

Henderson, Richard N., *THE KING IN EVERY MAN: EVOLUTIONARY TRENDS IN ONITSHA IBO SOCIETY AND CULTURE*. New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1972. xiii, 576 p. \$25.00

Levi-Strauss has distinguished between science and history as intellectual enterprises, science being interested in expanding theories on the basis of particulars and history interesting itself in establishing particulars through the use of theories.¹ Judging from the sub-title of this book one would expect a work of "history." In many ways one's expectations are fulfilled; much of Professor Henderson's efforts are aimed at establishing the particulars of Onitsha Ibo society, both in the ethnographic present and in an historical perspective. However, the work is not all "history." Henderson is an anthropologist, and the particulars he wishes to establish are those with which social anthropology as a discipline concerns itself. There is a second sense in which this is not a work of history. The author intends his analysis to be a paradigm for the analysis of the development of other small states.

The book is a detailed description and analysis of the Onitsha Ibo kingdom of Nigeria, beginning with a 1500-1880 baseline and bringing us through the author's fieldwork (1960-1962). The description of the early period is based on an oral historical approach of the type developed by Jan Vansina², augmented by travel and administrative accounts in the exploratory and colonial periods. The contemporary period is described on the basis of standard social anthropological techniques.

The volume is organized in four parts, plus an introductory theoretical statement in which the author summarizes most of the evolutionary approaches having currency today and delineates the approach to be used in the book. The approach delineated emphasizes processes of change over the establishment of stages of evolution.

Part I follows Henderson's statement of theoretical approach and sets the historical baseline by describing the Onitsha com-

¹Claude Levi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1967).

²Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition* (Chicago: Aldine, 1965).

munity and the Onitsha environment, both physical and social, in the 1500-1880 period. Part II establishes what the author calls the "elementary structures of Onitsha society", including: values and religious beliefs, the descent system, kinship, settlement patterns and basic property relationships. Part III concerns itself with structural differentiation, including: the system of titles, kingship, chieftancy and age-sets. Part IV is devoted to developing models of equilibrium and change which integrate the institutions described in the previous two parts of the book and finally to putting these institutions into the framework of evolutionary trends.

Professor Henderson's carefully detailed book represents a major contribution to ethnography and history of West Africa, particularly to the Ibo area. From a comparative point of view it may prove very useful in the understanding of the development of other small states, especially the development of city states. From the point of view of the anthropological enterprise Professor Henderson's serious attempt to bring time depth to a social anthropological study and his emphasis on processes in a social evolutionary scheme may provide a useful jumping off spot for the introduction into evolutionary schemes of models of "generative" processes, such as those being developed by Barth³, Bailey⁴ and others, in place of the more "historical" processes successfully employed here.

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³Fredrik Barth, Models of Social Organisation (London: Royal Anthropological Institute: Occasional Paper No. 23, 1966).

⁴F.G. Bailey, Strategems and Spoils (New York: Schocken Books, 1969).