

so far (as in language), or at least will stimulate further debate (as in religion).

The book makes abundantly clear how our knowledge of our origins has advanced greatly in recent decades. Despite areas of uncertainty, there are growing areas of firm knowledge. This might be disputed by some. The postmodernists, influential in much of cultural anthropology, presumably would object to any prioritising of any particular narrative of human evolution, or to regarding anything as factual. The authors do not contend with this view directly in the text (of course, they do so indirectly), but Cavalli-Sforza does in his introduction. He describes how the leading postmodernist Jacques Derrida carefully avoided speaking to him when on two occasions they both received honorary degrees together! (This at least is Cavalli-Sforza's narrative of what happened ...) Cavalli-Sforza compares the postmodernists to the Greek sophists, using the emotional power of words and their ambiguity to undermine belief in reason.

For someone genuinely seeking to understand our origins, this book is to be highly recommended as a clear, well-written account of what we know so far in a broad multi-disciplinary endeavour. There are indeed some narratives, but also many facts and many very well-founded theories and arguments. It will be most useful as a textbook on courses concerned with human evolution, and as a general resource for those interested in reading a synthesis of research findings and arguments within the area.

Peter K. Smith

Trefon, Theodore, et Pierre Petit (dir.): *Expériences de recherche en République Démocratique du Congo. Méthodes et contextes.* Bruxelles: Université libre de Bruxelles, 2006. 276 pp. ISBN 978-2-87263-006-6. (*Civilisations*, 54/1–2) Prix: € 30.00

It is encouraging that social science research is still being carried on in the Democratic Republic of Congo, with some involvement of local scholars and institutions, even though most of the initiative and the funding comes from abroad. The editors of this collection, both with long experience in the country, insist, however, that there is fundamentally nothing special about research in Congo. Their intention is to encourage interdisciplinary discussion of methods and perspectives, to remind researchers everywhere of the need to show how results were produced, to guide beginners, and to provide practical examples for all, especially but not exclusively in Congo.

Nevertheless, in their excellent introduction, the editors are obliged to discuss the difficulties of research in current conditions. Since the collapse of Mobutu's regime international agencies have interfered in the country's affairs as never before, as invaders, mineral profiteers, armed and unarmed United Nations expeditionary forces, journalists, and nongovernmental organizations of every description. Add in television and the constant traffic of goods and people between the homeland and diasporic communities in Europe, the Americas, and elsewhere in Africa. Congolese now know much more about

the world than they did thirty years ago and have more grounds for suspicion and outright paranoia. Even when there is no immediate physical danger, research can be very difficult; one anthropologist was arrested for "cultural espionage."

An even more serious concern underlined by the editors is the distortion imposed on results and perspectives by foreign agencies demanding "quick and dirty" research. Crowds of young project managers and research experts arrive on tight schedules, believing in surveys and statistics but ignorant of the environment, anxious to advance their careers in the World Bank or UNESCO (this reviewer has seen the like in Ghana). Contracts are written in the buzzwords of today's international social work: "participatory rural appraisal; project cycle management; empowerment, underprivileged; income generating; capacity building ..." The editors note local scholars readily learn this language, and that it is more rewarding for them to join a project or a program than to write a scholarly paper (16). In addition to what the editors call the NGOisation of research, current conditions result in its urbanisation. Rural areas, traditionally the terrain of the anthropologist's long-term participatory observation, are now neglected.

The twenty essays in this volume are written by a diverse group, from beginners to Léon de Saint Moulin, who began research in Congo 35 years ago, and Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, doyen of Congo historians. Their interests include anthropology, sociology, literature, popular culture, public health, emigrants, and churches, but all deal with the strategies and experiences of research. None of the issues discussed (notably the relationship between quantitative and qualitative research) will be new to the experienced social scientist, but the variety and immediacy of the reports make for stimulating reading.

Wyatt MacGaffey

Ubelaker, Douglas H. (ed.): *Handbook of North American Indians; vol. 3: Environment, Origins, and Population.* Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 2006. 1146 pp. ISBN 978-0-16-077511-6. Price: \$ 72.00

Dieser Band erschien im Herbst 2006 als der 14. des auf 20 Bände angelegten Handbook-Projektes. Es war zugleich der letzte Band, den der Herausgeber der Reihe, William Sturtevant, noch erleben konnte. Sturtevant starb am 2. März 2007 im Alter von 81 Jahren, und damit war ihm leider nicht vergönnt, sein wichtigstes Lebenswerk, mit dem er seit 1965 beschäftigt war, zum Abschluss zu bringen.

Im Vorwort der beiden Herausgeber (W. C. Sturtevant und D. H. Ubelaker), datiert auf den 10. Juli 2006, wird die Entstehungsgeschichte des vorliegenden Bandes ausführlich beschrieben. Die begann 1970 mit der Ernennung von Frederick S. Hulse als Herausgeber, der jedoch 1982 von diesem Amt zurücktrat. Ihm folgte Richard I. Ford, der 1991 dieses Amt wieder abgab, und erst 2002 wurde mit Douglas H. Ubelaker ein Herausgeber gefunden, der den Band vollenden konnte. Die teilweise 30 Jahre alten Manuskripte mussten völlig neu bearbeitet