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The Lasting Virtue of Traditional Healing: An Ethnography of Healing and Prestige in the Middle Atlas of Morocco by Jogien Bakker

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decades after annexation the British had abolished the legal status of slaves without actually emancipating them.

Lovejoy and Hogendorn's work, the product of fifteen years' fine, collaborative work with a tranche of eminent Nigerian scholars, concentrates upon northern Nigeria, where, they remind readers, the Sokoto caliphate made up one of the largest slave societies in the history of the modern world. Here they show that Lugard's unfolding policy was to maintain the economic vitality of the region and to sustain the power of his new, slave-owning allies by, in every sense, keeping slaves in their place. At a formal level this was achieved by remitting disputes over slavery to Islamic courts, which had not adopted the colonial law's denial of slave status. This unfairly suggests total cynicism; Lugard was genuinely committed to the ending of slavery but, as Lovejoy and Hogendorn show, only in a fashion which did not disrupt the *status quo* which now underpinned the political structure of the new colonial state and, as important, in a manner which would not require drawing upon state revenue.

Lugard and his African allies happily espoused the inherent utility of the Islamic practice of *murgu* whereby slaves recompense their owners for the right to work as wage labourers. To reinforce this, a knowingly crafted taxation structure encouraged both masters and slaves to enter into *murgu* agreements. In time—and it was a long time, as is suggested by the book's subtitle—slaves were transformed into free labourers; but in that process they had paid for their own emancipation.

That falsely suggests that it was a smooth transition. In reality the amalgam of locally interpreted *sharia* laws and a colonial legal code which denied slaves access to land while criminalising those who left their employers made the forty-year march towards real emancipation a wretchedly oppressive struggle. It was, moreover, an even rougher passage for women; the colonial state was content to regard all unfree women as concubines and hence the objects not of emancipatory legislation but of the partisan and patriarchal jurisdiction of *sharia* courts. Consequently slave women continued to be traded throughout the period under discussion.

This is a wonderfully detailed book and one to which a short review can do little justice. It is a fine elaboration of the ambiguities of colonialism as well as a very exciting and exceptionally well researched contribution to our understanding of the economic history of northern Nigeria in the first half of the twentieth century. It deserves a much wider readership than just those interested in modern West African history.

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JOGIEN BAKKER, *The Lasting Virtue of Traditional Healing: an ethnography of healing and prestige in the middle Atlas of Morocco*. Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1993, 360 pp., f42.50 (£15.50), ISBN 90 5383 261 0. Available from the Department of Cultural Anthropology and non-Western Sociology, Free University of Amsterdam. De Boelelaan 1105, 1081 HV Amsterdam, Netherlands.

'Healing is the proof of *baraka*, *baraka* the proof of healing.' This statement, which is also the title of its tenth chapter, succinctly summarises the central perspective of this study of traditional medicine in Morocco. Jogien Bakker is an anthropologist who recently defended her dissertation (this book) at the Free University of Amsterdam. Her study is both an exhaustive overview of healing traditions in some Berber communities in Morocco and a proposal to view those traditions as tools to display and build up the most prestigious form of prestige that there is, *baraka*, divine blessing and legitimisation of earthly power.

The author carried out sixteen months of fieldwork, between 1987 and 1989, among the Ait Abdi, a federation of five Berber tribes in the area around Ain Leuh in the Middle Atlas. She visited the area again in 1989 and 1990. About the research itself she is rather vague and brief: she praises the friendliness and co-operativeness of the people and extols the beauty of the landscape.

The book can be divided roughly into four parts. The first (chapters 1 and 2) has a theoretical bent and discusses the concepts of prestige and *baraka*. Chapters 3–5 are ethnographic and deal with aspects of Berber life which relate to prestige. Chapters 6–11 describe the various healing practices, with the emphasis on how they produce and are produced by *baraka*. The social meaning of healing is elucidated by placing healing in the Berber 'prestige structure'. The remaining four chapters (12–15) are an attempt to show how changes in the prestige structure affect healing practices.

The value of the study lies both in its contribution to the ethnography of Moroccan medical traditions and in its specific perspective: healing as an instrument of prestige. The author distinguishes Arab male and female healers and Berber male healers. The first category includes the *fqih*, the Koran expert who derives his *baraka* for healing from the holy book; the *cherif*, the nobleman whose *baraka* is inherited; and the *kowei*, the brander or cauteriser. Female Arab healers are the *gabla* or midwife, the *achaba*, the woman selling herbs in the market; and the *chaouafa*, the female diviner who works mainly in the town. Four types of male Berber healer are mentioned: the *jbar* or bone setter; the 'spit and touch' healer, so called by the author because he carries out most of his healing with saliva and massage; the *hadra* healer, who works through dance and trance; and the *fatha* or prayer healer.

Baraka can be acquired by personal achievement through one's talents and interests or by religious learning. It can also be inherited from relatives in the patriline and it can be given to someone who has been selected by God or the ancestors.

The author shows how respect and prestige, and their divine confirmation *baraka*, permeate social life in the Ain Leuh area and thus become the 'substance' of healing. The power to heal is the most convincing proof of the presence of *baraka*. *Baraka* is compared to electricity: nobody can see it, but it is noted by its effects. Healing is not only the manifestation of this religious prestige, it also creates it. Healing is an impressive demonstration of concern for the 'social good', it is the ultimate proof of human love. Payment for healing is therefore rejected. A gift, *ftuh*, is allowed, however. The true reward of the healer is the social credit he accumulates. The author refers here to Bourdieu's concept of 'symbolic capital'.

This perspective sheds a refreshing light on healing. It helps us to understand why some healers disappear and others manage to enhance their healing role. When a particular type of healing fails to win social esteem it is likely to die out, whereas other styles may emerge as alternative routes to social and religious recognition. The entanglement of healing and *baraka* also offers a plausible explanation for the infrequency with which 'modern' medicine and 'traditional' medicine are mixed, a phenomenon often observed in other societies. Finally, the focus on prestige delineates an interesting paradox in female healing. The public character of women's healing practices tarts the position of women healers and puts them on the same level as prostitutes. For them, however, it is a matter of sheer survival. Healing and divination solve their acute financial problems and in the longer term provide them with a new kind of social respect. It shows that in the final analysis bread is preferred to *baraka* and that no prestige structure is permanent.

The view of healing as a vehicle of prestige tempts one to draw comparisons with other cultural settings, including the European one, which is dominated by secularised biomedicine. In the biomedical setting money is both grabbed and tabooed, conjuring up the image of the doctor as an outstanding representation of human

goodness. The fact that this study inspires such perspectives underscores its anthropological significance.

It is regrettable that the publication contains numerous errors, especially in the bibliography, and that it lacks an index, as many books produced in the Netherlands do. It has, however, a French *résumé* and a useful glossary of Arabic and Berber terms.

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SANDRA BURMAN and ELEANOR PRESTON-WHYTE (eds.), *Questionable Issue: illegitimacy in South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1992, 319 pp., £17.95, ISBN 0 19 570660 9 paperback.

Illegitimacy and single mothers continue to be 'hot' issues in Britain and the United States. This admirable collection explores both the meaning of 'illegitimacy' in South Africa—a 'questionable issue' when the phenomenon is so frequent and increasingly accommodated—and the impact on the children themselves, the 'issue' whose status is questionable. The editors confirm their complementary strengths and excellent track record in research—Burman in history and law, Preston-Whyte in anthropology—by assembling (initially at a workshop in Cape Town in 1990) a diverse team of contributors qualified in social anthropology, law, economics, medicine, psychology and religious studies (with the maverick gifted mathematician Ken Hughes providing interesting historical perspectives from western Europe). Using an imaginative variety of wide-ranging sources of evidence, from surveys and interviews to census statistics, from legal precedents and religious rulings to clinical profiles and in-depth anthropology, they provide invaluable case studies which are deliberately—as in much of Burman's earlier work—inclusive of all South Africa's religious and racial communities.

This very inclusivity highlights the complexity of South Africa's many traditions, noted by Jack Simons in a preface which urges the new democratic government to confront the legal, social and economic disabilities faced by those defined as 'illegitimate'. Even within the religious traditions themselves there are conflicting voices: Orthodox versus Reformed Judaism; different Islamic legal schools, Moosa comments, holding sway in the Transvaal and Natal as opposed to the Cape. Furthermore, religious definitions of illegitimacy diverge from the law of the land but are so punitive that religious jurists will try desperately to find loopholes or resort to legal subterfuges. In Judaism a child born to a second marriage after a non-religious divorce can *never* marry in an Orthodox synagogue or have legitimate children, 'unto the tenth generation', Burman and Frankental explain. For Hindus, full legitimacy is 'intimately linked with caste' (p. 109)—a child born of a legal union between a high-caste woman and a very low-caste man may carry more stigma than one born to an unwed high caste mother; but Hindu tradition, McNamar notes, goes to great lengths to legitimate almost any type of union, as marriage is life's central religious event. Religion alone is an insufficient guide, though: pre-marital pregnancy is higher among Cape 'Coloured' Muslims than among the Muslims of Indian origin—in line with the extent of illegitimacy in their respective 'race' groups. Burman reports for the western Cape in 1990 that 48 per cent of all births were illegitimate, the racial breakdown in Cape Town being: whites 20 per cent, Coloureds 44 per cent, Asians 7 per cent, Africans 70 per cent (p. 22).

The majority religious tradition in South Africa is, of course, none of these, however, but Christianity, on which David Chidester uses my research on mission church approaches to pre-marital pregnancy and (more fully) the inter-war anthropology of Schapera and Krige (whose jeremiads about African cultural disintegration he