

Miskitu Coast. Students will find it very readable and engaging. Scholars will find helpful information up to a point, especially if they have some additional knowledge of the history and culture of the Nicaraguan Atlantic Coastal region. Thinking of Awastara from the perspective of my own study and experience of Miskitu culture, I am particularly struck by the sense of contrast between life in this coastal community not too far from the lower Rio Coco and that in a thoroughly riverine village several hundred miles upriver. Although Dennis does not specifically address this point, judging from a few scattered comments in his account, Awastara residents seem to view Rio Coco Miskitu as somewhat different from themselves, too. Judging from historical materials such Miskitu cultural regionalism has a considerable time depth. Thanks to Dennis's work we are now in a better position to pursue more comparative research among Miskitu communities that may reveal more diversity among Miskitu villages in eastern Nicaragua than is sometimes acknowledged by scholars.

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Dilley, R. M.: Islamic and Caste Knowledge Practices among Haalpulaar'en in Senegal. Between Mosque and Termite Mound. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004. 270 pp. ISBN 0-7486-1990-9. (International African Library, 30) Price: £ 16.95

This anthropological book examines, from the historical perspective, the relationship between Islamic and "caste" knowledge (respectively symbolic "mosque" and "termite mound" of its title) among Haalpulaar'en of Senegal. The author attempts to embrace the period which begins back in the late eighteenth century and continues up to the time of his own fieldwork in Senegal in the 1980s and mid-1990s. His main concern constitute the Pulaar (Fulfulde) speakers of Fuuta Toro, inhabitants of the middle Senegal river valley in the northern part of the country known as Senegal's fertile crescent, a valley of agriculture and the nucleus of early Islamic political movements.

The book combines knowledge coming from secondary published historical works with the author's own data assembled during his "multi-sited" field research. It owes much to his earlier anthropological analyses of the craftsmen, and concentrates on an Islamic revolution in Fuuta Toro in the late eighteenth century. The main bulk of the book is comprised in eight chapters.

In chapter 1, entitled "The Mosque and the Termite Mound" (1–26), the reader is provided with some general information on the territory and the population discussed in the book. The concept of caste is understood among the Haalpulaar'en and other West African peoples somewhat different from what is known from ethnography of the Indian subcontinent. It refers to the members of the marginalised occupational groups of artisans, praise-singers, and musicians. Islam and caste structure are presented as two points of reference of social and cultural relationships in the changing milieu of the Senegal river valley. The author is inclined to

assume that the social exclusion of members of caste categories arises from the kinds of knowledge and power they control in the pursuit of their respective occupations.

The Pulaar-speakers of Fuuta Toro are divided in three social ranks (known also as "estates") and a large number of social categories. The relationships between the marginalised "caste" groups and the freeborn groups (mainly the Islamic clerics) in different times and according to different conceptions of Islam are thoroughly discussed in chapter 2: "Ranks and Categories: The Emergence of a Haalpulaar Social Division of Labour" (27–56). The author tries to show to what extent historic hierarchical prejudices influence the full membership of the local Muslim community. From among the freeborn rank groups (Fulɓe, fishermen, warriors, courtiers, counsellors, and Islamic clerics) special attentions is paid to the formation and functioning of the *toorobe* who emerged with the rise of the Islamic Almaamate ("rule of the imam") in the late eighteenth century, which overthrew the Fulɓe Deniyanke dynasty started by Koli Tengella. They claim Arab-Berber ancestry and dominate the offices of religious authority throughout Fuuta Toro. Craftsmen (leatherworkers, smiths, weavers, and woodcarvers), musicians and praise-singers, known as the men-of-skill, do not exceed 10% of the total population. They are labelled "caste" people and constitute occupational groups whose separation from one another is marked, among others, by endogamous marriage practices. The third rank included slaves, bondsmen, and women and amounted to 20% of the population. Ex-slaves are viewed today as occupying a degraded social position. According to Dilley's findings "relations between the three ranks . . . were, and still are to some extent, structured hierarchically with respect to access to land, political and religious offices, and to other economic resources in Fuuta Toro" (49). Islamic lore, knowledge, and power (*gandal diine*) was restricted to the *toorobe*, whereas slaves and caste groups controlled their own lore and knowledge known as occupational lore (*gandal golle*).

Chapter 3, "Historical Origins and Social Pedigrees of Craftsmen and Musicians: Genealogies of Power and Knowledge of the Wild" (57–88), deals with the men-of-skill and takes into account the social division of their knowledge and charismatic power. Both Arabic and European sources, as well as local oral genealogies are used in order to establish the origin and history of the "subaltern" groups which are considered as having contact and association with spiritual forces that emanate from the wild. Of all the men-of-skill pedigrees, weavers' lines of ancestry appear to have the longest history, reaching back over eighteen generations, which represents a historical span of around 500 years. It is evident that occupational specialisation by "castes" predates the Almaamate revolution of the 1770s, and Dilley is of the opinion that this regime changed little the terms of the social organisation of specialisation.

In chapter 4, "The White and the Black: Ideology and the Rise to Dominance of the Islamic Clerics" (89–113),

the author aims at considering the extent to which the Islamic revival of the late eighteenth century, and then the reformist movement of Al-Hajj Umar Taal of the mid-nineteenth century, evoked some new ideological currents. He regards those waves of Islamic development as being in dialogue with craft lore and “black” knowledge of the men-of-skill groups. In such a way Dilley advocates the concept of an accommodationist Islam which sought, from the Almaamate times on, to accommodate but yet subordinate forms of craftsmen’s lore.

Chapters 5 to 7 comprise ethno-historical material testifying to the accommodationist conception of Islam which was a predominating variant up to the mid-twentieth century. In chapter 5, entitled “Accommodationist Sufi Islam and Rites of Passage: Tensions and Ambiguities” (114–130), the reader is acquainted with the role of the men-of-skill in certain *rites de passage*, in particular male circumcision and female excision. In this respect, the idea of higher and lower spiritual forces associated with the white (Islamic) and the black (traditional) forms of lore and knowledge are of crucial importance. Accommodationist Islam granted a place to men-of-skill within a cosmological framework but it was a subordinate position they occupied. Various barriers were set against their full participation in the *jama’a*.

Chapter 6, “The Witch-Hunter and the Marabout: Competing Domains of Knowledge and Power” (131–159), opens with the discussion on the indigenous conception of knowledge (*gandal*), and then examines the activities of the witch-hunter (*bileejo*) contrasted with those of the marabout, an Islamic healer and ritual specialist. The two figures represent mastery of two contrasting domains of power: witch-hunter and magician is a master of arts which are considered black, whereas the marabout disposes the white lore which is linked with the domain of the Sufi mysticism.

In chapter 7, “The Power of the Word: The Oral and the Written” (160–191), Dilley aims at the investigation of two forms of word: the spoken and the written one. He takes into account the potency and danger of names, praise-songs and prayers, secret languages, spells and incantations, as well as maraboutic written talismans. The author comes to the conclusion that these two modes of potency within language have much in common as far as their putative efficiency is concerned. A series of power practices in the form of both oral and written “magic” exhibits also some technological similarities.

The last chapter is entitled “Islamic Reformers, Islamists, and the Muslim Community” (192–213) and it deals with “fundamentalist” and other reformist conceptions of the Muslim *jama’a* in Senegal as a whole, not only in Fuuta Toro as indicated in the title of the book. Of central interest here is the question: why these forms of Islam have been more attractive to members of the artisan and musician groups compared with the cleric-dominated Sufi brotherhoods. Apart from the discussion on a bifurcation in the Muslim community of Senegal, this chapter examines also the role of Arabic literacy and *medersas* in local Muslim education.

The main merit of this book derives from the fact that while the existing literature was focusing on the Islamic preachers and *toorobe* of the Fuuta Toro region, this work takes into account – in the wake of the author’s earlier researches – the situation of the marginalised artisans, musicians, and praise-singers in a perspective of their response to the new faith which was the main way of rising of the social prestige and status. Through a thorough analysis of the knowledge practices of the clerics and the men-of-skill, based both on literature and on his own field research, Dilley comes to the conclusion that those practices are crucial for an understanding of the social and cultural distinctions of the Haalpulaar’en. It is laudable that the book is devoid of any misprints except for two cases: “prohibition” (120) instead of “prohibition” and omission of “not” (111). The Arabic and Fulfulde terms are well explained but still the reader might be looking for a glossary at the end of the book. This “shortcoming” is partially levelled by an “Index” (266–270) in which an access to the meaning of the Fulfulde words is offered through the English terms.

Stanisław Piłaszewicz

Donkin, Robin A.: Between East and West. The Moluccas and the Traffic in Spices Up to the Arrival of Europeans. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2003. 274 pp. ISBN 0-87169-248-1. (Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society, 248) Price: \$ 40.00

Diese Monographie aus dem Bereich der historischen Geographie setzt eine Reihe vorausgehender Monographien desselben Autors fort, welche die Verbreitung und Verwendung östlicher Luxusgüter in den höfischen Zentren der westlichen Hemisphäre untersuchten. Während Kampfer und Perlen in gesonderten Abhandlungen gewürdigt worden waren, liegt hier der Schwerpunkt auf Nelken, Muskat und Sandelholz, die als Aromata und Medizin eingesetzt wurden. Nach einem kurzen Prolog über die Bedeutung dieser Güter im Westen erfolgt im ersten Kapitel die Beschreibung und Verbreitung der verschiedenen Pflanzen unter Berücksichtigung der Biologie und Ökologie, ihrem Ertrag und den Techniken ihrer Aufbereitung. Daran anschließend werden die unterschiedlichen wissenschaftlichen und volkstümlichen Nomenklaturen vorgestellt, während die folgenden vier Kapitel in gleicher Aufteilung Indien, der Persisch-Arabischen Welt, dem mittelalterlichen Westen und schließlich China und Südostasien gewidmet sind. Die diachrone Spurensuche nutzt dabei vornehmlich literarische Zeugnisse innerhalb verschiedener Epochen und Regionen. Aus den eingefügten zwölf Karten sind die jeweiligen Handelszentren, die Verbreitung von Universalreligionen sowie die Umschlagplätze für die hier berücksichtigten Produkte auszumachen. Nützliche Indices, unterteilt nach Personen, Orten und Regionen, biologischen und ethnischen Kategorien, Titeln der im Text verwendeten Quellen und schließlich ein Generalindex sind hilfreich für den diagonal Lesenden.

Der zeitliche Horizont der Untersuchung von Donkin erstreckt sich von der Zeitenwende bis zum Erschei-