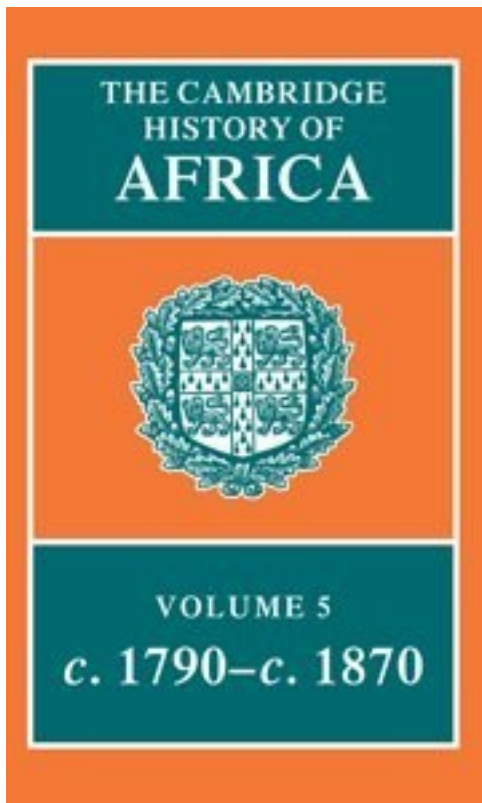


The Cambridge History of Africa



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The eighth and final volume of The Cambridge History of Africa covers the period 1940-1975. It begins with a discussion of the role of the Second World War in the political decolonisation of Africa. Its terminal date of 1975 coincides with the retreat of Portugal, the last European colonial power in Africa, from its possessions and their accession to independence. The fifteen chapters which make up this volume examine on both a continental and regional scale the extent to which formal transfer of political power by the European colonial rulers also involved economic, social and cultural

decolonisation. A major theme of the volume is the way the African successors to the colonial rulers dealt with their inheritance and how far they benefited particular economic groups and disadvantaged others. Special attention is paid in the chapters on Southern Africa and East and Central Africa to the problems posed by the continued role of white minority regimes in the Republic of South Africa, Rhodesia under UDI and Namibia. In the independent countries the limitations imposed on their options - political and economic - by poverty, population growth and the continued commercial domination of the former colonial powers and their allies, are analysed in the context of current theories of dependence and underdevelopment. The contributors to this volume represent different disciplinary traditions - history, political science, economics and sociology - and do not share a single theoretical perspective on the recent history of the continent, a subject that is still the occasion for passionate debate, and for which the primary sources are still largely unavailable. Rather they reflect the variety of views and vigour of scholarship that have been brought to bear on a continent for which scholarly concern has itself been a comparatively recent development.

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