

He emphasizes also the role of the diviner in attaining ambiguity and marginalization through rites of passage by using animal imageries, liminality, norm reversals and ritual treatment of the divining apparatus to give sight, speech, smell and other senses which will enable him/her in the quest for truth and in acts of mediation. Peek ends the section by analysing and reconciling divination's mystical process with its practical results, particularly as evidenced in binary opposition and probability modes. His work is brilliant and tremendously useful in analysing divination patterns in African cultures.

The book is rich in bibliographical surveys of divination in Africa, in particular the list of references provided at the end of the introductory section and part five. This part could very well be developed and expanded into a separate book as an in-depth historical-phenomenological study of imageries and themes emerging out of divination patterns in Africa. Some scholars might argue that even though the book is rich in terms of studies of ritual symbols, little effort is made to explain the meanings of these symbols, with the exception of the essays by Devisch and Peek. It would be even more useful if subsequent editions of African Divination Systems would provide more materials on the meanings of the rich ritual symbols explored in this book.

In addition, some scholars might have wanted to see a clearer picture of the historiography of divination and the impact of change on the institution over time in the respective case studies. Again only a few of the essays attempt to address this issue. Peek (pp. 38, 204 and 206), Burton (p. 42), Blier (p. 80f.), Whyte (pp.165 and 159f.) and Parkin discuss the impact of change on divination. Virin and Rajaonarimanana refer to both the history of origin and development of Sikidi in Madagascar, taking note of the impact of change. Most other essays ignore the history, development and impact of change, while others do not indicate clearly the "historical given" of their works.

These desiderata notwithstanding, the book is recommended for scholars of African religions and culture because, apart from having the advantage of being ethnically based, it provides comparative insights on divination in Sub-Saharan Africa. It seems that in many cases the institution of divination is the single strongest preserver of African culture in the face of increasing activity of religious change in Africa. Despite the strong wind of change, many Africans still find the diviner a rallying point in times of crisis, and regard divination as a genuine way of knowing.

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**SOMALI PASTORAL WORK SONGS: THE VOICE OF THE
POLITICALLY POWERLESS.**

EPOS, Uppsala University, Uppsala, 1993. Pp. xii, 84. 1 map.

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This is a collection of pastoral work songs collected during two months of field work in 1989 in what was then the northern part of the Somali Democratic Republic, now known as the independent Somaliland Republic. Following two chapters that introduce the reader to the Somali culture and the social and economic life of the northern Somali camel livestock breeders, the author gives a portrayal of the role and social significance of poetry in the Somali society. The central chapters, number four and five, present the various genres of work songs according to what tasks they are associated with. Thus, songs that are sang while driving camels to the watering points are presented separately from the songs that are sung while the camels drink the water, which in turn are separated from the songs associated with driving goats to the water, etc. While this may seem a piecemeal division of a rather homogenous material it reflects the Somali peoples' genre-conscious approach to their poetry. Although work songs fall outside of the so-called serious genres of Somali poetry, the author points out that singing in recreational and working situations are excellent opportunities for youth to demonstrate their artistic skills and to communicate...what is prohibited for them to say in other social situations (p. 21-22). The book is written in a straight-forward English and all translations from Somali are immaculate. Despite its modest scope it will defend its place among other studies of Somali oral literature. The following lines taken from a song that is sung while weaving mats for the nomadic hut (p. 61), illustrate how some of the songs manage to convey a very vivid picture of the Somali culture.

Three are valueless:
a gun without bullets,
a new white dress without shoes,
beauty without elegance.

Three are valueless:
the wealth of a miser,
a virgin from a small clan,
beauty without elegance.