

defined *les traites négrières* as purely economic phenomena, and thus not directly comparable to the Second World War genocide in Europe. Against the background of France's Loi Taubira (2001) declaring the (Atlantic) slave trade among the world's 'crimes against humanity', an activist coalition representing former colonized Francophone territories protested. A lawsuit and considerable public debate over distinctions between 'crimes against humanity' and 'genocide' descended into notoriously personal terms, dividing academic historians defending their professional standards from others (including very public figures) insisting on the validity of historical memory. The lawsuit was eventually dismissed, but the discussion continues, and money now seems to be pouring into the French academy for work on *les traites*. Change happens in unpredictable ways, and not always comfortably for those to whom it happens.

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DUTCH SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY DOCUMENTS ON THE GOLD COAST

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Expeditie naar de Goudkust. Het journaal van Jan Dirckz Lam over de Nederlandse aanval op Elmina, 1624–1626. Edited by HENK DEN HEIJER. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2006. Pp. 208. €25 (ISBN 90-5730-445-7).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, precolonial, sources.

With the possible exception of the Upper Guinea Coast, the Gold Coast (today's southern Ghana) must be the region of sub-Saharan Africa for which we possess the largest amount of published primary documentation from before the eighteenth century. Considerable progress has been made in editing these sources in the past 25 years, but the Dutch archives in particular still contain a wealth of largely unknown material.

The texts presented here, taken from a manuscript in the Rijksarchief, relate to the Dutch attempt to seize Elmina Castle (São Jorge da Mina) from the Portuguese in 1625. A total of 1,200 Europeans and 150 Africans from the nearby minikingdom of Sabou/Asebu marched upon Elmina; but the attack was a disaster and, according to the Dutch, 441 Europeans and 25 Africans were killed. The first text is a day-by-day journal by the admiral in command, or rather – as is pointed out – probably a copy of the manuscript written mainly by his secretary. There follow the resolutions of the fleet's council, which, although couched in formal language, throw valuable light on how the decision-making process worked as the crisis deepened. Unfortunately we are not given a third source – the text of the anonymous 13-page pamphlet *Waerachtich verhael van den gantsche reyse ...*, published immediately after the fleet's return to the Netherlands in 1626. Although more concise than the other material, it would have been interesting to compare this printed account, written in retrospect, with the unpublished documents.

Henk den Heijer's sixty-page introduction provides a considerable amount of new information on shifts in Dutch policy, on the officers commanding the fleet and on the attack itself. Combined with the primary material, it is an enormous improvement upon the account given in John Vogt's book, *Portuguese Rule on the Gold Coast 1469–1682* (1979), 179–82, which mentions but hardly uses the Dutch

records and contains numerous errors. But it is puzzling that the introduction says nothing about the more modest and equally abortive Dutch attacks of 1603, 1606 and 1615; and even when he describes the successful conquest in 1637, one wonders whether he might not have explored in greater depth why this last attack succeeded where the previous four had failed. He argues, plausibly, that in 1625 the Dutch underestimated the importance of having African allies; yet, later in the century, most commentators pointed to tactical mistakes, notably the need to gain command of St. Jago Hill. The famous Dutch map of 1629, reproduced as an illustration, might also have been discussed. Drawn only four years after this expedition, it indicated quite remarkable knowledge of the whole interior of the Gold Coast at a time when most of the coast was, in theory, still under Portuguese control.

Nevertheless, considering how many Africanist historians are happy to produce research based on British Parliamentary Papers, it is a relief to find someone willing and able to transcribe and publish well over 100 pages from seventeenth-century documents. In terms of value for money, this publication is difficult to beat: €25 for a beautifully produced, well-illustrated, scholarly hardback which must have taken ages to prepare and will be used by many generations to come – if, that is, anyone still does precolonial African history.

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ADAM JONES

ACADEMIC ANTHROPOLOGY AND COLONIAL RULE

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Ordering Africa. Anthropology, European Imperialism, and the Politics of Knowledge. Edited by HELEN TILLEY with ROBERT J. GORDON. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007. Pp. xiv + 390. £60; \$84.95 (ISBN 978-0-7190-6239).

KEY WORDS: anthropology, colonialism, knowledge.

This volume addresses questions about the relationship of academic anthropology and colonial rule that have been in circulation since the end of the colonial era.¹ But it is distinguished by its broad coverage, including essays treating Belgian, British, French, German and Italian colonial situations. Indeed, it stretches the definition of its purview to include a paper by Patrick Harries that analyses Swiss anthropologists, whose country was not a colonial power, who saw parallels between Alpine peoples and African ones – a form of projection (analogizing the lower orders in metropolitan society and subject peoples) that, as Harries observes, was also prevalent in colonizing countries. And Tilley suggests that its contributions will serve to help ‘scholars to avoid misleading binaries – black/white, colonized/colonizer, African/Western and tradition/modernity being the most obvious’ (p. 13).

¹ Full disclosure: I participated in a conference held at the University of Oxford in March 2000, organized by Helen Tilley, the proceedings of which were the basis of this collection; my assistance is acknowledged in Tilley’s introduction. That said, however, I should note that most of Tilley and Gordon’s impressive array of contributors did not attend the conference. And Tilley’s judgements are her own, of course, not those of her pre-publication readers.