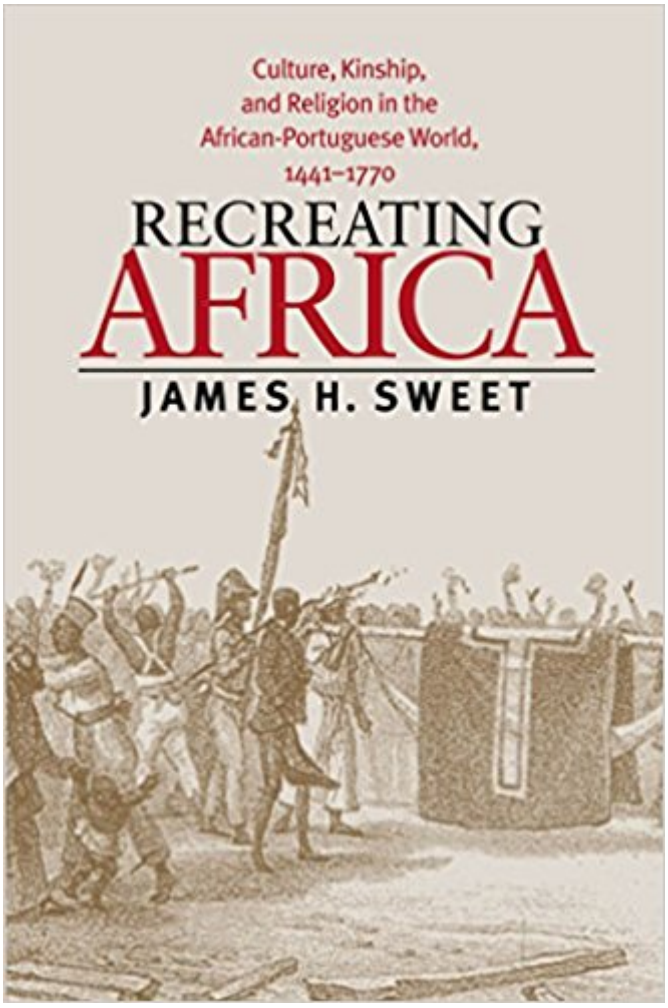
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Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, And Religion In The African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770



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Synopsis

Exploring the cultural lives of African slaves in the early colonial Portuguese world, with an emphasis on the more than one million Central Africans who survived the journey to Brazil, James Sweet lifts a curtain on their lives as Africans rather than as incipient Brazilians. Focusing first on the cultures of Central Africa from which the slaves came--Ndembu, Imbangala, Kongo, and others--Sweet identifies specific cultural rites and beliefs that survived their transplantation to the African-Portuguese diaspora, arguing that they did not give way to immediate creolization in the New World but remained distinctly African for some time.Slaves transferred many cultural practices from their homelands to Brazil, including kinship structures, divination rituals, judicial ordeals, ritual burials, dietary restrictions, and secret societies. Sweet demonstrates that the structures of many of these practices remained constant during this early period, although the meanings of the rituals were often transformed as slaves coped with their new environment and status. Religious rituals in particular became potent forms of protest against the institution of slavery and its hardships. In addition, Sweet examines how certain African beliefs and customs challenged and ultimately influenced Brazilian Catholicism. Sweet's analysis sheds new light on African culture in Brazil's slave society while also enriching our understanding of the complex process of creolization and cultural survival.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"[This] book will be a landmark in bringing Africa into the mix in Brazilian history."This book will be a landmark in bringing Africa into the mix in Brazilian history. (John Thornton, author of "Africa and

Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800")"A fascinating book . . . of considerable importance. It not only contributes to a continuing debate about the nature of slavery, but is a powerful example of Atlantic history as it shows that the societies on both sides of the South Atlantic lived in a kind of spiritual intimacy that was not severed by the infamous middle passage." -- "History""A fascinating collection of evidence." -- "The Americas"Sweet has mined an incredibly rich source of information in the Inquisition archives and produced an engaging study of the inner lives of Africans suffering under slavery in Brazil. His book will be a landmark in bringing Africa into the mix in Brazilian history.(John Thornton, Millersville University, author of "Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800".)

Given its scope, conceptual claims, and the depth of archival research, this project warrants the broadest conceivable audience. . . . After reading this richly layered study, the critical importance of Central Africans in Latin America and the African diaspora will be more clear.--American Historical ReviewAmong the best of the recent works on Africans in the Atlantic.--International Journal of African Historical StudiesSweet has uncovered rich gems from the Inquisition records of the Luso-Atlantic world that are essential to historical reconstructions of Central African religious traditions in Brazil before 1770. He also creates vivid portraits of individual Africans living in Angola, Portugal, and Brazil. This important book includes outstanding narratives of slave religious practices in colonial Brazil that I have seen nowhere else. They are especially significant because they enable historians to document continuities over time with contemporary Afro-Brazilian religions. Highly recommended to all students of the African diaspora.--Mary Karasch, Oakland UniversityA fascinating book . . . of considerable importance. It not only contributes to a continuing debate about the nature of slavery, but is a powerful example of Atlantic history as it shows that the societies on both sides of the South Atlantic lived in a kind of spiritual intimacy that was not severed by the infamous middle passage.--HistorySweet has mined an incredibly rich source of information in the Inquisition archives and produced an engaging study of the inner lives of Africans suffering under slavery in Brazil. His book will be a landmark in bringing Africa into the mix in Brazilian history.--John Thornton, Millersville University [Sweet] examines his material from an original point of view--perceptive, sensitive, and supported by a solid bibliographic discussion. The result is a fine book.--African Studies ReviewA fascinating collection of evidence.--The Americas

I agree with the previous 5 star review, dry but not prohibitively so with antidotes. This book focuses on the Congolisa people but also discusses elements of other african culture’s spirituality, and life

inside Portugal, Brazil as one of the biggest reposits of slaves and Africa. An outside perception of rites and what was seen, some inferances are made and referenced from other scholars who are modern practitioners. This book is revisive, with a modern view of the Catholic records mainly used to explore the african religious power before the gradual and not totally assumptive creolization of afrochristian practices.However at times I feel there is a lack of understanding in the hindsight between explanations of the slaves behavior and christian interactions on the part of the author or scholars referenced. The author admits christian scholars and the western mind has biased understanding of records and what was recorded even to this day.Portuguese were called white in this book or white moors keeping with the PC of calling slavers white europeans when the hispanics were of part african heritage. Although there is the admittance of african slavers and owners as well as most of the violence or poisoning was slave on slave versus slave on master. It is of common knowledge the slave owners treated their "property" for the most part horribly and the author doesn't mince words. About 30% of slave owners were the churches.This book is eye opening to those with an interest in Quimbanda candomble and Kimbanda of the afrobrazilians to the cuban congo practices of the religions of Palo, as well as some Vodun and influences throughout the diaspora.

The ubject of the slave trade has been written about before but this bookcovers the more interesting topic of the Protuguese trade in the 15th-18th century, and particularly its affects on Africans and the relationship between the church and the slaves, as well as 'others'. This book is scholarly and perhaps slightly dry, but not startinly so, in fact it is also readable and interesting, refreshing and original.Surely this book adds scholarship to the period, espcially illuminating the relationship between slaves, brazilian society and the church in both Brazil and Portugal. Of particular interest is the work regarding the inqusitions attempts to snuff out tribal religons that remained among slaves brought to the new world.Seth J. Frantzman

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