Pernille Ipsen

Daughters of the Trade: Atlantic Slavers and Interracial Marriage on the Gold Coast.
Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015. xi + 269 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.95)

Pernille Ipsen teaches in the departments of Gender and Women's Studies and History at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Her book, a volume in the Early Modern American Series, introduces readers to a neglected subject, namely interracial marriages between Danish men, employed by Danish trading companies, and Accra women from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Given that a number of present-day Ghanaian families carry Danish surnames (e.g., Quist, Hansen, Reindorf, Shandorf, Richter, Malm, and Lutterodt), the study is appropriate. It consists of an introduction, five chapters, an epilogue, endnotes, and a bibliography, plus three maps, eleven figures, two colored plates, and a short essay on the sources. Ipsen relied on archival records from the Danish National Archives in Copenhagen, as well as published primary sources such as eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travelers' accounts of the Gold Coast, and the correspondence of the Royal African Company. The secondary sources include an impressive range of historical, anthropological, gender, and literary studies by Africanist and non-Africanist authors. No families of Danish-Ghanaian descent were interviewed.

Ipsen operates her narrative and analysis at two levels, with the narrative moving between local Gold Coast and Danish milieus on the one hand, and the wider Atlantic world on the other. Where the evidence is available she reconstructs biographies or biographical profiles of interracial couples and their families as a micro-level study. Her themes include race, gender relations, family/household relations, beliefs and religious practices, health, divorce, inheritance, kin networks, trade, and the economic and social functions of interracial marriages in Gold Coast ports.

The introductory chapter ("Severine's Ancestors") details the story of interracial marriages through the life of the Afro-Dane Severine Brock, who married Edward Carstensen, the last governor of Fort Christiansborg. It then surveys six generations of Gã families whose daughters married Danes who resided in the fort.

Chapter 1 ("Setting Up") outlines the origins and evolution of Euro-African intermarriage practices (*cassare*) on the Gold Coast. Ipsen discusses the marriage and life of a Gã woman and a Danish commandant of Christiansborg, noting similarities (both came from families of traders) as well as the "vast cultural difference" between them (p. 20). She notes the personal and social motivations behind the interracial marriages and comments on the growing racializing discourse in the Danish administration's eighteenth-century records and

its implementation of racist employment practices. Chapter 2 (“A Hybrid Position”) examines the position of Euro-Africans and the emergence of a Euro-African culture in Osu, a development that generated a field of tensions among three groups: Christiansborg’s chaplains, the Christiansborg administration, and Euro-African families in Osu. The chaplains sought to accommodate Euro-African children by converting them to Christianity and promoting their fluency and literacy in the Danish language. Ipsen emphasizes that the hybrid social position of Euro-African families was shaped “by the unequal power balance of the Atlantic world, and it was created by local practices of slave trading” (p. 82).

Chapter 3 (“‘What in Guinea You Promised Me’”) considers the careers of three prominent Danish traders and royal officials who lived in Copenhagen, where they raised Danish families, and in Osu, where they raised Euro-African families. The chapter also looks at the lives of Euro-African men and women from Osu who lived in Copenhagen and other parts of the Atlantic world. Chapter 4 (“Danish Christian Mulatresses”) focuses on the lives and marriages of Euro-African women in the 1760s and their status in both the social hierarchy of Osu and the social-racial hierarchy of the Christiansborg administration. By this time high-ranking Danish assistants tended to marry Euro-African women with Danish surnames rather than women with African names. Chapter 5 (“Familiar Circles”) delves into the nineteenth-century interracial marriages of the Wulffs, the Malms, and others against the background of Denmark’s Gold Coast plantation project, which was pursued after the Danish government’s abolition of the slave trade in 1803. The epilogue (“Edward Carstensen’s Parenthesis”) features Governor Carstensen’s interracial marriage in the context of nineteenth-century discourses that rendered “African women’s bodies simultaneously inferior and corrupting” (p. 177).

As a microlevel examination of African-European cross-cultural interchange and a macrolevel interpretation of European global expansion, the rise of European racism, and expanding Atlantic commerce, this book makes a major contribution to Ghanaian and Atlantic world historiography as well as Early Modern Studies.

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