

*Colonial Africa, 1884–1994*. Dennis Laumann. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. ISBN: 9780199796397

Over the past 5–10 years, African Studies pedagogy has benefited immensely from publications in three book series designed for use in undergraduate classrooms: Ohio Short Histories of Africa (Ohio Univ. Press & Jacana), Africa in World History (Ohio), and African World Histories (Oxford). Each of these is designed to provide easily accessible, localized interpretations of African history, elaborating on specific African context and global trends. Dennis Laumann's (Univ. of Memphis) *Colonial Africa, 1884–1994*, is the first publication in the latter series, emphasizing, as the series editors put it, “that students can succeed when presented with relatively brief, jargon-free interpretations of African societies that integrate Africans' perspectives with critical interpretations and that balance intellectual rigor with broad accessibility.”

Laumann's short text provides the student with several chapters centered on specific themes. His introduction outlines some of the major debates within African History: Afrocentrism, oral history, debates regarding “collaborators” with colonialism, and Marxist historiography. His first chapter “Economics,” outlines some of the motives for European colonial expansion onto the African continent. Laumann addresses the importance of Africa's mineral wealth, cash cropping, and the growth of capitalism and industrialization in Europe. Importantly, the author shows the significance of missionaries and traders as “the advance guard of colonization,” setting into motion processes that facilitated “formal” colonization. He concludes the chapter with the so-called Scramble for Africa and its effect on colonial economies.

In his second chapter, Laumann moves the discussion to the functions and motives of colonial administrations, noting the importance of settler vs. non-settler societies, indirect rule, and district officers and intermediaries. He emphasizes Africans' agency in navigating these treacherous boundaries. Following the work of Mahmood Mamdani, Laumann shows the long-term effects of

codifying “customary laws” and tribal politics, illustrating how this served the interest of the colonial administration, rather than the colonized. He concludes the chapter with early African mobilization against colonial rule through trade unions, religious movements, and ethnic organizing.

The author then dedicates a chapter to “Violence,” noting the importance of violence in both European expansion and warfare, and African resistance. He provides several case studies: the German violence in South West Africa and the genocide of the Herero, African soldiers in World War I, and the Algerian Liberation Struggle. Laumann's final chapter, “Liberation,” outlines several ideological movements that motivated anti-colonial movements: Pan-Africanism, Ethiopianism, and Marxism. He uses apartheid South Africa as a brief case study.

Laumann supplements each chapter with books and articles for further reading/discussion, detailed maps and diagrams, and photos. It is very accessible even for students with little background in African Studies. *Colonial Africa, 1884–1994* and the others in the African World Histories series adequately address the Eurocentrism present in world history and global studies by placing Africa and Africans at the center of analysis. Though it is short and concise, I wholeheartedly recommend his text to those teaching world history or African history survey courses, so long as it is used in tandem with some of the “recommended” readings Laumann provides.

Bernard C. Moore, Michigan State University.