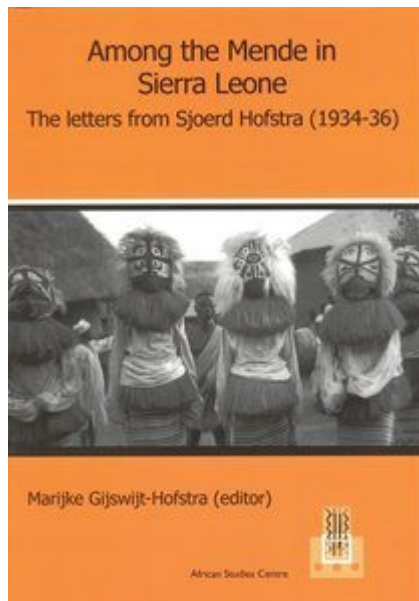


# Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra (Ed.& transl.) ~ Among The Mende In Sierra Leone: The Letters From Sjoerd Hofstra (1934-36)



This book offers a unique look behind the scenes of anthropological fieldwork amongst the Mende in Sierra Leone in the mid-1930s. The Dutch anthropologist and sociologist Sjoerd Hofstra (1898-1983), Rockefeller research fellow of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures and one of Bronislaw Malinowski's three 'Mandarins' (as were also Meyer Fortes and S. Frederick Nadel), reports in long, bi-weekly letters to his adoptive mother about his experiences with the Mende. During his first stay in Sierra Leone (January 1934 - March 1935), Hofstra got blackwater fever, a

complication of malaria tropica. His second stay (May - September 1936) came to an untimely end because he again developed symptoms of blackwater fever and was advised to return to Europe. Because of this his fieldwork remained unfinished, and Hofstra never got round to publishing the planned book on the Mende. However, Hofstra published four articles on the Mende in English, photocopies of which are included in this book. Next to these articles Hofstra's letters to his adoptive mother contain valuable first-hand information about his fieldwork. His daughter, cultural and social historian Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, has edited and translated these letters, while also including contextual information.

ASC Occasional Publication 19 - ISBN: 978-90-5448-138-6 - 2014

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