

# The Devils Handwriting: Precoloniality And The German Colonial State In Qingdao, Samoa, And Southwes

BOOK REVIEW/COMPTE RENDU: THE DEVIL'S HANDWRITING 715

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**George Steinmetz**, *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa*. Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007, 608 pp. \$US 33.00 paper (978-0-226-77243-1), \$US 90.00 hardcover (978-0-226-77241-7)

The year 2004 marked the hundredth anniversary of what has come to be known as the first German genocide; that is, the planned and officially sanctioned attempted extermination of the Herero people in German Southwest Africa, now Namibia. The anniversary of this event was marked by calls from the Herero people for restorative justice and reparations, an almost apology from the German government, and in the academic world, a number of conferences and symposia seeking to understand German colonialism in and of itself as well as considering the links between German colonial practices within Europe and those less remarked upon practices outside Europe.

George Steinmetz's book is an important contribution to the emerging debates, not least because at 600 pages it provides a wealth of information about the German colonies, not only in Africa, but in Samoa and in the Qingdao province in China as well. What is striking in comparing these three sites of colonial "encounter" — especially considering the short timescale of German colonialism, about thirty-five years — are the patterns of variation in those practices. While German Southwest Africa is widely recognized as the site of "the first genocide of the twentieth century" (p. 9), Steinmetz claims that Samoa was organized as an "over-seas plantation economy" (p. 12), and Qingdao, "coercively leased from China for ninety-nine years," was run, at times, in collaboration with the Chinese inhabitants (p. 16). The German depredations in Africa were not repeated in either Samoa or Qingdao and, thus, he argues, it appears there was "no singular German approach to colonial governance" (p. 19).

In making an argument for the heterogeneity of German colonial practice and policy, Steinmetz seeks to locate the explanation for these differences in two places: in precolonial ethnographic discourse and in "imperial Germany's three-way intra-elite class struggle" (p. 49). He suggests that "native policy rarely went beyond suggestions that were already present in precolonial ethnographic discourse" (p. 25) and that

The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa (Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning ) New.Book Reviews. The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa. By George Steinmetz.The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa German troops carried out a brutal slaughter of the Herero people; in Samoa, on what they thought they knew about running an empire (before the had one).Gewald's article on slave exports from pre-colonial southern and central Namibia<sup>3</sup>, as . of Namibian Studies, 4, ; Georg Steinmetz, The Devil's Handwriting. Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and.especially before the foundation of the German nation state in and Much of the extant research on Germans' role in colonial Australia tends to . 2 George Steinmetz, The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa, Chicago and.Professor of Sociology and German Studies,, University of . Council for European Studies Pre-Dissertation Fellowship The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, .. de Qingdao et de Samoa. [From 'Native Policy' to the Extermination Strategy: German Southwest Africa.Introduction: Coloniality in Post-Imperial Culture. . sies of pre-colonial Germany has been the subject of extensive research.2 George Steinmetz: The Devil's Handwriting. Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa.Local Politics in Imperial Germany () and The Devil's Handwriting: Pre- coloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest.During this period, settler colonies, including German South West Africa, were established . Steinmetz, George, The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest . 4562 Google Scholar; Fitzpatrick, Matthew P., The Pre-History of the Holocaust?. Witbooi's refusal to accept imperial authority compelled colonial officials to . Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa Also see Steinmetz, The Devil's Handwriting, 45, . links between colony and metropole that existed before the genocide and racial.serve as lead bloggers; after meeting with me the week before the . State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa (University of .. George Steinmetz, The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial. State.Sociology and Colonialism in the British and French Empires, the The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa (), and Sociology and Empire (). possibly before the birth of those who chanted these words in support of their teams.

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