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**George E. Brooks**. *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century.* Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003. xxiii + 355 pp. $65.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8214-1485-9; $26.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8214-1486-6.

**Reviewed by** Eric Ross (School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane)
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George Brooks's *Eurafricans in Western Africa* is the sequel to his *Landlords and Strangers* (1993). This book covers Western African coastal trading networks from the Senegal River to Cape Palmas (including the Cape Verde Islands) from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Brooks uses the term "Eurafrican" to designate Luso-Africans, Franco-Africans, and Anglo-Africans, the offspring of the union of transient European male traders and African women, often of elite social status. The term is meant to emphasize the greater African heritage of the mothers, as opposed to the Portuguese, French, or English heritage of the fathers.

As the subtitle indicates, the book deals extensively with social status, religion, and gender-related issues among Eurafricans. According to Brooks, African laws regarding inheritance and property rights largely determined the social status of Eurafricans, and these laws differed considerably depending on whether a society was acephalous or politically stratified. Religious observances and gender roles, in turn, depended on social status. Brooks makes good use of primary sources, particularly the accounts of Portuguese, French, Dutch, and English travelers and traders, nearly all of them men. In the preface, the author recognizes that his assessment of Eurafricans is limited by these informants and observers, who were "misinformed, self-serving, and imbued with racial prejudice" (p. xi). Also, only the most "successful" Eurafricans, of elite status, have survived in the historical record; porters, mariners, servants, and slaves, as all too often, remain anonymous–seen but not heard.

While the lives of Eurafrican men–mariners, interpreters, and traders–are explored, it is the portrayal of Eurafrican business women which stands out most strongly from Brooks's account. For example, there is the story of Senhora Catarina of the Petite C=te who acted as commercial agent for the king of Cayor, who served as interpreter during commercial negotiations and whose slaves traded up country on her behalf. There is Bibiana Vaz who owned a two-masted ship, among other vessels, and who managed an extensive trading network centered on Cacheu. There are also the stories of La Belinguere of Niumi, the indispensable intermediary for all European trade along the Gambia, who spoke Portuguese, French, and English and whose hospitality, fashion, and cuisine were legendary, and of Senhora Doll who created a trading dynasty which virtually monopolized commerce in the Plantain and Banana Islands. There is Seniora Maria, whose "town" on the Sierra Leone peninsula foreshadowed the later settlement of Freetown, and there is Betsy Heard, who was educated in England and then returned to manage a slave factory on the Bereira River. Eurafrican women–cultivated, entrepreneurial, and of elite status–emerge from the text as historical individuals. They helped to determine the commercial and social relations of European traders, were essential to maintaining the physical and mental health of these men, and were patrons of religious practice; Signora Philippa turned her house in Rufisque into a Catholic chapel, while Senhora Catarina, despite her Catholicism, patronized a Muslim "grand marabout." Far beyond the narrow confines of trade and commerce, therefore, it is the formation of a cosmopolitan Creole society, exemplified later in the nineteenth century by the famous signares of Saint Louis, which is revealed–a society largely created by women.

Other social phenomena of interest to readers are the presence of Portuguese Jews and New Christians along Western Africa's coastal networks, and the activities of various Catholic missions. The Jews and the New Christians were able to operate freely for a time but were persecuted by Portuguese and Spanish officials when competition from Dutch traders increased. Brooks also relates the cases of Franciscan and Capuchin missionaries ministering, every once in a long while, to the Luso-African communities along the Cacheu and Geba estuaries.

*Eurafricans in Western Africa* is best read as the com-

panion volume to *Landlords and Strangers*. Many of Brooks's underlying arguments, such as the succession of dry and wet periods which affected settlement patterns and trade networks, the formation of ethnic, religious, caste, and trade identities, and the overarching religious and cultural paradigms, explored in the first book, are only summarized in the second (chapter 1). There is a considerable amount of historical geography in *Eurafricans in Western Africa*, most evident in Brooks's description of the trading networks and diasporas in chapter 2. The remaining chapters, 3 to 10, recount the historical succession of Eurafrican commercial networks, as those of the Luso-Africans wax and then wane in the face of competition from Franco- and Anglo-Africans.

Brooks's *Eurafricans in Western Africa* differs substantially from Walter Rodney's *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545 to 1800* (1970), often cited in the text, in that it is mainly concerned with the intrinsic experiences of these liminal Eurafrican communities, rather than with the wider context of their interaction with African polities. Proponents of the "Atlantic World" perspective will be disappointed as this paradigm is not used by the author. The Americas seem to be entirely absent from the horizons of the Eurafricans. The notable exception to this is the story of Penda Lawrence, a woman trader from the Gambia who made a business trip to Charleston, South Carolina, in 1772.

The cartography in the first few chapters of the book is excellent. The maps are monochrome and easy to reproduce for use in the classroom. They serve to illustrate very precise issues related to the trade networks discussed in the text. However, the book would have benefited from the inclusion of more pictorial representations, i.e., etchings, engravings, and illustrations of the period. Only one of these is used, on the dust jacket and frontispiece. It is a panoramic depiction of Rufisque published in 1732 which highlights Senhora Catarina's waterfront compound. The reproduction of other period illustrations could have been equally useful for Brooks's discussion of maritime technology, housing and trading facilities, fashion, etc.

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