial orders and legal norms often posited as resulting from 'scandals of empire'. In examining the complex and convoluted unfolding of the M'Pésoba Affair, Teska notes that French colonial officials had to balance the competing pressures of 'cotton production, chiefly disputes, Islamic policy, and interracial sexual relationships' at a time of heightened tensions during the First World War. Teska's article extends an important historiographical insight about colonization: that colonial responses to problems were shaped more by the improvisational and quotidian logics of intra- and interracial interactions than by any consistent adherence to abstract metropolitan principles and concerns.

The last article in this issue privileges the agency of enslaved Africans over that of European abolitionists in late Ottoman and early colonial Libya in bringing about emancipation. **Gabriele Montalbano** explores the fascinating and insightful case of the so-called *Moretti* (little Moors), Black manumitted children in Libya, who, between the late Ottoman period and the Italian occupation in 1911, were the subjects and objects of intense Italian antislavery activities in Benghazi. Italian Catholic missionaries established a mission to host the manumitted children with the goal of cultivating them as a distinct local community loyal to the Church and to the Italian government. Montalbano argues convincingly however that the missionaries' project foundered because the Moretti built their own webs of solidarity and sociability through antislavery societies, which enabled them to attain what Montalbano calls 'forms of urban and social autonomy'. This space of freedom and solidarity shielded the Moretti from both the oppressive social hierarchies of Libyan society and Italian missionary and colonial abolitionist schemes. Montalbano's analysis reveals a world of communal solidarity among freed slaves that helped runaway and manumitted Moretti find sanctuary, protection, and group identity. The article challenges historical narratives that center European groups and institutions in the antislavery politics of colonial and post-abolitionist societies.

This issue's first review picks up where the research articles leave off. Our reviewer **Agata Bloch** considers the recent English translation of *Faith, War and Slavery: A History of the Colonial Conquest of Sudan*, by **Patricia Teixeira Santos** and **Suresh Kumar**. Originally published in Portuguese, Santos and Kumar's study uses the Italian Comboni missionary archive to narrate the fiercely contested and intertwined politics of religious conversion and antislavery in Mahdist Sudan. Beyond its scholarly and historiographical significance, Bloch — a reviewer based in Poland — notes this study was researched and written by Brazilian and Indian historians of Africa, and published by a press in the former. *The Journal of African History* is committed to recognizing and promoting new centers for the study of African history and we are excited that this issue features Bloch's review.

The remaining fourteen reviews confirm that African history is even more diverse than the locations of its researchers, writers, and reviewers. We have **François-Xavier Fauvelle's** review of **Mauro Nobili's** meticulous consideration of a seminal West African text, a supposed prophecy that was used to buttress Ahmad Lobbo's rule of the Diina of Masina, in contemporary Mali during the first decades of the nineteenth century. As Fauvelle notes, Nobili's careful textual analysis reveals the chronicle to have been a useful forgery, thus demonstrating how texts were deployed as political strategies in Islamic West Africa. **Richard Reid's** review of **David Schoenbrun's** recent book brings the consideration of political strategy and community-building hundreds of years back in time, to East Africa, where language preserves how symbols like the python and named spirits linked people to perform the 'groupwork' that Schoenbrun argues was at the foundation of durable communities. Schoenbrun and Reid's focus on 'work' and society invites us to flash forward to **Laura Ann Twagira's** analysis of how **Alice Wiemers** sees the dynamic interplay between chiefs, rural producers and both colonial and postcolonial development imperatives that Wiemers calls 'village work'. Wiemers argues that twentieth century Ghanaian chiefs attempted strategically to attract resources to their villages, without submitting to exploitative regimes of labor extraction. This they accomplished with mixed success, an outcome that resonates with **Todd Cleveland's** conclusions about the political economy of tourism across the African continent during the twentieth century, as our reviewer **Annie Hikido** considers.

Two other reviews featured in this issue focus our attention on the interconnected global economy, albeit from dramatically different locations. **Alfred Tembo** draws our attention to the impacts and legacy that the Second World War had on the Zambian economy, in addition to the experiences of those Zambians who were directly engaged in the war effort. **Guy Bud** is our reviewer. **Shobana Shankar** follows, reviewing **Cheikh Babou's** immersive study of Muridiyya migration from Senegal to elsewhere in West Africa, Western Europe, and the United States. Shankar reveals how Babou's book considers not only the economic motivations for transnational migration, but especially how a host of other factors — spiritual, racial, and gendered — define the Muridiyya experience. It is altogether fitting that this issue also includes **Ned Bertz's** review of **Shobana Shankar's** own recent book, which takes an intellectual and networked approach to transnational history and demonstrates how postcolonial West African and South Asian politicians, intellectuals, and activists have collaborated and thought together, sometimes productively, and sometimes less so.

These compelling books and carefully considered reviews represent less than half of this issue's complement. We have studies on ethnicity and governance in Menelik's Ethiopia (**Ayana on Yates**); **Gregory Mann's** elegant review of **Camille Lefebvre's** account of the onset of colonial rule (Lefebvre prefers 'occupation') in two West African cities; two studies that consider the Atlantic and *longue-durée* history of African health and medicine (**Hellawell on Kanonoja** and **Flint on Lee**, respectively); and, finally, two studies that offer dramatically different — and differently dramatic — narratives from recent West African history: **Shaffer on Hogan**, which hearkens back to our issue's first review, only now the missionaries are on the ground during the Liberian Civil War, and, as both a tonic and methodological invitation, **Paul Schauert's** review of *Cool Runnings*, the multimedia and multivocal story of Ghanaian drivers' distinctive *por por* horn music, compiled by **Nii Yemo Nunu**, **Steven Feld**, and **Hannah Schreckenbach**.

This third issue is the last of our sixty-third volume. It is also **Shane Doyle's** last as a member of the editorial team. We are grateful to Shane for his good spirit, his keen eye, his generous editorial oversight, and his dedication to *The Journal of African History* and its mission. While we will miss him dearly, we are excited to welcome **Michelle Moyd** from Michigan State University (USA), who will take over as editor in Volume 64. Here's to the journal going from strength to strength! And cheers to our readers for a healthy and happy 2023.