

ner in which particular hook types worked in catching fish, especially the rotating or circle hooks. In research by Cooke and Suski (2004) cited in “Te Matau a Māui,” the circle hook catches on the flesh inside the jaw of the fish and, as the line is tensioned backward from the shank, the hook point rotates through the flesh to encompass the jaw, just as was argued by Reinman in 1970, cited in the book, and many authors since. However, Paulin and Fenwick (67–71) propose that, in the traditional Maori circle hook, the point does not penetrate the flesh but rather guides the hook to slip over the narrow section of the jaw; a technique which the authors identify, optimistically, as encoded in words translated as “wrapped well” that occur in a Maori fishing incantation (79). Their proposition is plausible enough, but if the point was only a guide in the Maori circle hook, then making it sharp would seem to have been redundant, even counterproductive. A second issue (121–129) is whether the putative ornamental fish hook form known as *hei matau* – meaning a hook-shaped neck ornament – existed prior to the arrival of Europeans and was possibly an implement for scraping flax or seal skins or performed some other such function. The functions seem improbable but Paulin’s argument that the form is late is certainly worth the additional research he recommends.

Through the chapters 6 to 8 there is an extensive description of fish hook collecting and museum collections of Maori hooks. This is interesting for its evidence of the provenance of various types and examples of fish hooks but it could have done with some succinct conclusions, as indeed could the book as a whole. Had “Te Matau a Māui” been confined to the form, function, history, and collection of Maori fish hooks, or indeed of Maori fishing generally in historical perspective, that would have been simple enough, but the last two chapters, upon the management of late historical and modern New Zealand fisheries, blur the focus of the book and detract from its main theme. The bibliography, with items in a single numbered list for the book, is sufficiently detailed but contains some errors, for example: 11 and 128 have different references to the same book; 46 and 315 have the wrong authors; 325 and 326 have different authors for the same article and 48 and 362 have the wrong title and editors.

Those matters aside, “Te Matau a Māui” is a book to be valued on several grounds: it brings the material culture of Maori fishing back into discussion, and within the context of archaeological and ecological evidence; and if it does not quite succeed in putting this main theme into an historical context of fishing activity and its management, at least it indicates where that discussion needs to head. The book is well-written, attractive, and worth the attention of anthropologists. Atholl Anderson

**Peel, J. D. Y.:** Christianity, Islam, and *Oriṣa* Religion. Three Traditions in Comparison and Interaction. Oakland: University of California Press, 2016. 296 pp. ISBN 978-0-520-28585-9. Price: £ 29.95

Published two months after its author’s death in November 2015, “Christianity, Islam and *Oriṣa* Religion”

is the final contribution to the study of religion in Africa, and in particular Nigeria, by the great sociologist J. D. Y. Peel. Peel’s first book, “Aladura. A Religious Movement among the Yoruba” (London 1968), focused on the Yoruba “praying” churches, and he later returned to the study of the Yoruba with a historical-sociological study of the kingdom of Ilesha, published as “Ijeshas and Nigerians. The Incorporation of a Yoruba Kingdom, 1890s–1970s” (Cambridge 1983), and an exploration of the role of Christianity in Yoruba ethnogenesis in “Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba” (Bloomington 2000). Both “Ijeshas and Nigerians” and “Religious Encounter” won the Amaury Talbot Prize of the (British) Royal Anthropological Institute and the Melville J. Herskovits Award of the (US American) African Studies Association, a so far unparalleled achievement that reflects Peel’s status as one of the most important scholars of religion in Africa.

Peel’s final contribution to the study of Yoruba religion focuses on the relationship between Christianity, Islam, and the diverse ranges of practices he calls “*Oriṣa* Religion.” This ambitious comparative project is possible because Yoruba speakers converted to both Islam and Christianity in significant numbers. And even though the majority of Yoruba speakers have been either Muslim or Christian since the mid-20th century, traditional forms of spirituality remain important and constitute the basis for institutions such as chieftaincy and kingship. Today, Yoruba speakers of all three religions live closely together and religious conflicts are usually resolved quickly. However, Peel points out that interreligious relations have been subject to significant historical change over the course of the 20th century, and suggests that for the purposes of comparison, it is more productive to understand Islam and Christianity as rivals even as they coexist peaceably within a framework of shared community values (2).

Reflecting the different possibilities of comparison in the Yoruba context, the book is divided into two parts. The first part contains five chapters based on already-published material that rely on comparison between different groups and societies to explore how different social conditions may lead to the adoption of particular forms of religious practice. Comparing the conversion to the world religions among the Yoruba and the Asante (Ghana), Peel suggests that the far greater reluctance in Asante to adopt Christianity is predicated mainly on their existing beliefs, which emphasised the pervasive threat of anarchy. As a result, conversion was understood as a far more perilous activity than in the Yoruba context, where most religious activity was based on the understanding, encapsulated in the over-arching divination cult of *Ifá*, that order existed in the beginning, and simply needed to be restored (chap. 1). This difference also informed the differences between the first histories of the Yoruba and Akan by Samuel Johnson and C. C. Reindorf respectively: Johnson’s work illustrates the greater ease with which Yoruba speakers could represent Christianity as an integral part of their experience (chap. 2). After an illustrative discussion of the performativity and fluidity of the Yoruba traditional pantheon (chap. 3), Peel suggests that the strongly

doctrinal elements of Aladura and Pentecostal Christianity in Yorubaland are mediated by an emphasis on performance and media that reflects an overall preference for imagistic worship (chap. 4). Unlike in the European context, Christianity's association with modern education in West Africa meant that it was neither perceived as a rival to scientific reason nor as an oppressive ideology. For that reason especially Pentecostalism offers Yoruba Christians a convincing way of engaging with the conditions created by economic neoliberalism in Nigeria (chap. 5).

The second part of the book includes six chapters that centre on the comparison of Christianity and Islam. Peel argues that as "world religions," both are shaped both by their own foundational practices, texts, and traditions of interpretation, and by the cultural context in which they are realised (chap. 6). Although Yoruba Christians were leading in the early imagination of the Yoruba as an ethnic nation, Yoruba Muslims were drawn into politics at least partly as fellow Muslims to their northern Nigerian co-religionists (chap. 7). While some Yoruba Muslims have sought to distance themselves religiously from the language shared with Yoruba Christians, such efforts are limited by the importance of local traditions that emphasise the importance of coexistence with non-Muslims (chap. 8). Over time, there have been several exchanges between Islam and Christianity. The emphasis on prayer, including night vigils, in the Aladura churches reflects a distinctly Islamic influence on Yoruba Christianity, while the production of printed prayer and religious handbooks was pioneered by Christians and adopted by Muslims later. Interestingly Peel also suggests that the leadership through divine charisma of the large Pentecostal churches is not unlike that of the great Sufi *shaykhs*, even though it contrasts with modern Muslim Yoruba organisations (chap. 9). Yet despite such exchanges and apparent similarities, Salafism and Pentecostalism offer very different views on religious reform, with Islamic discourses offering a more political but also narrower guide than the Holy Spirit (chap. 10). And although the joint rise of Islam and Christianity has led to the decline of traditional religion in Yorubaland, *Oriṣa* religion has grown in the New World (chap. 11).

Clearly written, cogently argued, and offering deep insights into the interwoven trajectories of three different religious traditions in one society, this book undoubtedly constitutes required reading for scholars and students of religion, both in Africa and beyond. And yet the book's very strength – its strongly Weberian, comparative approach to the study of religions – also constitutes a limitation. Focusing on Islam, Christianity and even *Oriṣa* religion as coherent and distinct traditions, Peel's ascription of their coexistence to shared cultural values and practices can only be preliminary. Occasional descriptions of what people *do* with religion include the enthusiastic participation of Muslim guests in the celebration of the New Year in church and the participation of a Christian child in the early breakfast of his fasting Muslim relatives during Ramadan (134). They illustrate that exchanges between Muslims and Christians can extend beyond notions of competition, appropriation, and tolerance to joyful expe-

riences and satisfying personal strategies. As the plurality of the religious landscape offers a wealth of personal opportunities and choices, individuals draw on the very coexistence of Islam, Christianity, and traditional practices – rather than one to the exclusion of all others – to manage, understand, and re-cast their relationships with others, themselves, and the divine. What such forms of strategic mobilisation and experience may mean for the "internal" dynamics of Islam, Christianity, and *Oriṣa* religion, and indeed for our understanding of religion in Africa and beyond, is a question that remains to be addressed.

J. D. Y. Peel's notable scholarly achievements enabled him to both serve and shape his academic community in many roles, including as the editor of *Africa – Journal of the International Africa Institute* (1979–86) and the "International African Library" (1986–2015) and as a fellow and even Vice-President (1999–2000) of the British Academy. In these various roles, he liked to challenge younger colleagues, always with the aim of improving their work, and the wider debates to which it related. The already significant number of publications engaging with the arguments put forward in "Christianity, Islam and *Oriṣa* Religion" suggests that this book is such a challenge: beyond constituting a point of reference for Africanists and scholars of religious encounter it will, by inviting and inspiring responses and questions, continue to shape their scholarship for the foreseeable future.

Insa Nolte

**Prem, Hanns J., Sabine Dedenbach-Salazar Saénz, Frauke Sachse y Frank Seeliger:** *Relación de la genealogía y Origen de los mexicanos. Dos documentos del Libro de Oro*. Norderstedt: Books on Demand. 2015. 436 pp. ISBN 978-3-7386-4142-4. Precio: € 34. 99

I want to congratulate everyone who studies or is interested in the late pre-Hispanic and early colonial history of the Mexica (Aztecs), that now the new and long-awaited, critical edition of two related, in their structure and content very similar sources are available to them, which date by the early 1530s and which are conventionally titled "Relación de genealogía de los señores que han señoreado en esta Nueva España" and "Origen de los mexicanos." Both documents were written on request of the Spanish conquistador Juan Cano de Saavedra, husband of Doña Isabel de Moctezuma, one of the numerous daughters of the last Mexica supreme ruler (*huey tlahtoani*) Motecuhzoma Xocoyotzin. She survived the conquest and died in the early 1550s, probably in July 1550. Based on a vast compilation of oral and pictorial testimonies, both sources state that Doña Isabel was the oldest legitimate and the most beloved child of Motecuhzoma and his chief wife. Therefore, she was the main legitimate heir of supreme power in Central Mexico and vast private estates of her parents. Both documents are a complex amalgamation of native and late medieval Spanish notions concerning transmission of power, property rights, marriage practice, and inheritance. We do not know any details about the authorship, and the originals of the manuscripts did not survive. However, in the second half of the 16th century anonymous copies of both manuscripts were includ-