

**Resource guide to travel in Sub-Saharan Africa – Volume 2: Central and Southern Africa (and Western Indian Ocean Islands)**

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Here is a very worthy addition to the Hans Zell stable of reference bibliographies and guides, the standard of production and editorial content being all one has come to expect of Hans Zell over the years. Louis Taussig was also

the compiler and editor of volume 1 covering West and East (or more strictly, Eastern) Africa (Hans Zell Publishers, 1994). Taussig's credentials for the task are near impeccable: a lengthy stint working and travelling in Africa, followed by six years as partner, with the under-signed, in Leishman and Taussig, the erstwhile specialist UK importer and distributor of African-published books, and precursor of the Oxford-based African Books Collective.

As the Introduction notes, for the librarian

'... the guide should assist both collection development and general reference by providing an extensive and systematically-organized listing of guidebooks, maps and other relevant materials'.

But it is much more than that: it is for the independent traveller, or person planning to reside in a country in the region; it is for those in the travel industry, whether tourist bodies, agents, operators, publishers or booksellers. It covers not simply travel guides and magazines by region and country, but all manner of literature to do with travel, tourism and the languages involved, and the sources of and outlets for this literature. Specialist areas are covered, again by region and country: trekking, mountaineering, caving, water and other sports, motoring, cycling, rail travel, even bungee-jumping. There are chapters on bibliographies and other reference sources, bookshops and specialist dealers, tourism and environmental organisations, clubs and associations, publishers and distributors, and, to cap all, two indexes, one on journal titles, organisations and associations, the other, invaluable for using the guide, on place, subject and activity, cross-referenced where necessary.

'Taussig' is written all over the guide, and that's as it should be, much to be preferred to the impersonal, soul-less guide this could so easily have been. He has developed the knack of bringing the subject matter alive with his own subjective comments, but maintaining a keen balance and not allowing personal prejudice to unnecessarily cloud his perception of what he is reviewing. The sections 'Travel in Central and Southern Africa ...' and 'Review of the literature' set the tone, in the latter of which Taussig discourses on the relative merits or otherwise of the different kinds of guides, travelogues, maps and magazines. Even Internet matters are covered.

In the body of the book, all entries are numbered and annotated, and where Taussig has not had a sight, it says so: few were not inspected. The annotations continue where 'Review of the literature' left off, with critical appraisal by Taussig. Much cross-referencing is employed, rating of titles according to quality as a feature, and it becomes very clear how much time and effort have been expended on making the guide pretty well the last word on travel resources on the sub-continent. The shame is it will date quickly, in a field and on a continent celebrated for constant change, politically-inspired or not. Taussig refers to this more than once in the introductory sections, but also makes the valid point that many guides are much more than mere

recitations of current factual information, and contain information which does not 'date'. Campbell's *The guide to Botswana*, originally published back in the late 1960s, comes to mind, and L&T were still selling it as a guide-book in the UK in the 1990s, despite the presence on the market of much more recent guides.

For South African information providers one proviso must be sounded, and Taussig makes this quite clear. Whereas with most of the other countries in the region he has tried to be fully comprehensive, on South Africa he can not be, or else the guide would have been nearer 1000 pages long. The fact is South Africa could really do with its own travel resources guide, such is the wealth of publishing here. At a time when there is a coming-together between South African and the rest of Africa, I wager that most South African libraries interested in the subject will be much more concerned that the guide is comprehensive for Africa 'up north' than whether various South African publications, which they should know about anyway through South Africa's own bibliographical data bases, are omitted.

There are other omissions and errors – as one example of an omission, Air Malawi's excellent *Reflections*, in the in-flight magazine section – but it would be churlish to pick out the few there are. The title page verso gives the Library of Congress C-in-PD for volume 1 (though the British Library CinPD is correct). The maps depicting Central and South Africa are not as accurate as they might be: some 'cities' so designated, are little more than glorified villages, the Kruger National Park is drawn at only about two-thirds its actual extent, and in the map showing, *inter alia*, historical sites and buildings, not one of the sites mentioned in Phillipson's *National monuments of Zambia*, a listed title, appears on the map, though we are told that featured areas, sites and buildings are shown. But the depiction of the Indian Ocean Islands does actually show them *all*, and how they relate to one another.

I have some reservations about the language guide section. Afrikaans is spoken widely, of course in South Africa, and also Namibia: it is not really spoken, even by whites, in the other surrounding states. SiNdebele is given due prominence as a 'regional' language, but xiTsonga is not mentioned at all, and yet is spoken in much of southern Mozambique, the north-eastern Northern Province, eastern Mpumalanga, and among migrant workers on the Rand in South Africa. It should have been made clear that chi-Chewa (cited under Malawi) and chiNyanja (under Zambia) are the same language: the impression is given they are not. The late Dr Banda changed the name of what generically had been called 'chiNyanja' in Nyasaland to 'chiChewa' after Independence, because he wanted to make the dialect of his home district round Kasungu into the national language. In chiTonga and siLozi especially. For some strange reason, not explained as far as I could see, the standard reference dictionaries are not covered – perhaps space problems?

I strongly recommend this cased guide to all reference librarians whether academic, specialist or public.

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*Book buyer for Hogarth Representation: Books from Africa, London, and former partner/proprietor, Leishman & Taussig, UK, 1983–1996. Johannesburg.*