

## BOOKS RECEIVED

*Babban Yunwa. Hunger und Gesellschaft in Nord-Nigeria und den Nachbarregionen in der frühen Kolonialzeit. Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der späten vorkolonialen Verhältnisse der Kolonialmächte* by Holger Weiss. Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura (Bibliotheca Historica 22) 1997. pp. 480. ISBN 951-710-056-6.

This is a study of the interrelation between hunger and political and historical changes around the time of colonization. In this, it follows in the tradition of the similar studies, also German, by Gerd Spittler on Air in Niger and Astrid Meier on Northern Chad. Weiss' work covers the region from Hausaland to Adamawa, focusing on the period 1898-1915.

It raises the question whether trans-regional hunger crises such as those of 1904 and 1914 are the results of the policies and reforms of the new colonial powers, or if one can find similar crises in the immediate pre-colonial period. It is noticeable that while the 1904 crisis, shortly after the colonial arrival, was primarily a local one, the later one—for which we have better documentation—was trans-regional. (In this, his findings appear to match those of Astrid Meier studying Chad of the same period.) Weiss sees this also as leading to a crisis of legitimation for the new rulers, thus having a political impact. He also studies the 'drought economy' that developed during the period of famine, based on the statistical surveys that can be made.