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Religion in Africa

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Religion in Africa

Thomas D. Blakely, Walter E. A. Van Beek, and Dennis L. Thomson, editors, 1994, Religion in Africa. The David M. Kennedy Center, Brigham Young University in association with Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH, and James Currey, London. xvi + 512 pp. Bibliography and index. \$24.95 (paper).

This is the first major collection on African religion in over a decade. Its more than 20 contributors include distinguished researchers in anthropology, archaeology, political science, comparative religion, health and healing, languages, literature, and the visual and performing arts. Following the editors' excellent introduction, contributing essays are presented in three parts: I. Religion and Its Translatability, II. Comparisons over Time and Space, and III. Instrumentality of Religion. Many of the papers are of direct interest to the readers of this newsletter including: Wande Abimbola's discussion of "Ifa" a West African cosmological system and Pierre de Maret's "Archaeological and Other Prehistoric Evidence of Traditional African Religious Expression." Other articles explore such topics as the impact of Christianity and Islam, women's power, the nature of "evil", and the role of music in traditional religion.