

*Marriage, Inheritance and Witchcraft: A Case Study of a Rural Ghanaian Family.* By W. BLEEK. Leiden: Afrika-Studiecentrum, 1975. Pp. x+435, bibl., tables. (Mededelingen Afrika-Studiecentrum 12). n.p.

*Prophétisme et thérapeutique: Albert Atcho et la communauté de Bregbo.* PAR MARC AUGÉ et al. Paris: Hermann, 1975. Pp. 324, ill., tableau, carte. FF 48.

*Marriage, Inheritance and Witchcraft* deals with social change and conflict within the context of a single matrilineage among the Kwahu of Ghana. Forty-six members of a lineage chief's family were interviewed. Such topics as childhood, sexual relations, marriage, divorce, death, religion and witchcraft, migration and economic relations were covered. Other standard ethnographic procedures were employed as well as the recording of modern 'highlife' songs later used in the analysis of cultural themes. In addition a series of essays by school children were collected on the themes: 'I and my father,' 'I and my mother,' 'I and my uncle,' and 'Good and bad qualities of the Kwahu people.' A study of social patterns including network analysis revealed that: 'Daily life gives more leeway to social change. Crisis situations are inclined to restrict change and make people return to traditional patterns of relations or norms,' (p. 129). But, sometimes crises can become an instrument of social change, 'if the persons involved refuse to act according to the conventions,' (p. 129).

Marriage among the Kwahu is no longer a 'system.' There is a wide variety of types of marriage and sexual union. Temporary unions are common but people desire a final customary marriage. The term divorce is applied to customary unions, the term separation to 'free marriage.' Divorce and separation rates are high. The author concludes that 'Kinship stability is more important than marriage stability, and not only for the purpose of residence; also for the upbringing of children,' (p. 222). Thus the usual disjunction found in matrilineal societies operates here.

Hierarchical selection in inheritance is seen as a tool and expression of family unity, but inheritance is also a source of tension and conflict. On the other hand, overt accusations concerning unjust inheritance can be a reflection of other social conflicts rather than their cause. As is true among all Akan peoples intrafamilial tensions are frequently expressed in witchcraft accusations. Witchcraft is seen not as a safety valve, but rather as an aggravation of hostilities and an obstacle to cooperation.

In general this book is critical of structural (in the British sense) explanations and takes a dynamic and processual point of view. The data are copious and the arguments well integrated.

*Prophétisme et thérapeutique* is a richly textured book. It is a study of Albert Atcho, a Harris cult prophet discovered for the anthropological world in 1962 by Jean Rouche. Atcho, his activities, and his village (Bregbo in the Ivory Coast not far from the capital Abidjan) were studied by a team of French anthropologists. The book therefore consists of individual analyses expressing different foci and different points of view. In particular the sociological, religious, therapeutic, and political aspects are covered. A political synthesis is presented by Marc Augé who sees disease and its cure in the context of this syncretistic cult as a judicial-political process. As a whole the book deals with the development of a successful practice and its relation to various aspects of symbolic and social expression. Atcho is particularly interesting because he is at the same time a prophet, a curer, and the head of a modern business.

The celebration (*fête*) of November 1, All Saints Day, is the major event in the life of Bregbo and its prophet. The cult and its cures centers on the use of holy water originating in Bregbo and blessed by Atcho. According to the prophet: 'We live in a state of sin and this is why we are black as coal. We cannot approach God because of our bad odor. It is by the grace of perfume