Goodman to make in his arguments for a contrast between humanism and various religious attitudes. Religion tends to be serious and discourage irony; so humanism really does go in a different direction. That point probably brings the whole title of the book into question, but it is in transcending these paradoxes so smoothly that Goodman does us all a service in resurrecting an important cultural tradition in the Islamic world.

doi:10.1093/jaarel/lfh093

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This illuminating work extends the historiography on African religions by showing how contending African and European epistemologies played out on the ground. In their precolonial history, says Sandra Greene, Anlo people viewed particular sites as sacred, as “locations where the separate and intimately related worlds of the material and the spiritual came together” (2). For British colonial administrators and German missionaries, however, the natural world was to be understood according to scientific principles. In sermons, in classrooms, and through military force, they sought to transform a variegated Anlo landscape into a natural world that could be governed. Greene argues that the effects of colonial interventions were never uniform. While colonialism “transformed the very terms by which many of the colonized understood themselves and their physical environment” (6), many of Anlo people’s beliefs nonetheless survived. Greene’s book aims to illuminate how, in different locales, old understandings of self and world have interwoven with new ideas.

The first and last chapters of the book deal with the urban spaces of Notsie and Anloga, respectively. Greene asks why, in a dramatically changed world, these two ancient towns exercise a hold over Anlo people’s imagination. Notsie, now located in southern Togo, was, in the fifteenth century, the shrine center for the powerful deity Mawu. It was German missionaries who gave Notsie a symbolic role as homeland for a wider, invented “Ewe” people. In vernacular-language history books, missionary authors described how disparate Ewe groups had emigrated from Notsie, fleeing the oppressive dictatorship of a tyrannical king. By the early twentieth century Ewe nationalists had adopted this origin story in order to show the Ewe to be a singular, united people. In Ghana, as elsewhere in Africa, missionary history fed nationalist thought (cf. J. Peel, Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba [Indiana University Press, 2001]). Anloga invites more passion than the rather antiseptic Notsie role play. Anloga prospered in the 1700s as a shrine center for the war god Nyigbla. Criminals were brought to Anloga for execution. Parents came to Anloga too, to present their newborn children at the town’s shrines. The town’s historic centrality in Anlo religious
practice shaped its role in twentieth-century politics. When in 1952 the local
government sought to levy taxes on the town’s inhabitants, they rioted. In
punishment British police destroyed Nyigbla’s sacred grove, erecting a police
station where the shrine once stood. But veneration for Nyigbla could not so
easily be erased. In 1987 and again in 1996 Nyigbla devotees attacked Pentecostal
Christians for refusing to silence their drums during times ritually proscribed by
the deity. The contrast between Notsie’s and Anloga’s trajectories, Greene
argues, shows that the impact of colonial interventions was never predeter-
ned. By human agency and imagination, different sacred sites have been
differently constituted in contemporary Anlo thought.

In her second chapter Greene asks why inland freshwater ponds in central
Anlo have lost their former “aura of sacredness” while the ocean still invites reli-
gious devotion. In the early nineteenth century Keta Lagoon and other bodies of
water were believed to be homes of deities who provisioned Anlo settlements with
freshwater and granted them rich catches of fish. German missionaries, however,
attacked water deities as agents of Satan. And by the early twentieth century
mechanical pumps were drawing freshwater from man-made wells. The ocean, in
contrast, continues to exceed human efforts at containment, testing men’s cour-
age and endurance. That Anlo people today continue to defer to the spiritual
powers of the ocean, Greene suggests, is a reflection on this titanic incivility.

Chapters 3 and 4 turn from bodies of water to human bodies. Greene first
explores the history of Anlo dealings with the dead. In the nineteenth century
Anlo had placed their accomplished dead under the floors of their own homes,
while those who died unhappy or violent deaths were hastily buried on the out-
skirts of human settlements. By locating dead bodies in this way, Anlo hoped to
influence who would and who would not successfully reincarnate in newborn
children. In the early twentieth century government administrators condemned
home burials as unhealthy: decaying bodies were supposed to produce vapors and
sicken people. The government therefore ordered that dead bodies should
be placed in cemeteries. Greene finds that new ideas about sanitation did influ-
ence Anlo thinking. Even “traditionalists” today aver that the respiratory disease
alokpli, once thought to be caused by spiritual forces, is caused by the vapors of
decaying flesh. But new understandings of burial have not simply replaced the
old beliefs. Today those who die prematurely are often buried on the cemetery’s
outskirts, while celebrated elders are buried at the center. In this way, says
Greene, the old Anlo practice of evaluating the dead was displaced onto the site
of the cemetery itself.

Greene’s essay on the living body as sacred site (chapter 4) is perhaps the
most illuminating chapter in the book. Body and soul were not separate entities
in nineteenth-century Anlo belief, says Greene. Remedies applied to the body
could correct the soul; conversely, a refractory soul was often blamed for a person’s
antisocial behavior. Parts of the body, moreover, could be inhabited by outside
spiritual powers. Precolonial Anlo ontology thereby confounds western notions
of agency and passivity. Beginning in the mid–nineteenth century, though,
Bremen missionaries sought to revise Anlo people’s thinking about body and
soul. They asked converts to exercise mastery over their impulses, to chasten
their lusts, so better to demonstrate the extent of the inward religious conversion they had experienced. In missionaries’ rhetoric and practice the human body was a purely physical entity, liable for doctoring through medical intervention. Greene argues that the Bremen missionaries’ lessons on ontology have influenced Anlo Christians and traditionalists alike. Where once all manner of bodily disease was thought to have spiritual causes, today Anlo traditionalists seek spiritual healing for a comparatively small number of illnesses. Modern thought has thereby reshaped even “traditional” Anlo approaches to health. But in health as in burial practice former ways continue to inform present conceptions. Christian converts, Greene says, continue to believe that spirits have the power to affect the wellness of the human body. Thus, says Greene, Anlo Christianity draws from a “double inheritance, one that comes not only from the colonial period but also from their own nineteenth century past” (107).

This is a rich, ambitious, and rewarding work of social and intellectual history. But for whom was colonialism in Anlo (or anywhere else) an “encounter” between two ways of life? Greene’s methodology is forensic: she contrasts Anlo conceptions of ontology and epistemology with missionary ideas and then explores how, during the course of the colonial encounter, Anlo ideas survived, were modified, or were abandoned. The problem with this approach is that, first, it understates how modern thought was itself made through Europe’s colonial expansion. As recent scholarship has shown, it was out of their interaction with colonized peoples that European thinkers came to conceive of the “sacred” as a universal category (Talal Asad, Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity [Stanford University Press, 2003]). In Greene’s book Bremen missionaries arrive in Anlo territory with an already-established analytic armature that they sought to impose on African converts. What remains unexplored is how, in Ghana and elsewhere, the “sacred,” the “natural world,” and other categories of missionary praxis were manufactured through colonial history.

A second consequence of the “encounter” paradigm is to overstate the singularity of Anlo people’s religious thought. Greene focuses on the contrast between Anlo and European ways of life. The reader therefore gets little sense of the conceptual diversity that must have divided Anlo people as they “encountered” colonialism. Anlo thought is made to look like a stock of symbols and beliefs, an inheritance that modern thinkers can draw upon. “Old meanings and memories have not been completely forgotten,” Greene writes: “Much remains, retained in bits and pieces by some, forming the very foundation upon which the new is made sensible” (109). But can Anlo thought be objectified? Were there different schools of Anlo thought during the nineteenth century? How did these differences shape Anlo people’s engagements with colonial technologies and ideas? Recent scholarship on ethnicity has illuminated how peasant intellectuals, drawing on different strains of an indigenous intellectual tradition, elaborated different answers to the intellectual problems posed by colonialism (S. Feierman, Peasant Intellectuals [University of Wisconsin Press, 1992]). Was it only under European inspiration that Anlo thinkers were generating new ideas during the twentieth century, or could novelties also come from within Anlo thought?
These questions are not meant for Greene alone. All of us interested in colonized peoples’ thought need a new interpretive lens, one that allows African and European intellectual traditions to be seen developing in tandem, in a heterogeneous temporal and spatial world.

doi:10.1093/jaarel/lfh094
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Based on extensive fieldwork in southwest Rajasthan, The Goddesses’ Henchmen began when Lindsey Harlan was conducting research for her previous book, Religion and Rajput Women (University of California Press, 1992). Often when Harlan arrived to interview women in their homes, she was “greeted by men” who found her scholarly interests disappointing and therefore suggested an alternative topic: “Why not forget about women’s religious traditions and write about something that mattered, like Rajput history and heroism? Frequently [these men] went on to narrate stories about ancestral heroes worshiped in their household shrines,” and Harlan thus “collected many tales of headless horsemen, cattle thieves and marauding Muslims” (4). Such thrilling tales are now the subject of this engaging ethnographic study of ancestral hero worship (25), particularly as celebrated and practiced in Rajput homes, where women ritually worship familial heroes for the fulfillment of mundane desires. “Using narratives and rituals as sources,” writes Harlan, “this study examines the ways in which ancestral heroes encapsulate and express the ideals of perfection and masculinity, articulated most clearly against the backdrop of domesticity, householdership, and femininity” (13). Harlan’s goal, then, is to provide a “gendered analysis of hereditary hero veneration” (72–73), which she understands “primarily as a religious phenomenon,” whether such heroes are ritually worshiped “by descendents at home” or “by various pilgrims in a cultic milieu” (47), the latter likely supplying the topic of Harlan’s next book (7).

Chapter 1 provides a detailed overview of Harlan’s sources, findings, and methods, and chapter 2, an introduction to Rajasthan as a cultural construct shaped largely “by the actions and interests of [stereotypical martial] Rajputs, the dominant caste in this part of India” (27). Chapter 3 compares and contrasts men’s and women’s stories about sacrificial heroes, whose sacrifice required by women needing protection reveals that men and women have “inimical interests” that effectively ally women with enemy men (27), whether rival Rajputs or Muslims. Chapter 4 “contemplates the relationship between hero- balidān and blood-loving goddess, who protects and is protected by her hero consort,” whose sacrifice transforms him into the goddess’s intimate guardian deity, a Bheruji (27–28). Chapter 5 explores the “verbal iconization of heroes in women’s songs, which . . . move the hero from past to present and celebrate his