

## Literatur

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Volker Harms

**Casajus, D.: La tente dans la solitude: la société et les morts chez les Touaregs Kel Ferwan.** Atelier d'anthropologie sociale. ISBN 0-521-30970-0 (C. U. P.)/2-7351-0190-8 (M. S. H.). 390 S., 36 Photos, 41 Fig. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press / Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme 1987.

Although the central rôle of the tent in nomadic life has been recognised in titles such as Raswan's, the nature of that rôle has until now been largely neglected. Here at last it is adequately explored within the now classic French framework of two counterpoised poles. The tent is presented as the permanent setting for the continuity in Kel Ferwan society, in juxtaposition to the surrounding emptiness which threatens it, personified by the *kel esuf* "those of the wastes", essentially the malevolent spirits of those whose identity has not been preserved. This permanence is both conceptual, as established in tent form as an image of the cosmos, hence following divine ordinance since the beginning of time, and actual in the sense that, on the marriage of an elder daughter, she inherits her mother's own tent, which she in turn will maintain with newly-woven matting, before passing it on in due course to her own daughter. As the domain and actual property of the woman, and her home with a possible succession of husbands, the tent stands in the same relation to the female world as the veil to the male: a man, essentially tentless unless accepted by a woman, wears his veil permanently as a protection against the *kel esuf* in the outside world, and to be worthy of God's beneficence, just as a woman shelters from the spirits in her tent, which must be secured by particular rituals at times of marriage and birth, or celebrations of its sanctity.

The camp, by contrast, is presented as a male domain, the site chosen by men, and its tents grouped patrilineally; as such it is impermanent not only in spatial terms but as a social unit, tending to disperse when the authority of the dominant male fails, or when the number of grandchildren exceeds acceptable limits. Thus whereas the tent is constantly renewed, the fabric of the camp, represented by its folds of thorn bushes, ages and ultimately fails. The movement between camps, and through the wastes, appears to threaten the permanence of Tuareg society while actually guaranteeing its survival by assuring new pasture on the one hand, and new brides and progeny on the other. While a man must leave his mother's tent at adolescence, and remain effectively roofless until he marries and is received in his wife's tent, he remains in his camp while it is