

Major contribution to the historiography of the Anglo-Boer War

Wessels, André. 2010. **A century of postgraduate Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) studies.** Bloemfontein: Sun Press. 205 p.
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This publication, a comprehensive list of all postgraduate studies on any conceivable aspect of the Anglo-Boer War, was compiled in the course of almost 30 years. No effort has been spared in trying to ensure that the list is as complete and correct as possible. In addition to source lists, footnotes and endnotes in numerous publications, finding aids and databases at universities, academic colleagues and relevant people across the globe were consulted to compile this list. This publication is a logical extension of a work the author published in 1987: *Suid-Afrikaanse verhandelinge en proefskrifte oor die geskiedenis van die Anglo-Boereoorlog: 'n bronne-studie* (HSRC, Pretoria).

In chapter 1 a brief background history of the war, as well as a historiography of the postgraduate studies on the war, is given.

The author identified 139 Master's and 84 Doctoral studies that focus exclusively on the war, as well as 125 Master's and 212 Doctoral studies that deal to some extent with the conflict. Statistical data are provided and interpreted in chapter 2.

Two lists are provided, comprising all 560 Anglo-Boer War studies completed in the century between 1908 and 2008. If a study has subsequently been published in book form, information about this is also provided.

In chapter 3 the first list is arranged by country of origin (seventeen countries of origin as well as "other countries"). Background information regarding each country's involvement in this conflict is also provided. It would come as a surprise that no postgraduate studies completed in other African countries are listed although the war did have an impact on South West Africa (Namibia), Bechuanaland (Botswana), Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Swaziland, Lesotho and Mozambique. It would come as an even bigger surprise that not so many studies that deal exclusively with the war were undertaken at universities in the United Kingdom (sixteen studies), compared with 113 at South African universities, 49 at American universities, and even twelve at Canadian universities. The fact that it was only number 226 out of 230 conflicts during Queen Victoria's long reign probably accounts partly for this.

In the last chapter (chapter 4) all of these studies are listed once again, but this time thematically in 22 topics as well as "other topics". Fields which have not yet been researched are indicated. This reviewer feels there is some scope for refinement of the "other topics", by listing some of these studies under "The war and the wider world" (already listed as a topic), "The impact of the war on British society" or even the impact of the war on the four South African states (the South African Republic, the Orange Free State and the two British Colonies). In rigidly dividing the studies under topics, there is also the possibility of some overlap which was not accounted for.

Seven appendices and a source list conclude this publication.

This reviewer can only concur with two views expressed in the publisher's blurb on the back cover, viz. that this publication is "a major contribution to the historiography of the Anglo-Boer War" by Prof. Fransjohan Pretorius and "an absolutely invaluable digest of the wealth of postgraduate work on the South African [Anglo-Boer] War" by Prof. Ian Beckett.

Normally, proofreading bibliographic lists brings out the best or the worst in any proofreader. In the case of this publication the standard of proofreading is exceptionally high. Ms Alice de Jager, who was responsible for the copy-editing of the text, and the proofreader(s) who is not mentioned per se, are to be commended for their excellent work.

The publisher is to be commended for publishing a work which, because of its elitist nature, will not find a mass market but nevertheless is a work of extraordinary scope.

The author's Preface mentions "students, historians, and other academics and scholars, as well as other researchers and anyone interested in the history of the Anglo-Boer War" as possible readers of this publication, a view with which this reviewer can only agree.

Although no effort has been spared in trying to ensure the completeness of the lists, this reviewer could detect, after considerable effort, two minor omissions in the text. A study for the Master's degree at the Université François Rabelais in Tours by Johanna E.T. Steyn, *Les Boers dans la littérature française* (1993) has not been included.

Secondly, the Doctoral study of L.J.S. Changuion, *Arbitrasie of bemiddeling? Die rol van die Verenigde State van Amerika in die Anglo-Boereoorlog, 1899-1902* (1982), is included in the text but the fact that it has subsequently been published as *Uncle Sam, Oom Paul en John Bull: Amerika en die Anglo-Boereoorlog, 1899-1902* (Protea Boekhuis, Pretoria, 2001) is not mentioned.