

PRACTICAL GEOGRAPHY IN AFRICA

T. E. Hilton

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L. Dudley Stamp

The aim of this important new book is to provide a work of reference to serve as a companion to the textbooks of the student, and as a source of information for the general reader. In very many cases a reference has been given to a standard work in which further details can be found. Geographical terms, geographers (including a few biographical details), geographical societies, journals and awards are dealt with in simple alphabetical order. There are brief accounts of the principal physical features, countries and towns of the world. Population growth trends are indicated by comparison of census figures. The main commodities of international commerce are included and there is an annotated book list for sources of further information.

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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

AFRICA: Oxford Regional Economic Atlas. Prepared by P.H. Ady and the Cartographic Department of the Clarendon Press, with the assistance of A.H. Hazlewood. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965. 10 x 7½ inches. 164 pp. U.K. price: 63s.

This volume is the third in the Oxford series of regional economic atlases; although it is somewhat longer than the atlases of the U.S.S.R. and the Middle East, the format and general plan of the volume are much the same. The atlas is divided into three parts: an economic commentary (55 pp.), regional and thematic maps (112 pp.), and a gazetteer (49 pp.).

The economic commentary is a useful summary of some of the main facts of the economy of Africa. A statistical note provides a timely reminder that "the countries of Africa are not well documented with statistics except in a few cases", that "in many cases figures published are no more than estimates", and that "statistical information has an appearance of accuracy which may be highly misleading, and when statistics are mapped an even more misleading impression may be given" (p. 5). In so far as the nature of African statistical material constitutes a basic limitation upon the value of the atlas as a whole, a more critical assessment of this material would have been very useful. The most serious weakness of the atlas is that the statistical material presented and used is seriously out of date. Very few of the statistical tables are continued beyond 1960, and many relate to the mid-1950's; most of the economic distribution maps do not reveal the date to which they refer, but the maps of population distribution are "based on 1956 figures". Until this deficiency is rectified in a second edition the atlas is likely to prove a good deal less useful to the serious student than it might otherwise be. The economic commentary also contains a number of errors of fact or emphasis; for example, robusta coffee is probably an indigenous African plant and was certainly not "introduced into Africa only after the First World War" (p. 25). There is an unfortunate tendency throughout the commentary, as a result of the need to present only a bare outline of facts, to explain complex circumstances in terms of single, simple causes.

The series of topographic maps shows twenty-two slices of Africa on scales varying from 1:1,500,000 to 1:6,300,000. Relief is shown by means of layer shading; the additional use of hill shading on the smaller-scale maps is of questionable benefit. Emphasis is given to areas of economic importance, e.g. Nigeria and the Republic of South Africa; less well-developed areas are adequately covered, but the divisions and titles used are in places rather odd. The map entitled 'Zambia' (pp. 32-33), for example, shows only the north-eastern part of the country. East Africa is shown on a general map on the scale of 1:6.3 million, the 'Lake Victoria area' appears at 1:3.2 million. The first of these two maps omits a considerable stretch of southern Tanzania, shows the River Aswa as the Victoria Nile, and marks Moroto mountain but not Kadam or any of the Kigezi peaks. The second map shows an area stretching from Mombasa to the Congo, and both maps make the mistake of indicating Entebbe in larger type than Kampala. There is insufficient difference between the two maps, and the second one might usefully be replaced by a more detailed coverage of the Kenya highlands and southern Uganda.

The thirty-five thematic maps represent the core of the work, and almost all of them are drawn on a scale of 1:25 million. The spreading of the continent across the double page means that certain details are difficult to read, especially in West Africa, and the displacement of the north-eastern horn is displeasing. Nine maps deal with the physical environment: the relief map is oversimplified, yet emphasizes some unimportant features. A commendable effort has been made to present new climatic data not otherwise available, but some of this material is less valuable than may appear at first sight; the map of moisture regions (pp. 58-59) is not at all easy to interpret, and the climatic diagrams (pp. 60-61) include data from only two stations in ex-French and ex-Belgian Africa. Five dot maps show the distribution of agricultural and pastoral activities; unfortunately, it is possible only to show commercial production in detail, and areas of significant production in the subsistence sector are merely outlined. The dots sometimes appear inaccurately placed, e.g. sugar dots in Busoga (p. 67). Of the seven maps showing the distribution of minerals and sources of power and of industries, only the map of electrical power gives any quantitative information in terms of absolute values; the other maps in this section merely classify phenomena rather unsatisfactorily into major, secondary and minor categories. The importance of these developments in the economies of the countries concerned is not made clear, and no distinction is made between mineral deposits which are worked and those which are not. Thus, in Uganda, Kilembe is marked as a minor source of copper but as a major source of cobalt; copper exports were valued at over £6 million in 1964, but for economic reasons the cobalt remains unworked. Copper refining, one of the most important industries at Jinja, is not shown, and the steelworks there, completed in 1962, are marked as 'under construction'. Several maps show aspects of transport; the map of airports and air routes is clear, but that attempting to show accessibility to main roads in relation to moisture regions is less successful, especially in South Africa where the pattern becomes very confused. The map of ports does not agree in detail with similar maps published elsewhere, and serves to underline the basic problem of accuracy even where straightforward trade figures are concerned. The population maps (pp. 91-97) give a misleading impression of the distribution of non-African people; this is unavoidable because of the method used, but is nevertheless irritating. The maps of urban population (pp. 98-101), based on 1956 figures, grossly overestimate the importance of the non-African element in North Africa and perhaps also elsewhere, and the difficult problem of mapping the Witwatersrand conurbation has not been very satisfactorily solved.

In order to review fully a work of this nature one needs to be an expert in a wide variety of aspects of Africa. In those sections of the atlas in which an individual reviewer's knowledge permits him to do so, numerous errors and shortcomings may be detected, and this naturally leads to the suspicion that comparable weaknesses exist in other sections. As a general work of reference the atlas is undoubtedly very useful, and such errors as it contains are of relatively minor importance, for it provides an overall picture of many aspects of Africa not readily available elsewhere on a continental basis. As a source of reliable and up-to-date information it is much less useful, and one feels that more thorough inquiry and more serious attention might have improved the standard considerably. — B.S.H.

THE AFRICAN HUSBANDMAN, W. ALLAN. xiii, 505 pp., 8 plates, 13 figures. Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd. 1965. U.K. price: 63s.

The work of Allan has been too little known by geographers, and now that it has been revised and greatly expanded in the form of a book it should become much more familiar. Allan was one of a team of agricultural ecologists by whose work our understanding of the environment of Zambia has been advanced in several significant ways. Allan's particular contribution has been in furthering knowledge of the carrying capacity of the land. Much of his early work was done in areas of shifting cultivation, particularly of *citemene*, and this remains much the most satisfying part of the present study. From a basis of studying land carrying capacities, land requirements, cultivation factors (average acreage cultivated per farming unit), critical population densities and other phenomena for a moderately dry area of central Africa, the author proceeds to make a similar examination of other areas within Africa south of the Sahara where rainfall is higher and soil conditions are better. Some of these later studies are less complete, and one sometimes feels that the carrying capacities of the areas involved are underestimated. Much of the early part of the book is devoted to calculating formulae for the understanding of the carrying capacity of the land under differing environments and under different agricultural practices. These themes are well supported by examples which are subsequently expanded into a major section of the book. To render this survey of husbandry more complete some consideration is given to carrying capacity under hunting and food-gathering economies (for which the author presents a brief world survey) and under pastoral economies. In this section no detailed examples are developed and the association between the pastoralist and his habitat is not advanced very adequately. The final part of the book is a stimulating discussion of means of improving the productivity of the land by advanced farming techniques compatible with environmental conditions. The book is extremely well written and contains a mass of interesting information on all aspects of man's association with soil drawn from a wide range of examples and illustrated by anecdotes from the author's own wide experience. Although it may not be an easy book to use, it should be invaluable to agriculturalists and sociologists, and is highly appropriate as a stimulus to discussion for geography students at advanced levels. A geographer might have wished for the descriptions of the various environments to have been presented more systematically, but it is in a book such as this that the significance of systematic geographical studies can really be seen.

Of particular interest to geographers in East Africa are studies of the Chagga, Gisu, Ganda and Haya as illustrations of banana cultures, and of the Kikuyu, Luo, Ciga, Teso, Sukuma, Matengo and Kara as illustrations of highly populated areas. These descriptions vary very much in quality; that of the Ganda is very slender, whilst those on the Chagga, Matengo and Kara are much fuller. It is particularly pleasing to find a critical assessment of the much publicised Ukara Island. There are also some brief studies of areas of low population density in Tanzania. These various examples from East Africa are not always as closely related to the earlier themes of the book as one might have wished; but nevertheless the wealth of examples from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania throughout the work greatly enhances its appropriateness for school and university libraries in East Africa. — B. W. L.

MIGRANTS AND MALARIA. R. MANSELL PROTHERO. x, 142 pp., 28 maps. London: Longmans. 1965. U.K. price: 15s.

This study is a composition from Mansell Prothero's numerous writings on the relation between malaria and human movement. The fact that the substance of this book is already familiar in no sense detracts from the pleasure of having it presented in a new and attractive form. The theme of the book is a fascinating one and is an excellent exposition of how geographers work and present their material. Various themes from human geography and biogeography are here seen in association as a study in applied geography. From a world review of malaria and from an examination of religious, labour and pastoral migration in Africa, the author proceeds to a presentation of the association of the two main themes in the Sudan, Somalia, East and Central Africa, West Africa and Morocco. The material on northern Nigeria is drawn from the author's own field experience, but there is also a wealth of information on other areas of Africa which he visited more briefly on a fact-finding mission. Finally the problem is seen against a brief discussion of many aspects of the human geography of the continent. The book contains twenty-eight fine maps, but no photographs. The price may seem high for a soft-backed book, but this should not prevent it from finding its place on the geographer's bookshelves. — B. W. L.

RAILWAYS AND DEVELOPMENT IN UGANDA. A study in economic geography. A. M. O'CONNOR. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, on behalf of the East African Institute of Social Research. 1965. viii, 176 pp., 13 maps (including 3 in folder). Price: 16s.

This book examines the role of rail transport in the economic development of Uganda. The research on which the study is based was initially undertaken between 1960 and 1962, but the material has been brought up to date for purposes of publication. The aim of the study is to consider the relevance to Uganda of the widely held belief that new railway construction automatically promotes economic growth. Railways may be related to economic development in three ways: they may actively stimulate economic activity, they may form part of the infrastructure necessary for such activity without acting as a stimulus, or they may be of no very great importance at all. An historical distinction is also necessary between initial major arteries making the extensive development of external trade possible and later additional lines which may compete over shorter distances with other forms of transport. Although the Uganda Railway from Mombasa was built primarily for political ends, one of its main effects was to facilitate the development of Uganda's cash economy. The circumstances in which the western and northern rail extensions in Uganda have been built are rather different; each was constructed for a specific purpose primarily unrelated to the stimulation of economic activity in the area traversed, although in both cases it was assumed that such stimulation would inevitably occur. The chief aim of the Kampala-Kasese line is the evacuation of copper from Kilembe, and that of the Soroti-Pakwach extension the replacement of an existing but outmoded and inconvenient transport system using lake steamers. In a sense, the author could hardly have found two major rail extensions better adapted to fit his

thesis. Both lines have succeeded in fulfilling their basic role, but clear evidence is presented that so far neither line has effected any significant change in the economy of the area served.

Thus the main conclusion reached is that railway construction is not the key to economic development in present-day Uganda, and it is important that this conclusion should be appreciated at a time when track-mileage is increasing and when the opposite view often prevails. The book is well-constructed and clearly written, although the style is very heavy and in places suffers from the contraction that is inevitable when a thesis is published as a book. The author clearly shows an impressive command of the statistical data that is available. A short chapter is devoted to conditions in Kenya and Tanganyika; comparisons are drawn with Uganda, and the conclusion is reached that it is in Tanganyika that new railways are likely to prove of greatest benefit. In general terms the book draws attention to the importance of the quantitative approach in geography, and forms an important geographical contribution to the study of transport which has too long been considered mainly as the province of economists. — B.S.H.

THE FRENCH AT KILWA ISLAND. G. S. P. FREEMAN-GRENVILLE. xviii, 243 pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1965. U.K. price 42s.

This book collects and translates all the available documents on the French slave trader, Morice, who made an agreement at Kilwa Kisiwani in 1776 by which he hoped to extend French trade and influence. Though the scheme failed, this material is most valuable to specialist historians and historical geographers. Morice's knowledge and understanding was limited but he illumines an obscure period in East African history especially in his answers to the rather unsystematic questions of his friend Cossigny. In the introduction, the editor shows how Morice's evidence can be used in conjunction with other written sources and the oral traditions preserved in Swahili chronicles. Most important here is the attempt to list the rulers of Kilwa between 1700 and 1856. Unfortunately, much of the resulting reconstruction is quite unacceptable. Limited space precludes detailed criticism; but how, for example, is the accession of Sultan Hasan in 1772 (p. 30) to be reconciled with his reigning in 1759 (p. 41)? The rest of the introduction is good within its limits — though it is a minor irritation to have April to August in the southern tropics called "summer" (p. 15). The maps are of interest while footnotes, bibliography and index are all helpful. R.C.B.

ENVIRONMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTION TO PLEISTOCENE GEOGRAPHY. K. W. BUTZER. xviii, 524 pp. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd. 1965. U.K. price 84s.

Rarely do modern scientific texts cover more than a limited field of study. Rarely, too, are comprehensive presentations really up-to-date, readable and vital in terms of both approach and ideas. It is rare also to find the literature in more than one language adequately reviewed. This new book shows none of these

weaknesses and demonstrates not only an impressive grasp of an enormous subject but also the great value of an interdisciplinary presentation. "While the subject matter of the book is.....not necessarily new, it attempts to chart a new course in presenting a comprehensive outline of palaeo-environmental study both from the theoretical and applied viewpoints, followed by an appraisal of some of the inferred interrelationships between man and environment." The approach is geographical while the Pleistocene period is here conveniently extended to the present.

The book is divided into six related sections; the first dealing with the scope and history of such interdisciplinary studies, Pleistocene stratigraphy and dating methods; the second covering zonal differentiation, vegetation, soils and geomorphological processes as environmental indices; the third techniques and interpretations of Pleistocene sedimentology and the fourth biological contributions — palynology, palaeobotany and palaeontology. The last two sections, comprising an integrated approach to the Pleistocene environments of the Old World and man-land relationships in prehistory represent the most striking parts of the book. Here the methods and theories outlined in the earlier chapters are applied to reconstructions of the environment, morphological, climatic, and biogeographical of mid-latitude Europe, the Mediterranean, the Sahara and Eastern Africa. The span of time covered in this section, as also the areas described, are limited by the availability of data, but ranging as it does from the last glacial maximum to the present, it is probably representative of much of the range of Pleistocene conditions. This discussion offers opportunities for statements upon glacial/pluvial relationships, interglacial conditions and climatic changes in general. Human origins and evolution are skilfully related to the environmental setting and man's cultural progress from the Lower Palaeolithic to the development of agriculture and urban life is meaningfully seen in its regional setting. These last sections vividly and practically vindicate the theoretical value of the interdisciplinary approach forcefully advocated in the introduction.

There are criticisms of detail; the section on tropical soils and especially that on laterite is misleading (pp. 81-82) as is the out-dated discussion of glacier movement (p. 95). The general section on fluvial processes is unconvincing and the elevation of glacial erosion to greater significance than stream erosion is erroneous. To be told that exfoliation results from salt hydration alone (p.131) makes sense only in a very limited regional context. The citing of slope angles in percentages and the use of the American style of spelling throughout unnerves the conditioned English reader. Figure 56 is upside down and there are minor errors in the key of Figure 76.

Notwithstanding the above points, this is an immensely thorough, scholarly, authoritative, fluently written book, a fund of information, condensation and illumination, supported in depth by a comprehensive set of references. It is more than just a good text book: it is a book to be enjoyed by all who desire to see a break-down of the artificial division of scientific subjects and a mutually beneficial cross-fertilisation of ideas, methods and observations. — P.H.T.

NORTH AMERICA. N. J. G. POUNDS, xii, 238 pp. London: John Murray. Second edition, 1964. U.K. price 18s. 6d.

This is a new edition of a school text first published in 1955. After three chapters on the United States and Canada as a whole the author examines these countries on a regional basis; and he succeeds admirably in giving a clear picture of them to a depth suitable for Advanced Level or H.S.C. candidates. The book is well written and thoughtful as well as containing sufficient factual information. It is also illustrated by 46 excellent photographs, and in addition to a bibliography it includes a useful literary reading list. The revision for this edition seems quite thorough, with the exception of the bibliography which still includes very few items published after 1954. One of the few is Paterson's *North America*, and for teachers or university students this reviewer would strongly recommend this in preference to Pounds; but as a school text, and especially in relation to its low price, Pounds' *North America* is extremely valuable. — A.M.O.C.

A COURSE IN WORLD GEOGRAPHY, BOOK 7, NORTH AMERICA. E. W. YOUNG. 192 pp. London: Edward Arnold Ltd. 1965. U.K. price 11s.

This School Certificate text book is one of a series which may be strongly recommended. By its stimulating and refreshing approach based on questions and answers, maps and diagrams, and exercises and activities for the student, it sets out to encourage "the development of genuine geographical understanding." It makes the subject directly relevant to the lives of students by an emphasis on human response to environment, and by frequent discussion of contemporary economic and other problems, and it does this without losing sight of the basic geographical knowledge which must also be acquired by the students. As a class text book, however, it would not, perhaps, be to everyone's taste. The style and form of the book mean that it could not really be used unless the teacher follows very closely in his lessons the approach of the text book. It is liable to become the whole basis of teaching, not just something which supplements the teacher's lessons, and might, therefore, tend to lessen rather than stimulate the teacher's own initiative. Secondly, as a single text book, the students might find it confusing, jumping as it does from one topic to another and compressing rather too much information into a small space. On the other hand, it contains so many ideas on methods of teaching and approach to the subject that it would make an excellent handbook for the teacher himself, from which he could borrow ideas and adapt them to his own teaching. — J.T.

A COURSE IN WORLD GEOGRAPHY, BOOK 8, EAST AFRICA. E. W. YOUNG AND M. A. ESMAIL. 128 pp. London: Edward Arnold. 1965. U.K. price 11s.

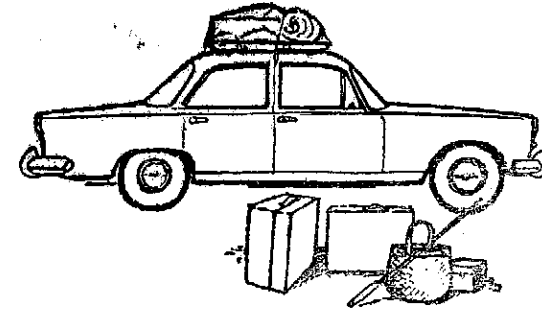
Text books on East Africa are increasing in number but the choice for School Certificate work has been very limited; a new book specifically aimed at helping students in this work is therefore most welcome. The authors of this volume begin by making a systematic survey of relief and structure, climate and natural vegetation, animals, peoples and farming in East Africa, and follow this

by a brief account of each of the three countries. Economic statistics are for the early 1960's, averaged in order to give a more accurate picture, and population figures quoted are 1965 estimates. Much data is clearly presented in the form of tables or bar or pie graphs. The vocabulary used should not be beyond the capabilities of S3 or S4 students in East Africa and the practice of picking out fundamental geographical terms or phrases in heavy type will be a great help to students. Maps are numerous and clear, and act as a focus for basic notes or exercises of value to the student in note preparation or revision. This 'map notebook' approach is combined with an interesting text, which is not only factual but contains comments on problems and future possibilities in East Africa and should provoke thought and discussion. The numerous useful and appropriate photographs are very well printed, as we have come to expect from books in this series. In the section on Uganda it might be felt that the statement that "annual rainfall becomes (for a hot climate) generally light" is rather misleading when applied to a region defined as including Gulu (60.5" p.a.) and the area of north-eastern Karamoja (20"-30" p.a.); and the photograph on p. 82 showing a ferry across the Kazinga Channel which "carries all traffic on Western Uganda's north-south road" should either be removed from future editions or should be provided with a new caption. With these minor reservations the book can be highly recommended for students studying individually or in class. It provides a sensible guide to study and a wide range of possible work aiming towards an increase in factual knowledge and a development of ideas and basic skills of mapping, graphing and interpretation. It provides an up to date alternative approach to books already serving School Certificate students. — K.P.

UNDERSTANDING CONTOURS AND LANDFORMS IN EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA. A. J. F. WEST & J. ROSE. 52 pp. London: George Philip. 1964. U.K. price 6s.

This simple introduction to contours and landforms is intended for use by pupils in the lower classes of Secondary Schools. The text is supported by a large number of simple line diagrams and contour maps. The first part of the book contains chapters on the meaning of contours, slopes and gradients, sections and profiles and intervisibility. Some teachers will feel that an examination of slopes and gradients (Chapter 3) should be carried out before the introduction of even simple sections (Chapter 2). The second part of the book is largely devoted to examples of landforms and landscapes and practical exercises thereon. Unfortunately, if one accepts the idea that a book should deal with the subject indicated in the title, this part leaves much to be desired. The book purports to refer to East and Central Africa; but, with the exception of the endpaper map of Tanganyika, the examples taken appear to be entirely imaginary, and the topics chosen and the mode of presentation appear more suited to pupils in Derby than in Dodoma. Three pages are devoted to glacial landforms; yet there is no reference to faulting or to rift valleys. Fjords, skerries and alluvial fans may be popular with examiners, but they are of little relevance to a simple examination of the landforms of this part of the continent or to the introductory studies of the pupils living there. Although the book contains useful material its shortcomings are so obvious that it will be of limited use in East African schools. — J.S.H.

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