

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In this issue, the editors of *The Journal of African History* are pleased to be able to present six papers that demonstrate the innovative findings being produced by the old skills of archival research in a new generation of Africanist historians. **Marcos Abreu Leitão de Almeida** applies the tools of historical linguistics to reconstruct the social history of the enslaved in the mid-nineteenth century from a single ship's inventory in the archives of Brazil's Navy Auditor Court. Assembling and critically interpreting the many indirect comments and observations in the records of London Missionary Society allows **Philip Gooding** to explore the scope and significance of Islamic conversion on the shores of Lake Tanganyika after the 1860s. **Kelly Duke Bryant** uses the documents of early twentieth-century official abolitionism in the Senegalese National Archives to reconstruct the interests and perspectives of a cohort of 1,600 liberated children. **Tasha Rijke-Epstein** combines a critical reading of the documents of sanitation in the archives of colonial reformers in Antananarivo with dictionaries and contemporary field work, to unpack the cultural politics of excrement in colonial Madagascar. The high-politics of embryonic neo-colonialism in Dahomey (later Benin) emerges from **Alexander Keese's** interrogation of the records in the French Diplomatic Archives in La Courneuve and the national archives in Porto-Novo. And **Jeremy Rich** traces the evidence of the skillful diplomatic maneuvering of Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko and Rwanda's Grégoire Kayibanda around the 1968 Katanga crisis in the archives of the International Red Cross.

The reviews section leads with an examination by **Ana Lucia Araujo** of a book that took decades to reach publication: **Zora Neale Hurston's** *Barracoon: The Story of the Last 'Black Cargo'*. Hurston narrates the life of Oluale Kassola, a Yoruba speaker who seems to have been born in the early 1840s in a village north of the Kingdom of Dahomey. In his late adolescence, he was captured, sold, and, on the eve of the Civil War, illegally transported to the United States, where he labored as a slave and then a freedman. Several other kinds of first-hand accounts also grace the review sections, including **Adélékè Adéèkò's** collection of Philip Quaque's writings, which are appraised by **Randy Sparks**; a hefty volume on John Chilembwe and his uprising, compiled by **John McCracken** and assessed by **Joey Power**; and a book edited by **Jean-Luc Vellut** and critiqued by **Raphael Okitafumba Lokola** on Simon Kimbangu and his prophetic movement in the Belgian Congo. The writings and reflections of the leaders and philosophers of independence likewise offer a rich perspective on the political transformations of the twentieth century and anchor a volume on political thought by **Gregory Smulewicz-Zucker** and **Chelsea Schields**, reviewed by **Leslie James**.

Primary sources, and their careful consideration, inspire and drive Africanist historiography, and are at the core of rigorous scholarship, such as that which is featured in *The Journal of African History*. We thank our readers and contributors for their dedication to the field and for their collective efforts, through research and reviews of all kinds, to stretch our learning and interpretations in ever-expanding new directions.

THE EDITORS