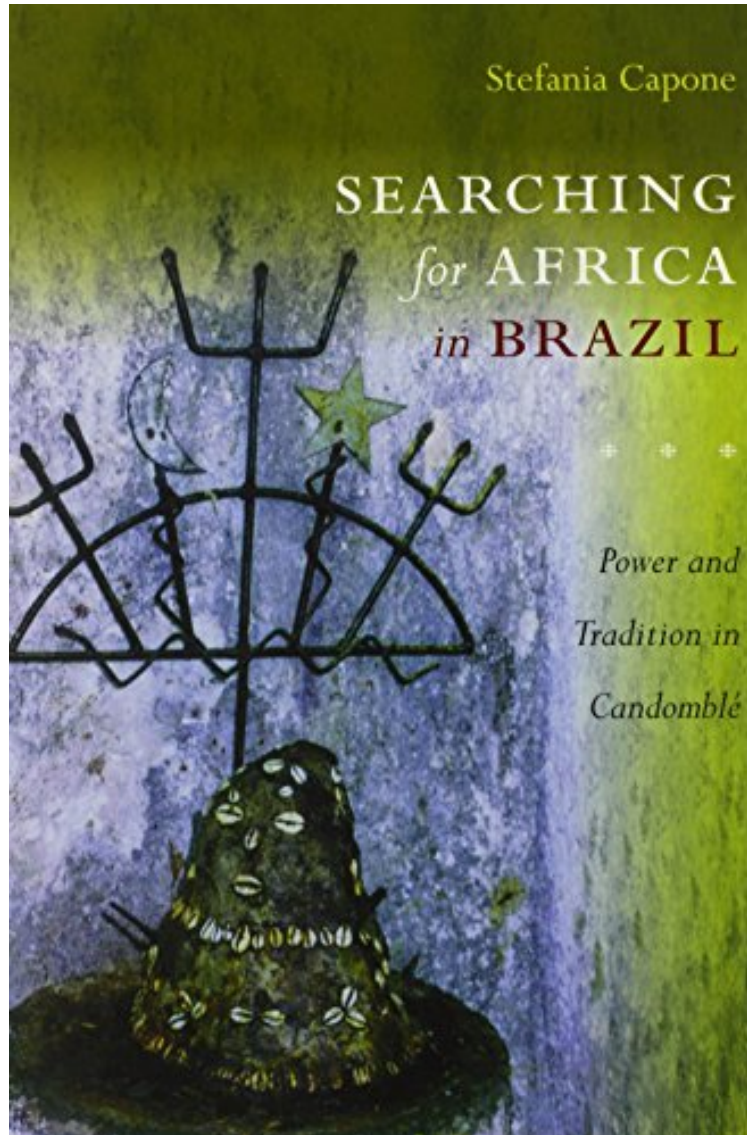


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Searching for Africa in Brazil: Power and Tradition in Candombl

Stefania Capone Laffitte

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Stefania Capone Laffitte : Searching for Africa in Brazil: Power and Tradition in Candombl before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Searching for Africa in Brazil: Power and Tradition in Candombl:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. More like a doctoral thesis than a book By Aaron M. Schulze I got this book to read before a trip to Salvador, Brazil. I have always been interested in the African religions of Brazil, and I was hoping to understand them better before my trip. This book was a difficult read because it is written more as a

doctoral thesis than a book. Unfortunately, I only read about 20% before putting it down. I wish there were better books on Afro-Brazilian religions in English.³ of 3 people found the following review helpful. This book deserves 10 stars! By Kalfu I love this book! Stefania Capone has done more for Candomblé than she could ever imagine! Her book is thorough and unique. She writes about the development of Eshu, analysing his position in Candomblé and other Afro-Brazilian traditions over decades and centuries. She takes political pressure and prosecution by the Catholic church as well as a fight against superstition into account, she writes about lesser known and lesser researched branches of Candomblé and she shows that "just because it has been written about, doesn't mean it's better". But what makes this book so important is the internal politics of Candomblé that Stefania Capone reveals. The power struggles between members of temples and the associated defamation, gossip and the use of witchcraft to harm and destroy competitive priests are part of the undercurrent of Candomblé. Sadly as it may be, these things are the glue that keeps this religion going. This book deserves 10 stars! 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Excellent! By Kalunga A very scholarly and well researched book. This is authentic and well written in English. Persons interested in the topic of Exu and how He relates to Candomblé and Brazilian traditions, as well as spiritual authority in those traditions from an unbiased viewpoint will enjoy this book.

Searching for Africa in Brazil is a learned exploration of tradition and change in Afro-Brazilian religions. Focusing on the convergence of anthropologists and religious leaders' exegeses, Stefania Capone argues that twentieth-century anthropological research contributed to the construction of an ideal Afro-Brazilian religious orthodoxy identified with the Nag (Yoruba) cult in the northeastern state of Bahia. In contrast to other researchers, Capone foregrounds the agency of Candomblé leaders. She demonstrates that they successfully imposed their vision of Candomblé on anthropologists, reshaping in their own interest narratives of Afro-Brazilian religious practice. The anthropological narratives were then taken as official accounts of religious orthodoxy by many practitioners of Afro-Brazilian religions in Brazil. Capone draws on ten years of ethnographic fieldwork in Salvador de Bahia and Rio de Janeiro as she demonstrates that there is no pure or orthodox Afro-Brazilian religion. Challenging the usual interpretations of Afro-Brazilian religions as fixed entities, completely independent of one another, Capone reveals these practices as parts of a unique religious continuum. She does so through an analysis of ritual variations as well as discursive practices. To illuminate the continuum of Afro-Brazilian religious practice and the tensions between exegetic discourses and ritual practices, Capone focuses on the figure of Exu, the sacred African trickster who allows communication between gods and men. Following Exu and his avatars, she discloses the centrality of notions of prestige and power, mystical and religious in Afro-Brazilian religions. To explain how religious identity is constantly negotiated among social actors, Capone emphasizes the agency of practitioners and their political agendas in the return to roots, or re-Africanization, movement, an attempt to recover the original purity of a mythical and legitimizing Africa.

[T]he volume still stands admirably on its own. . . . [A] fascinating survey of the history of the field. . . . Capone is especially illuminating in her reading of anthropology and its reification of tradition. . . . Capone's frank reflections on the field are thought provoking and important. . . . - Anadelia Romo, *The Americas*