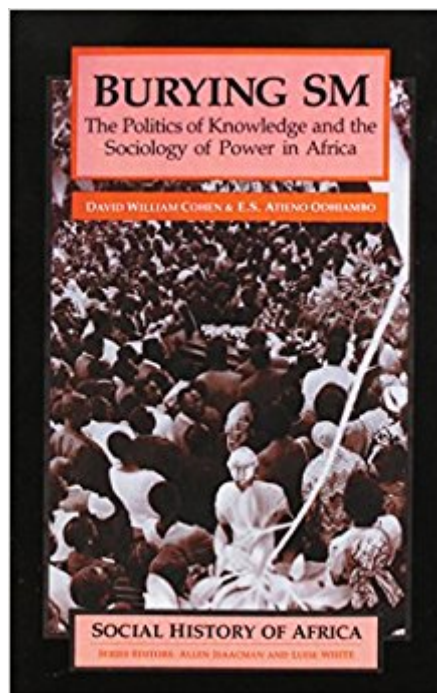




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Burying SM: The Politics Of Knowledge And The Sociology Of Power In Africa (Social History Of Africa (Paperback))



Synopsis

The distinguished Kenyan lawyer S.M. Otieno died intestate in 1986; the ensuing struggle between his Kikuyu widow and his Luo clan became a matter of national concern. Debates raged over what legal, cultural, social, and historical grounds should govern the disposition of SM's remains, what legal rights should be enjoyed by widows, and over the interests of the state. While closely scrutinizing the legal case record, the authors examine how history was constructed by the various litigants, counsel, jurists, and witnesses, including an elderly gravedigger and mason, a cook, and a professor of philosophy. The authors invited a half-dozen scholars from different disciplines to discuss "what the case was really about" and "how the story should be told." These brief commentaries are included.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Buying this book would be a big mistake. I'm assuming that, like me, you're a general reader who is interested in the history and politics of Kenya and wants to know more about the complex struggle over SM Otieno's body (My interest was piqued by reading Daniel Branch's book on Kenya.)This book will leave you mystified about what happened. All you will get is a mass of pompous academic prose imitative of theorists like Foucault and Derrida. Don't dismiss me as some anti-theory ideologue. I like theory. I even sometimes read the stuff. But this is a case of complicated ethnic/class/gender politics in an unfamiliar situation. The occasional clear sentence would have been helpful.

Sadly, the meaning and intent of this book - which I read for an anthropology class many years ago - was obscured by the ridiculously pompous and pedantic prose. I'm an educated and very literate woman, and I actually gave up reading it half way through and just pulled out a few good quotes for my paper. I was slightly surprised that my essay received an A grade, as I had no idea what the book was even about. I can only assume that the teacher didn't know, either!

Interesting story but poorly written and difficult to follow.

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