



The Shona Peoples: An Ethnography of the Contemporary Shona, with Special Reference to Their Religion

M. F. C. Bourdillon, Michael F. C. Bourdillon

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Newly reissued, this book is still regarded as one of the best synthesis of ethnographic research undertaken amongst the Shona people, taking indigenous religion and culture as a starting point. The author, a renowned anthropologist and sociologist of Zimbabwe, examines the historical background and sources of Shona history from the fifteenth century. He details, from anthropological perspectives, kinship and village organisation including patrilineal kinship, Shona marriage and the position of women in Shona society. The author explores the subsistence and cash economies of the Shona peoples, their contribution to commercial farming, their use of land, and their function as a migrant labour force. Further sections focus on chiefship, courts; and interpretations of sickness, personal misfortune, witchcraft, death and the afterlife. The final sections of the book consider the functions of traditional religion at family and tribal levels; the interface between traditional and new religions; and rural and urban influences, amongst the Shona people.

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