

Among the many strengths of this book is that McDow has crafted the individual chapters to build upon one another but also stand alone as readings that could be assigned to undergraduate and graduate courses in the history of East Africa or the Indian Ocean. Chapters on Tippu Tip (Chapter 5) and the dhow that plied the waters of Lake Victoria (Chapter 8) would be particularly appropriate readings for classes. Chapters 6 and 7 address subjects related to slavery, including the mobility of freed slaves and the ironies of British antislavery in the Indian Ocean, which produced a “documentary regime ... that both facilitated and controlled the movement of Africans across the Indian Ocean” (p. 170) as slaveholders developed a form of “insincere manumission” to relocate slaves overseas.

McDow’s skill as a master storyteller is on full display in Chapter 9, which recounts the gripping story of the imamate rebellion in Oman in the 1870s and 1880s and traces the East African connections to the imamate and its financing. The author’s writing is engaging and effective throughout the book, but the crescendo is in the finale: the last chapters tie the book’s main themes together and circle back to connect the opening stories to twentieth-century events including the SAS bombing raids in Oman in 1959 and the Zanzibar Revolution of 1964.

Buying Time is deeply researched and impressive in scope. It highlights the importance of multi-site research—McDow conducted extensive archival research on three continents and makes particularly strong use of sources from Zanzibar, India, and the United Kingdom. The book is clearly written and compelling. It is suitable to be assigned in whole or in part to undergraduate and graduate courses on the history of the Indian Ocean and East Africa and should be in the library of every scholar of the nineteenth-century Indian Ocean.

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***Water Brings No Harm: Management, Knowledge and the Struggle for the Waters of Kilimanjaro.* By Matthew V. Bender.**

Athens: Ohio University Press, 2019. Pp. xv, 336; 18 figures, 3 tables, 7 maps. \$80.00 cloth; \$34.95 paper.

This is a history of water on Tanzania’s Mount Kilimanjaro since its initial settlement by farming communities 500 years ago. Matthew Bender carries the story forward through the periods of German and British colonialism, discusses water policy in socialist and neo-liberal Tanzania, and concludes by considering recent debate over Kilimanjaro’s shrinking glaciers. His accounts of techniques of water management and changes in understandings of water are illustrated with abundant, well-chosen detail. Particularly interesting is his treatment of *mifongo*, the irrigation canals first constructed perhaps 400 years ago and by the 1920s numbering about 1,000. Some of these canals could extend for several kilometers and some remain in use. Bender describes not only their construction and

maintenance, but also the intricate social relations that have regulated distribution of their waters.

Water Brings No Harm is a pleasure to read, thanks to its straightforward, uncluttered prose and strong thematic continuity. To enhance the flow of his presentation, Bender deftly employs the concept of “waterscapes,” that is, socially constructed perceptions of water, its sources and its courses. “Waterscapes,” he shows, are susceptible both to subtle modification and abrupt transformation. The precolonial Chagga people of Kilimanjaro, he tells us, revered their waters as the blessing of the creator deity. This endowment distinguished them, they felt, from their less well-favored neighbors on the arid plains below the mountain. It also inspired their commitment to educating the young in the proper use of water. This spiritual conception of water was readily assimilated into the new Christian identities, which developed on Kilimanjaro from the 1880s. (Indeed, the history of Christian thought about water and environment might well have merited longer discussion.)

While the modifications in their understanding of water made by Chagga people could be subtle, colonial and postcolonial states subjected them to sudden shifts in water policy when their rulers veered from one imagined “waterscape” to another. The Germans, says Bender, were content to allow Chagga communities to continue the style of water management, which in their view made Kilimanjaro an “African Switzerland.” The British worried about water scarcity and demanded compulsory conservation. Postcolonial Tanzania has also experienced abrupt change in “waterscapes.” The socialist government of Julius Nyerere understood access to water to be a human right, but neo-liberal governments that followed have regarded water as an “economic good” which ought to be purchased.

Another theme used by Bender to achieve continuity is scale. Precolonial water distribution extended across several kilometers at most. Under colonial and postcolonial governments, however, the scale of water management on Kilimanjaro expanded progressively. It first encompassed the lowlands around the mountain and the city of Moshi, then the whole Pangani River drainage basin extending to the Indian Ocean, and eventually the eastern Tanzanian mainland. The 1930s witnessed notable expansion of Kilimanjaro’s “waterscape,” Bender explains, as the mountain became the source of water for Tanganyika’s sisal industry and a hydroelectric plant supplying Dar es Salaam. Meanwhile, the population reliant on Kilimanjaro’s waters increased from perhaps 100,000 in 1850 to at least several million by the twenty-first century. Expansion of scale naturally leads us to ask whether understandings of water formulated at the micro-scale of the *mifongo* can usefully contribute to national management. Bender finds an elegant way to address this issue by folding it into his concluding discussion of Kilimanjaro’s glaciers. As the people of Kilimanjaro have watched the glaciers shrink, he argues, they have maintained their longstanding openness to innovation by incorporating new ideas, such as concepts of climate change and deforestation, into their enduring understandings of water.

With this argument, Bender leaves us confident that the people of Kilimanjaro can scale up their “waterscape,” making it relevant for national water management. In so doing, he is taking a position on knowledge production shared by another, eminent expert on the East African highlands, Wangari Maathai. Maathai qualified her confidence in

grassroots environmental managers, however, insisting that they would be able to shape national debate only if they enjoyed inclusive “democratic space” and “cultures of peace.” Sadly, Bender’s book has appeared at a moment when many Tanzanians fear that unconstitutional political practices and extra-judicial violence are destroying their space for democratic debate. Thus it is important to say that the fundamental contribution of this study is that it affirms Wangari Maathai’s core message: environmental sustainability is inseparable from Africa’s struggle for broader democracy.

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The Black Kingdom of the Nile. By Charles Bonnet. Forward by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019. Pp. 209. \$29.95 cloth.

In 2017, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. hosted “Africa’s Great Civilizations,” an epic PBS documentary that showcased the remarkable achievements of African civilizations, including the Western Deffufa of Kerma and the pyramids of Meroe. With equal verve, Gates introduces the story of the “black kingdom of the Nile,” ancient Kerma. The volume itself, written by the preeminent archaeologist of the ancient Sudan, Charles Bonnet, is less a narrative history than a retelling of fifty years of excavations at Kerma and Dukki Gel (ancient Egyptian Pnubs), although the sections do produce a basic chronological order of sites. The volume is divided into three sections: Kerma, Dukki Gel (through the reign of Thutmose I), and Pnubs (New Kingdom through Meroitic Period). A cursory chronology, bibliography, and exhaustive index conclude the book. Each section details Bonnet’s major archaeological discoveries, from the urban history of Kerma (during the early, middle, and classic periods), to a royal tomb (uncovered during a rescue excavation), to another “regional metropolis” at Dukki Gel, less than a kilometer north of Kerma. The results of five decades of painstaking excavations have revealed incredible juxtapositions of local Sudanese and imported Egyptian architecture. The volume is less clear about associated artifacts, and descriptions of ceramic forms are fully comprehensible only to a specialist in Egypt or Nubia; for example Bonnet mentions “calciform red goblets with black rims (sometimes with an intermediary silver band),” which the initiated would recognize as a Classic Kerma beaker. From an art historical perspective, the most impressive discovery is the cache of monumental statues of Napatan rulers, whose images had been carefully dismembered during a campaign of the 26th Dynasty Egyptian pharaoh Psamtek II and buried within a temple complex. Reassembled in the site museum at Kerma, the monumental statues provide eloquent testimony to the influence of Egypt on ancient Nubian royal art.

Oddly, Bonnet’s text, a publication inspired by his Nathan I. Huggins Lecture delivered at Harvard University in October 2016, provides virtually no historical