

ra Loos (89–104) analyses the 1848 execution of Prince Rakronnaret in Thailand. As she points out, not only the sexuality of elite women in Thailand was highly regulated, but, as the example of this high-ranking man shows, the sexuality of elite men, too, was intimately bound up with politics. Timon Screech (105–124) offers a detailed case study on sexual encounters between Japanese and European males in 17th-century Japan. Dutch VOC officials were well aware of male-male intercourse among the Japanese elite and Screech mentions that a Dutch physician even supplied medicine to treat rectal bleeding. However, as Part III, “Crimes and Sins,” makes clear, Europeans generally considered “sodomy” as criminally wrong and those found guilty of it were put to death. Raquel A. G. Reyes (127–140) discusses the case of a Chinese man who frequently visited Manila and was found guilty, in 1670, of “the crime against nature” and hence condemned to death. Peter Boomgaard (141–160) situates the execution of a member of the Council of Indies in Batavia in 1644, also on account of “sodomy,” in the broader context of ideas and attitudes toward “sodomy” in the Indonesian archipelago, thereby covering much the same ground as in Clarence-Smith’s previous chapter.

Although agreeing that “Southeast Asian literary sources are especially rich” (11 f.), I would nevertheless warn of the risks involving mining them for “women’s history, homoeroticism and transgender practices, as well as gender relations and constructions of sexuality” (11). Theoretically, analysing fictional texts is fraught with methodological problems, whereas, more practically, not all historians possess the necessary linguistic and literary competences to delve in texts written in exotic scripts and languages. The encyclopaedic Javanese narrative poem “Centhini” is twice invoked in this book for its descriptions of non-normative sex acts (see 12 and 74 f.), but both authors have no direct access to it and are, therefore, dependent on secondary literature. However, students of traditional Javanese literature know that the eroticism of the detail and type found in the so-called major “Centhini” is highly exceptional and it may well be that its detailed sexual fantasies catered to one particular prurient prince who later ruled as Pakubuwana V (d. 1823).

This book remains, however, a most welcome addition to the growing body of work on gender and sexuality in Asia. Written by historians, this volume reminds us that sexual acts “are freighted with their own histories worthy of examination” (17).

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Rizzo, Lorena: *Gender and Colonialism. A History of Kaoko in North-Western Namibia, 1870s–1950s.* Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2012. 331 pp. ISBN 978-3-905758-27-6. (Basel Namibia Studies Series, 14) Price: sfr 42.00

Lorena Rizzo’s study “Gender and Colonialism” is a new history of colonialism in Kaoko which explicitly asks for gendered experiences and narratives in the period between the 1870s and 1950s. It has been submitted as a doctoral thesis to the Philosophic-Historian Faculty at the University of Basel in 2009. The introduction to the pub-

lished book was written by Professor Patricia Hayes from the University of Western Cape.

Rizzo’s starting point is a critique of the colonial archive with its ethnic and androcentric biases, and of historians who have reproduced these biases. The author asks many incisive questions on all sorts of truisms, including Kaoko as a study area, which is introduced as a subject of colonial imagination, renegotiation, and redefinition rather than as a clear and static territoriality with a particular geography, ethnicity, or political unity. Consistently, the study lacks an introductory description of “land and people.” She is “very much concerned with avoiding the reproduction of a colonial narrative in which space and ethnic identity are so deeply ingrained with each other” (4) and, indeed, manages to escape the ethnic bias by applying a transregional perspective, by exploring the ways in which Africans moved between geographical, political, and cultural spaces, by introducing communities, groups, families, and individuals instead of ethnic groups or representatives, and by differentiating geographical parts of Kaoko as well as social categories such as class, gender, or generation. The transregional perspective relates Kaoko’s history as part of Namibia’s colonial history. The limits to a really transregional approach, which would have had to include adjacent areas in southwestern Angola, are acknowledged and accountable to the lack of sources in English or German. The interest in the impact of colonialism on the constitution of gender relations and women’s lives is pursued by new readings of archival sources and the incorporation of oral histories and memories. An additional layer of interpretation is attained by the analysis of colonial photographs.

The main sources were the written documents in the National Archives of Namibia in Windhoek, supplemented by missionary accounts in the archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) and of the Rhenish Mission Society in Wuppertal in Germany (RMG), travelogues by hunters and adventurers as well as oral sources. The latter include the oral testimonies from Kaoko as edited by anthropologist Michael Bollig (“When War Came the Cattle Slept ...” *Himba Oral Traditions*. Köln: Köppe 1997), and interviews conducted by Rizzo in Kaoko between 2001 and 2002. They provide alternative perspectives on what has made its way into the colonial archive as well as different fields of attention. The fields of grand attention, also called “nodal points,” “condensations,” “defining moments” (12 f.), or “highlights” (15), because they led to an intensified production of written documents, stood out in the oral histories, or both, have been taken to determine the structure and conceptual framework of six meticulously researched individual chapters which are rich in detail, ordered in a loosely chronological way, and cross-referenced throughout the book.

Part I, “Gender and Conflict” deals with the expansion of the Oorlam raiding economy into Kaoko from the 1870s onwards by which Kaoko became integrated into the capitalised economies of the Cape and Angola until its collapse in the aftermath of an outbreak of rinderpest in 1896/97. “Gender and Colonial Counter Insurgen-

cy" (Part II) takes the military expeditions of the resident commissioner of Owambo, Major C. Manning, to north-western Namibia in 1917 and 1919 as a start to reflect on the complex historical developments during the first two decades of the 20th century and challenges earlier historiographies, which had suggested a continuous marginality and insignificance of late German and early South African presence in the region, and, thereby, had promoted the idea of historic stagnation. "Gender and Containment" (Part III) reconstructs how the South African administration pushed forward the creation of clear settled conditions in the late 1920s and 1930s by defining and enforcing reserve borders, regulating mobility, and enforcing indirect rule. The chapter "Gender and Colonial Law," parts of which have previously been published as an article in *The Journal of African History* (48.2007: The Elephant Shooting. Colonial Law and Indirect Rule in Kaoko, Northwestern Namibia, in the 1920s and 1930s), deals with the same period, but takes a different approach by discussing a particular legal case and analysing the respective written and oral sources as a narrative field, in which different local and colonial actors negotiated social and power relations. "Gender and the Technologies of Empire" (Part V) focuses on two inoculation campaigns against lung sickness in 1938 and 1939 and shows that while they failed in terms of animal disease management, they became a tool to finally establish colonial power in Kaoko and laid the groundwork for the isolation of Kaoko as a reserve on the territory's periphery. Finally, "Gender and Visuality" takes a collection of photographs of the Windhoek-based businessman and amateur photographer Heinz Roth from 1951 as a start to address the genesis of Kaoko and its tribalised Himba population as a consumption asset for "white" South African elites after World War II. Instead of a concluding chapter, the book ends with a very short "Epilogue" that highlights individual aspects of the approach and the findings and names a number of new fields for scholarly inquiry. Unfortunately for the reader who is interested in the main lines of the argument, the book lacks an informative summary of the elaborately detailed study as a whole. The "Appendix" includes a list of figures and a map, a bibliography of sources, including archival files, published sources, literature, and specifications of interviews, as well as an index, which covers names and locations but no topical keywords.

Rizzo's cogently reveals the nature of Kaoko's colonial archive, the kind of narrative it produces, and the historical interpretations it suggests. Often enough, the archival sources remain silent about women's lives and gender relations, or about particular stretches of land and aspects of past relationships. Rizzo never hesitates to name and point to the gaps instead of glossing over them by resorting to generalising statements. The gender category in the book and chapter titles is not to be understood as a topic of detailed description but as an issue raised. In spite of elusive evidence, Rizzo insists on asking for the implications, which the numerous social transformations had for women, for gender relations, and for the construction of femininities and masculinities, and proves that it

is, indeed, possible to draw conclusions on them from seemingly unpromising sources and by unravelling the contexts for experiences of women. What emerges very clearly is that femininities are constructed as unimportant, marginal, or negligible in the colonial archives. One might argue that the insights into women's lives and gender relations remain modest. Rizzo has to be credited to have asked such questions in the first place and to have pointed to the gaps and biases in the archival sources instead of adding to historiographies, which perpetuate the invisibility of women by either ignoring them or simply hinting to but not questioning the lack of sources. Apart from the questions pertaining to women and gender, parallel questions pertaining to the way how generational relations, both female and male, within the family and social hierarchies were shaped, seem to emerge as a promising approach for future work, suggested by several remarks on conditions differentiated according to membership to age cohorts or generations.

Rizzo further has to be credited for consequently avoiding ethnic categories. Her language is less consequent in making clear that historiography is a process, implying agency by herself as a historian. We learn that "highlights" or fields of grand attention have been taken to determine the structure and conceptual framework of the chapters. Potential alternatives and the reasons for and processes of making particular choices are, however, not revealed. For example, it is left to the reader's guess whether the colonial archive is telling as little about the period before, during, and after World War II, or about the establishment of the headman council system as Rizzo does in her historiography; to the nonexpert reader it remains blurred whether and which alternatives to Roth's photographs would have been available for the discussion in "Gender and Visuality." Compared to the meticulous elaboration of the nature of Kaoko's colonial archive, the nature and context of the oral sources remain vague. Little attention is directed towards the intricacies and difficulties of chronology in oral accounts, to how oral narratives are passed on and, most importantly, to how they are dialogically produced in research interviews. A more elaborate and self-reflexive exposition of how the information became evidence for Rizzo as a historian herself would have been desirable.

In sum, "Gender and Colonialism" is a detailed and sophisticated new historiography asking many new questions, providing unfamiliar insights, and making significant contributions towards a better understanding of Kaoko's social history. In a short review article it is impossible to account for the richness in detail and perspectives. Rizzo disentangles the multiplex implications of state interventions in an impressive and dense way, always having an eager eye on the fractured character and ambiguity of the sources and historical developments as well as on the complexity in terms of geographical regions, societal fraction, or individual actors within the colonial society. The book is a highly recommendable reading for researchers who are interested in Namibian historiography as well as in discussions of the nature of archives.

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