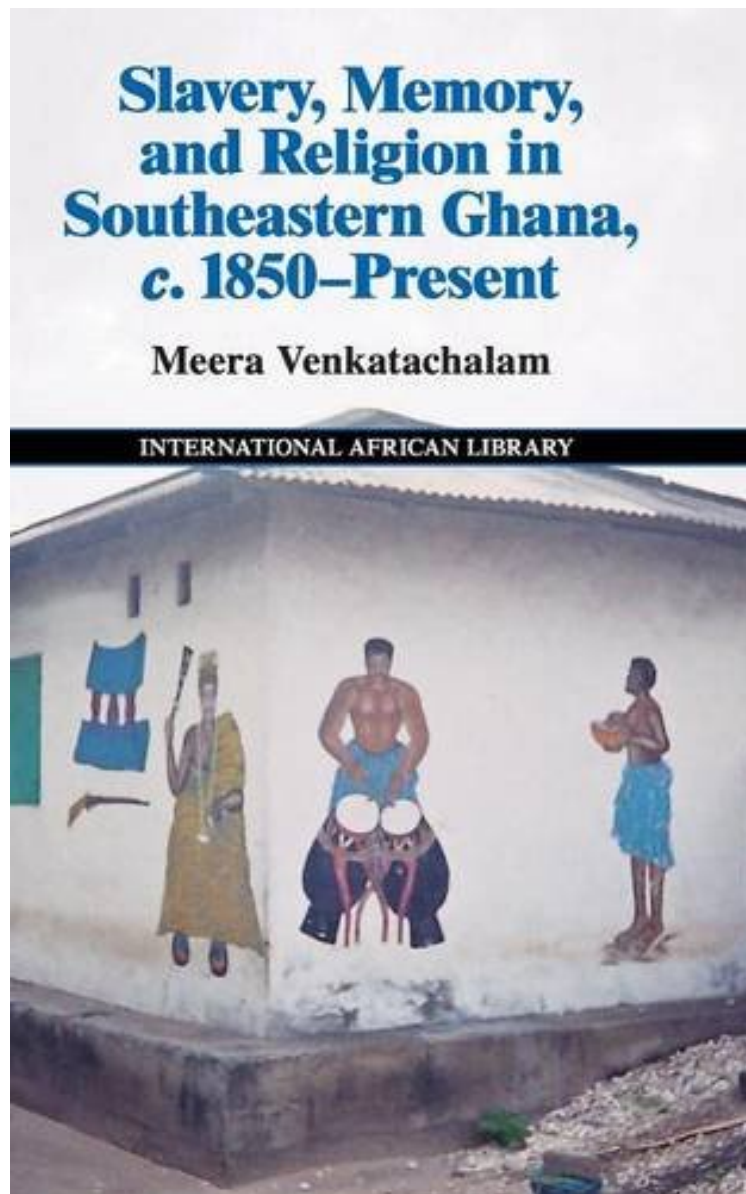


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Slavery, Memory and Religion in Southeastern Ghana, c.1850-Present (The International African Library)

Meera Venkatachalam

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all praised Slavery, Memory and Religion in Southeastern Ghana, c.1850-Present (The International African Library):

Based on a decade of fieldwork in southeastern Ghana and analysis of secondary sources, this book aims to reconstruct the religious history of the Anlo-Ewe peoples from the 1850s. In particular, it focuses on a corpus of rituals collectively known as "Fofie," which derived their legitimacy from engaging with the memory of the slave-holding past. The Anlo developed a sense of discomfort about their agency in slavery in the early twentieth century which they articulated through practices such as ancestor veneration, spirit possession, and by forging links with descendants of peoples they formerly enslaved. Conversion to Christianity, engagement with "modernity," trans-Atlantic conversations with diasporan Africans, and citizenship of the postcolonial state coupled with structural changes within the religious system - which resulted in the decline in Fofie's popularity - gradually altered the moral emphases on legacies of slavery in the Anlo historical imagination as the twentieth century progressed.

"Engaging, logically structured and based on impressive ethnography, this [book] makes an important contribution to the existing scholarly literature on the religion and belief of the Ewe people of Ghana and Togo and more broadly to an emerging history of religious change in West Africa that seeks to go beyond the established narrative of conversion." John Parker, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London"Meera Venkatachalam offers an informative analysis of the memory of slavery in Anlo (Ghana) as embedded in various ritual practices. She provides an excellent discussion of ritual as memory, and rituals as historically created processes." Sandra E. Greene, author of *Sacred Sites and the Colonial Encounter* and *West African Narratives of Slavery*"Meera Venkatachalam's book is an involving account of the historical contingencies and complexities of belief among the Anlo-Ewe of southeastern Ghana. Her subject is the moral imaginary of Anlo-Ewe people since the 1850s in their evolving view of their own historical agency in, and responsibility for, slavery and slave-holding. This is a study of the intricacies of memory, but in a documented historical context that is still all too scarce in African studies. The book is lucidly written, intriguing, in places compelling, and always thought-provoking. The author is to be congratulated on this finely honed study." Tom McCaskie, Emeritus Professor, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

About the Author Meera Venkatachalam was awarded her PhD in Social Anthropology from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London in 2007. She has conducted postdoctoral work at the Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh. Her writing has appeared in *Africa* (journal of the International African Institute) and the *Journal of African History*.