



# ANTHROPOLOGY & MISSION

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*We would like to remind our readers that, strictly speaking, we are not reviewing the books and articles presented here (in the sense of giving a critical assessment of their contents) but intend to draw the readers' attention to the publications that are of particular interest for those who are engaged with both – anthropology and mission. The material in the bulletin partly consists of quotes taken from the presented books and articles.*

## Review of Books

(by Vinsensius Adi Gunawan and Othmar Gächter)

**Kasten, Erich** (Hrsg.): Die Haltung eines Wissenschaftlers in Zeiten politischer Umbrüche. Fürstenberg: Verlag der Kulturstiftung Sibirien. 2. Erweiterte Aufl. 2022. 239 pp. ISBN 978-3-942883-77-1. (pbk)

Der 80. Todestag von Franz Boas fällt in eine Zeit irritierender gesellschaftlicher Diskurse und politischer Umbrüche mit kriegerischen Auseinandersetzungen, bei der vor allem auch Wissenschaftler und Wissenschaftlerinnen gefordert sind, Haltung zu zeigen – und wofür das Leben und Werk von Franz Boas beispielhaft Orientierung geben kann. Ein solcher Blick auf seine Persönlichkeit steht in diesem Buch im Vordergrund. Daneben wird der Entwicklung seiner ethnologischen und linguistischen Methoden nachgegangen und wie sich Franz Boas dabei gegenüber seinen indigenen Mitarbeitern und Kollegen verhalten hat.

Das Buch nimmt auch Bezug auf identitätspolitische Debatten, wie sie zurzeit bei uns geführt werden, sowie auf die aktuellen politischen Verwerfungen in Russland. Franz Boas konnte vor 100 Jahren ähnliche Entwicklungen in Deutschland und in der Sowjetunion

mitverfolgen und nahm dazu vor allem im ersteren Fall dezidiert und entschlossen Stellung auf der Grundlage seiner humanitären Einstellung und seines profunden Wissens. Somit sucht das Buch ebenfalls Antworten auf Fragen, welche sich der Wissenschaft und uns allen gerade heute in ähnlich schwierigen Zeiten stellen.

**Miotk, Andrzej:** The Missionary Endeavor of the Society of the Divine Word in Latin America and China. The Founding and Biographical Approaches. Rome: Collegium Verbi Divini, 2023. 580 pp. ISBN 978-88-945785-4-6. (pbk)

The first part of the study of the SVD Latin American foundations discusses the genesis and character of each foundation and the applied methodologies in the founding process and its aftermath. It takes into consideration the historical momentum of each foundation by situating it in the local and national contexts that implied missionary challenges. The missionaries decided to venture into unknown territory and searched for how to apply suitable methods to proclaim the Gospel.

The second part of the study adopts a biographical approach to deepen our knowledge of the first mission of the Society in China. The collection of biographies in the first chapter presents 20 Divine Word Missionaries in the Middle Kingdom, bound by a common interest to research the historical, cultural, and religious background of their missionary work in China. The three subsequent chapters discuss the figures of the first cardinal to China, Thomas Tien, SVD, the society's formators involved in the training of indigenous members, and Fr. Thomas Megan, SVD, the charismatic pioneer and first apostolic prefect of Xinxiang in Northern Henan.

**Rivinius, Karl Josef SVD:** Josef Büttgens SVD (1879-1959). Priester, Missionar und Künstler. Sankt Ottilien: EOS Editions, 2024. 363 pp. ISBN 978-3-8306-8225-7. (hbk)

Der Steyler Missionar Josef Büttgens war dank seiner zahlreichen Talente ungewöhnlich vielseitig tätig. Als junger Ordenspriester stand er Arnold Janssen, dem Gründer des Missionsinstituts, als Privatsekretär bei, wirkte anschließend in Italien und in Mosambik, bis er zum ersten Oberen der Neugründung St. Augustin in Deutschland ernannt wurde. Nach einem Studium der Malerei und Bildhauerei wurde er Leiter einer Kunstwerkstatt und übernahm die Ausstattung zahlreicher Kirchen der Steyler Missionare, aber auch von Kirchenbauten außerhalb des Ordens. Ein Hauptwerk war dabei die Ausmalung der Kirche von St. Augustin und später von Kirchen in Indien und Brasilien. Höhepunkte in seinem Künstlerleben waren die Darstellung des Letzten Abendmahles in der Kathedrale von New Delhi und die Ausmalung der St.-Josef-Kirche in Ressaquinha, einem Wallfahrtsort im Bundesstaat Minas Gerais/Brasilien.

Das hier vorgelegte Buch gibt einen umfassenden Einblick in Leben und Werk dieser Künstlerpersönlichkeit und erinnert zugleich an ein hochverdientes Mitglied der Steyler Missionsgesellschaft.

**Vertovec, Steven:** Super Diversität. Migration and soziale Komplexität. Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag 2024. 364 pp. ISBN 978-3-518-58815-4. (hbk)

“Superdiversität” erforscht die zunehmenden Diversifizierungsprozesse und die hochkomplexen sozialen Konfigurationen, durch die frühere Formen der Vielfalt in unseren modernen Gesellschaften nochmals potenziert werden. Migration spielt bei diesen Prozessen eine Schlüsselrolle, wie der international führende Sozialwissenschaftler Steven Vertovec in diesem bahnbrechenden Buch zeigt. Sie bringt nicht nur Veränderungen in allen sozialen, kulturellen, religiösen und sprachlichen Bereichen mit sich, sondern auch in der Art und Weise, wie diese mit Faktoren wie Geschlecht, Alter und ökonomischem wie rechtlichem Status zusammenwirken.

Im Mittelpunkt des von Vertovec entwickelten Konzepts der “Superdiversität” steht die Beziehung zwischen sozialer Kategorisierung und sozialer Organisation. Immer komplexere Kategorisierungen haben erhebliche Konsequenzen auf allen gesellschaftlichen Ebenen. Sie erfordern eine Neubewertung sozialer Identitäten als mehrdimensional, wandelbar und durchlässig. Infolge des Klimawandels wird sich die Diversifizierung noch weiter verstärken, die Komplexität noch weiter erhöhen. “Superdiversität” liefert überzeugende Argumente für die Anerkennung dieser neuen Verhältnisse und fordert uns zum Umdenken auf.

**Amin, Ash:** After Nativism. Belonging in an Age of Intolerance. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2023. 197 pp. ISBN 978-1-5095-5731-8. (pbk)

Increasingly, many people in democracies are turning to a strongarm politics for reassurance against globalization, uncertainty and precarity. In countries ranging from the US and the UK to Brazil, India and Turkey, support has grown for a nativist politics attacking migrants, minorities, liberals and elites as enemies of the nation. Is there a politics of belonging that progressive forces could mobilize to counteract these trends?

“After Nativism” takes up this question, arguing that disarming nativism will require more than improving the security and wellbeing of the “left-behind”. The lines drawn by nativism are of an affective nature about imagined community, with meanings of belonging and voice lying at the heart of popular perceptions of just dues. This, argues Ash Amin, is the territory that progressive forces – liberal, social democratic, socialist – need to reclaim in order to shift public sentiment away from xenophobic intolerance towards one of commonality amid difference as a basis for facing existential risk and uncertainty.

The book proposes a relational politics of belonging premised on the encounter, fugitive aesthetics, public interest politics, collaboration over common existential threats, and daily collectives and infrastructures of wellbeing. There is ground for progressives to mount a counter-aesthetics of belonging that will convince the discontents of neoliberal globalization that there is a better alternative to nativism.

**Haller, Tobias, and Samuel Weissman** (eds.): *Disenchanted Modernities. Mega-Infrastructure Projects, Socio-Ecological Changes, and Local Responses*. Münster: LIT Verlag, 2024. 483 pp. ISBN 978-3-643-80378-8. (pbk)

Mega-Infrastructure Projects (MIPs) represent a central element of globalized development. MIPs like the Chinese driven “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI) include large-scale agrarian, road, rail, port and energy networks. They are complex ventures involving international capital and multiple stakeholders. “Disenchanted Modernities” presents 16 case studies showing that the promise of a sustainable modern development by MIPs leave many local users disenchanted: They don’t profit from the MIPs but lose access to their resources often held in common. The book describes the strategies of states and companies as well as local responses to MIPs in Asia, Africa, Americas and Europe.

**Thimm, Viola:** *Shopping with Allah. Muslim Pilgrimage, Gender and Consumption in a*

*Globalised World*. London: UCL Press, 2023. 304 pp. ISBN 978-1-80008-559-6. (pbk)

“Shopping with Allah” illustrates the ways in which religion is mobilised in package tourism and how spiritual, economic and gendered practices are combined in a form of tourism where the goal is not purely leisure but also ethical and spiritual cultivation.

Focusing on the intersection of gender and Islam, Viola Thimm shows how this intersection develops and changes in a pilgrimage-tourism nexus as part of capitalist and halal consumer markets. Based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork in Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates and Oman, Thimm sheds light on how Islam and gender frame Malaysian religious tourism and pilgrimage to the Arabian Peninsula, but she raises many issues that are of great importance beyond these regional contexts.

This book also offers an innovative methodological-analytical toolkit to research mobility and intersectionality across socio-geographic scales ‘Scaling Holistic Intersectionality’. By bringing methodological holism into a fruitful engagement with the antiracist-feminist framework intersectionality, Thimm argues that hierarchical relationships, i.e. marginalisation, power and empowerment, can shift for an individual or a social group depending upon the social sphere.

“Shopping with Allah” will primarily be of interest to readers within the anthropology of gender, the anthropology of Islam and the anthropology of religion more broadly.

**Stier, Nokchachom Cheskhun:** *Merit and a Sense of Home. Emerging Thai Buddhist Communities in Germany*. Glienicke: Galda Verlag, 2023. 307 pp. ISBN 978-3-96203-306-4. (pbk)

This book provides an insight on the Buddhist way of Thai temple life in German diasporic context. It is based on input from several Thai Buddhist communities in Germany where the first-generation Thai transmigrants construct and form a sense of belonging by actively participating in temple life. It also explores the

multifaceted role that Thai temples play in the lives of Thai transmigrants. Moreover, this book combines the anthropology of diasporas with Buddhism and identity.

**Ruegg, François:** *Retour dans les Carpates – Un ethnologue au pays de Ceașescu*. Wien, Berlin: Kment Verlag, 2023. 250 pp. ISBN 978-3-903511-00-2. (pbk)

La Roumanie, un pays suscitant des sentiments les plus ambigus. Si la presse en parle, c'est pour dévoiler un scandale. Aux touristes, à qui on vantait jadis les plages bon marché de la Mer Noire, on vante encore les monastères peints de Moldavie. Le Delta du Danube attire maintenant aussi les écologistes. C'est grâce aux nombreux intellectuels de réputation internationale que la carte de visite roumaine a meilleure presse : Istrati, Tzara, Ionesco, Gheorghiu, Eliade, Cioran, Brâncuși pour les plus fameux.

Le présent ouvrage donne une autre vision de ce pays, à travers les yeux d'un apprenti ethnologue dans les années 1970, puis d'un professeur invité dès les années 2000, fasciné avant tout par les habitants des campagnes, leur habitat et leur mode de vie. S'il a été parfois choqué par les interrogatoires que leur font subir les ethnographes officiels, l'auteur demeure toujours curieux d'observer la société roumaine sous ses multiples facettes.

François Ruegg est ethnologue, professeur émérite de l'Université de Fribourg (Suisse). Il a mené de nombreuses recherches en Europe du sud-est, particulièrement en Roumanie, ex-Yougoslavie et Bulgarie, portant principalement sur l'environnement construit et son histoire.

**Weig, Tobias:** *Silk Road Priests and Prisoners. Bishop Yang Libo (1919–1998) and the Catholic Church in Gansu*. Siegburg: Franz Schmitt Verlag, 2023. 284 pp. ISBN 978-3-87710-561-0. Studia Instituti Missiologici SVD 122. (pbk)

Chinese Catholic priests, sisters, and lay persons imprisoned after 1949 have produced a number of memoirs and autobiographical ac-

counts in which they reflected on their experiences in prisons and labor camps. Some of them have been published in English in recent years, many other materials have been divulged in an unofficial way in China or abroad.

Among these documents the memoirs written by Yang Libo (1919–1998), bishop of the archdiocese of Lanzhou, occupy a special position, since they refer to the developments of the local church of Gansu (China) from the 1940s to the 1980s. Bishop Yang's memoirs are written from the perspective of a priest, and he paid special attention to the matters concerning the diocese and the fate of the other priests and religious brothers.

In a special way, Bishop Yang's memoirs also show his own spiritual journey from the years at the minor seminary in dire poverty through his uplift by the solemn priestly ordination in Lanzhou in 1949, his pastoral work and his long years of lonely confinement and suffering in different labor camps. Like many other Catholics and priests from Gansu he loyally kept the faith and was ready to suffer for it, and after his release his only concern was not personal well-being but the needs of the Catholics in his diocese.

This book contextualizes the life story of Bishop Yang by looking back at the beginnings of Catholicism in Gansu, starting with the Jesuit missionaries in the seventeenth century. It contains short biographical notes on missionaries of different congregations who worked in Gansu.

**Ohnuki, Toshio, et al.** (eds): *Pastoral Care and Monasticism in Latin Christianity and Japanese Buddhism (ca.800–1650)*. Münster: LIT Verlag, 2024. 262 pp. ISBN 978-3-643-15497-2. (pbk)

Monasticism has a special position in the history of pastoral care. It produced innovations in various aspects of pastoral care despite, or more precisely, because of its isolation in legal or social terms from the secular world. The thirteen papers contained in this volume will reveal that there was a great variety in the ways pastoral care continued to be practised by monasticism, depending on time, space,

and the nature of each religious order. Adopting a comparative approach, their historical and geographical range of investigation is not limited to medieval Europe but expands to the Americas and even to Japan in the early Modern Age.

This volume bases on a conference held on 1 and 2 March 2019 at Okayama University, Japan, as part of the close collaboration between a Japanese research group on Christian/Buddhist religious movements and the Research Project “Monasteries in the High Middle Ages: Innovation Laboratories for European Life Designs and Regulatory Models” of the Saxon and the Heidelberg Academies of Sciences and Humanities, as well as the Research Center for Comparative History of Religious Orders (FOVOG, Dresden).

**Mitchell, William E.:** *A Witch’s Hand. Curing, Killing, Kinship, and Colonialism among the Lujere of New Guinea.* Chicago: Hau Books, 2024. 534 pp. ISBN 978-1-912808-45-8. (pbk)

From 1971 to 1972, William E. Mitchell undertook fieldwork on suffering and healing among the Lujere of Papua New Guinea’s Upper Sepik River Basin. At a time when it was not yet common to make colonial agencies a subject of anthropological study, Mitchell carefully located his research on Lujere practices in the framework of a history of colonization that surrounded the Lujere with a shifting array of Western institutions, dramatically changing their society forever. Mitchell’s work has been well known among anthropologists of Oceania, but the material in this book has remained unpublished until now.

In this major new work, Mitchell revisits his early fieldwork with a three-part study of the history of colonial rule in the region, the social organization of Lujere life at the time, and the forms of affliction, witchcraft, and curing that preoccupied them. Furthermore, Mitchell offers the first sweeping cross-cultural survey of *sanguma* (magical murder) in Oceania. The book presents a vivid portrait of a society that has since changed dramatically as well as an approach to anthropology that was typical of the era. This is a significant contribution to the

ethnography of Papua New Guinea and is sure to be an invaluable source for researchers of Melanesia, medical anthropologists, and scholars of kinship, myth, and ritual.

*Pierre Lemonnier:* Blending history and ethnography, this book offers a long-term monographic vision of one of Papua New Guinea’s last communities to enter modernity.

**Brokaw, Galen, and Pablo García Loaeza** (eds.): *The Nahua. Language and Culture from the Sixteenth Century to the Present.* Denver: University Press of Colorado, 2024. 297 pp. ISBN 978-1-64642-578-6. (pbk)

Revealing the resiliency of Nahua culture and language while highlighting the adaptations and changes they have undergone over the centuries, “The Nahua” demonstrates that Nahuatl remained a vibrant and central language well after European contact and into the twenty-first century, and its characteristic features can provide insight into nuanced aspects of Nahua culture and history.

During the colonial period, Nahuatl became a means of empowerment, oppression, and indoctrination. In modern times, Nahuatl continues to serve as an ideological lightning rod for both the Mexican government and Indigenous communities. Contributors to this volume focus on Nahua intellectual production from the sixteenth century to the present; contact and the negotiation of meaning; adaptations of Christian lore that show how representations of creation, hell, and the Passion of Christ reflected Nahua perceptions and understandings; Nahua cultural expressions, including poetry, healing rituals, and even running; language and geography; Nahuatl place-names; and the transformation of Nahuatl speakers from antiquity to the present.

Showcasing how Nahuatl’s cultural resilience permanently shaped the region’s social geography, “The Nahua” engages the field’s interest in the nonhomogenous character of the language, with regional and subregional dialects and pronunciations that reflect the history of pre-Columbian migrations and modern-era influences. Bridging the study of Nahuatl as a “historical” Indigenous language tradition with the study of modern-day speakers and their experiences, this

work is of significance to students, scholars, and speakers of the languages as well as those studying colonial New Spain, Indigenous resilience, or Indigenous linguistics.

**Butter, Inge:** *Nomadic Connectivity. An Ethnography of Walad Djifir Navigating Insecurities in Central Africa.* Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter/Oldenbourg, 2023. 253 pp. ISBN 978-3-11-071460-9. (hbk)

A focus on the everyday has produced this ethnography, which hopes to give a nuanced voice to an extended family of semi-sedentary nomads, living at the centre of a country and region known for its political turmoil, ecological insecurities, and socio-economic hardship. The everyday of the Chadian Walad Djifir is one in which sedentarity and mobility are approached as two entwined parts of a whole, and where economic and geographical boundaries do not necessarily form constrictions. The ferikh (nomadic camp) is where all of the Walad Djifir's networks meet, and often also begin- a physical place embodying various networks and connections, which span time and geographical space. This analytical and methodological approach gives insight in how regional trends can be understood in light of the Walad Djifir's daily lives. Over time, the Walad Djifir have developed ways of coping and dealing with insecurities, interacting with infrastructural, technological, and socio-political developments in specific ways. In exploring how such insecurities and crises become anchored into the everyday, the ferikh provides answers. It is precisely the mundane elements of daily life which anchor disruption.

**Wessling, Yamara-Monika:** *Frauen des Wandels. Zur Bedeutung von Geschlecht und Sexualität in der aufstrebenden Mittelklasse Ruandas.* Frankfurt am Main: kula Verlag 2023. 358 pp. ISBN 978-3-945340-03-5. (pbk)

Ruanda erlebt seit dem Genozid 1994 eine tiefgreifende Transformation. Dazu gehören die Entstehung einer gebildeten Mittelklasse ebenso wie die internationale aufsehenerregende Geschlechterpolitik. Im Mittelpunkt dieser Arbeit stehen die Biografien von sieben hochgebildeten, beruflich erfolgreichen Frauen

in Ruanda. Die Autorin vollzieht deren Kindheit nach, die Schul- und Berufslaufbahn, beschäftigt sich mit dem Erwachsenwerden, der Hochzeit und dem Familienleben sowie der Übernahme von Verantwortung in der Gesellschaft. Dabei fragt sie, wie die Frauen im Laufe ihres Lebens die Zugehörigkeit zur Mittelklasse herstellen, und zeigt, dass sie Vorstellungen und Praktiken von Geschlecht und Sexualität relevant machen, um sich von anderen Teilen der Gesellschaft abzugrenzen. Denn die Zugehörigkeit zur Mittelklasse und die Anerkennung als moderne, jedoch respektable Frau bedingen sich in Ruanda gegenseitig.

**Niehuus, Rachel Marie:** *An Archive of Possibilities. Healing and Repair in Democratic Republic of Congo.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2024. 216 pp. ISBN 978-1-4780-2575-7. (pbk)

In “An Archive of Possibilities”, anthropologist and surgeon Rachel Marie Niehuus explores possibilities of healing and repair in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo against a backdrop of 250 years of Black displacement, enslavement, death, and chronic war. Niehuus argues that in a context in which violence characterizes everyday life, Congolese have developed innovative and imaginative ways to live amid and mend from repetitive harm. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and the Black critical theory of Achille Mbembe, Christina Sharpe, Alexis Pauline Gumbs and others, Niehuus explores the renegotiation of relationships with land as a form of public healing, the affective experience of living in insecurity, the hospital as a site for the socialization of pain, the possibility of necropolitical healing, and the uses of prophesy to create collective futures. By considering the radical nature of cohabitating with violence, Niehuus demonstrates that Congolese practices of healing imagine and articulate alternative ways of living in a global regime of antiblackness.

*Laurence Ralph:* (...) Vivid and eye-opening, “An Archive of Possibilities” is a poignant exploration of a people’s unwavering determination to create a future beyond the scars of their past. An immensely thought-provoking and illuminating book.

**Haberland, Eike, Elisabeth Pauli, Wolfgang Kuls:** *The Wolaita*. Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2023. 400 pp. ISBN 978-3-643-91314-2. (pbk)

The ethnography of the Wolayta people of southern Ethiopia by Eike Haberland goes back to his research in Wolayta in the years 1954/55, 1967, and 1970/71. Following his research, Haberland wrote the present work, which he did not publish. It is a classic ethnography divided into the following chapters: Sacred kingship, myths of state, court culture and administration, law and justice, the meritorious complex, feasts and rituals, crops, economy and folkloric material. The ethnography is illustrated by historical photographs from the archives of the Frobenius Institute.

**Woldekiros, Helina Salomon:** *The Boundaries of Ancient Trade. Kings, Commoners, and the Aksumite Salt Trade of Ethiopia*. Denver: University Press of Colorado, 2023. 224 pp. ISBN 978-1-64642-472-6. (hbk)

Drawing on rich ethnographic data as well as archaeological evidence, “The Boundaries of Ancient Trade” challenges long-standing conceptions of highly centralized sociopolitical and economic organization and trade along the Afar salt trail—one of the last economically significant caravan-based trade routes in the world.

For thousands of years, farmers in the Tigray, Amhara, and Afar regions of Ethiopia and Eritrea have run caravans of nearly 250,000 people and pack animals annually along an eighty-mile route through both cold, high-altitude farmlands and some of the hottest volcanic desert terrain on earth. In her fieldwork, archaeologist Helina Solomon Woldekiros followed the route with her own donkey and camel caravan, observing and interviewing over 150 Arho (caravaners), salt miners, salt cutters, warehouse owners, brokers, shop owners, and salt village residents to model the political economy of the ancient Aksumite state. The first integrated ethnoarchaeological and archaeological research on this legendary route, this volume provides evidence that informal economies and local participation have

played a critical role in regional trade and, ultimately, in maintaining the considerable power of the Aksumite state. Woldekiros also contributes new insights into the logistics of pack animal-based trade and variability in the central and regional organization of global ancient trade.

Using a culturally informed framework for understanding the organization of the ancient salt route and its role in linking the Aksumite state to rural highland agricultural and lowland mobile pastoralist populations, this book makes a key contribution to theoretical discussions of hierarchy and more diffuse power structures in ancient states. This work generates new interest in the region as an area of global relevance in archaeological and anthropological debates on landscape, social interaction, and practice theories.

**Hahn, Hans Peter, et al. (eds.):** *L’avenir des ONG en Afrique de l’ouest*. Paris: L’Harmattan, 2023. 308 pp. ISBN 978-2-14-030822-2. (pbk)

Comment bailleurs, communauté scientifique et acteurs du développement déterminent-ils la bonne approche pour un avenir meilleur des populations en Afrique de l’Ouest, où travaillent un grand nombre d’organisations non gouvernementales (ONG) ? Cette étude rassemble des approches aussi bien théoriques qu’issues de la pratique du terrain et analyse la genèse des ONG, leurs expériences et leurs terrains. L’ouvrage examine d’abord la société civile, partenariats et ONG des droits de l’homme ; puis le renforcement des capacités des ONG, des politiques publiques, les stratégies d’adaptation et l’histoire des ONG ; enfin, plusieurs contributions se penchent sur les ONG religieuses et les politiques publiques. Une ultime section discute les acteurs alternatifs, les ressources et les faiblesses des ONG. À la fin de l’ouvrage, le projet d’un observatoire des ONG au Burkina Faso est présenté.

**Luis, Diego Xavier:** *The First Asians in the Americas. A Transpacific History*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2024. 368 pp. ISBN 978-0-674-27178-4. (hbk)

Between 1565 and 1815, the so-called Manila galleons enjoyed a near-complete monopoly on transpacific trade between Spain's Asian and American colonies. Sailing from the Philippines to Mexico and back, these Spanish trading ships also facilitated the earliest migrations and displacements of Asian peoples to the Americas. Hailing from Gujarat, Nagasaki, and many places in between, both free and enslaved Asians boarded the galleons and made the treacherous transpacific journey each year. Once in Mexico, they became "chinos" within the New Spanish caste system.

Diego Javier Luis chronicles this first sustained wave of Asian mobility to the early Americas. Uncovering how and why Asian peoples crossed the Pacific, he sheds new light on the daily lives of those who disembarked at Acapulco. There, the term "chino" officially racialized diverse ethnolinguistic populations into a single caste, vulnerable to New Spanish policies of colonial control. Yet Asians resisted these strictures, often by forging new connections across ethnic groups. Social adaptation and cultural convergence, Luis argues, defined Asian experiences in the Spanish Americas from the colonial invasions of the sixteenth century to the first cries for Mexican independence in the nineteenth.

"The First Asians in the Americas" speaks to an important era in the construction of race, vividly unfolding what it meant to be "chino" in the early modern Spanish empire. In so doing, it demonstrates the significance of colonial Latin America to Asian diasporic history and reveals the fundamental role of transpacific connections to the development of colonial societies in the Americas.

*Christina H. Lee:* Diego Javier Luis has given us the first of its kind: a study of the transpacific Asian migration to the Americas under Spanish imperial rule. This book radically revolutionizes our understanding of race-making and mestizaje in the Spanish Americas and the Spanish transpacific.

**Paustian, Megan Cole:** *Humanitarian Fictions. Africa, Altruism, and the Narrative Imagination.* New York: Fordham University Press, 2024. 276 pp. ISBN 978-1-5315-0548-6. (pbk)

Humanitarianism has a narrative problem. Far too often, aid to Africa is envisioned through a tale of Western heroes saving African sufferers. While labeling white savior narratives has become a familiar gesture, it doesn't tell us much about the story as story. This book aims to understand the workings of humanitarian literature, as they engage with and critique narratives of Africa.

Overlapping with but distinct from human rights, humanitarianism centers on a relationship of assistance, focusing less on rights than on needs, less on legal frameworks than moral ones, less on the problem than on the nonstate solution. Tracing the white savior narrative back to religious missionaries of the nineteenth century, *Humanitarian Fiction* reveals the influence of religious thought on seemingly secular institutions and uncovers a spiritual, collectivist streak in the discourse of humanity.

Because the humanitarian model of care transcends the boundaries of the state, and its networks touch much of the globe, *Humanitarian Fictions* redraws the boundaries of literary classification based on a shared problem space rather than a shared national space. The book maps a transnational vein of Anglophone literature about Africa that features missionaries, humanitarians, and their so-called beneficiaries. Putting humanitarian thought in conversation with postcolonial critique, this book brings together African, British, and U.S. writers typically read within separate traditions. Paustian shows how the novel—with its profound sensitivity to narrative—can enrich the critique of white saviorism while also imagining alternatives that give African agency its due.

*Jeanne-Marie Jackson:* "Humanitarian Fictions" manages throughout to be critical without being dismissive and constructs a humanitarian vision that is acutely sensitive to its own predicament.

**Falola, Toyin, and Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso:** *African Refugees.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2023. 688 pp. ISBN 978-0-253-06441-7. (hbk)



“African Refugees” is a comprehensive overview of the context, causes, and consequences of refugee lives, discussing issues, policies, and solutions for African refugees around the world. It covers overarching topics such as human rights, policy frameworks, refugee protection, and durable solutions, as well as less-studied topics such as refugee youths, refugee camps, LGBTQ refugees, urban refugees, and refugee women. It also takes on rare but emergent topics such as citizenship and the creativity of African refugees.

The authors showcase the voices and experiences of individual refugees through the sweep of history to tell the African refugee story from the historical past through current developments, covering the full range of experience from the causes of flight to living in exile, all while maintaining a persistent focus on the complicated search for solutions.

This book recognizes African agency and contributions in pursuit of solutions for African refugees over time but avoids the pitfalls of the colonial gaze—where refugees are perpetually pathologized and Africa is always the sole cause of its own problems—seeking to complicate these narratives by recognizing African refugee issues within exploitative global, colonial, and neo-colonial systems of power.

*Ogenga Otunnu*: This voluminous work takes an all-inclusive decolonial approach to the study of forced migration, causes and consequences, refugees in Africa and the diaspora, humanitarian studies, and rethinking futuristic approaches to solving the crises.

**Fiske, Amelia M.:** *Reckoning with Harm. The Toxic Relation of Oil in Amazonia.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 2023. 272 pp. ISBN 978-1-4773-2778-4. (pbk)

“Reckoning with Harm” is a striking ethnographic analysis of the harm resulting from oil extraction. Covering fifty years of settler colonization and industrial transformation of the Ecuadorian Amazon, Amelia Fiske interrogates the relations of harm. She moves between forest-courtrooms and oily waste pits, farms and toxic tours, to explore both the ways

in which harm from oil is entangled with daily life and the tensions surrounding efforts to verify and redress it in practice. Attempts to address harm from the oil industry in Ecuador have been consistently confounded by narrow, technocratic understandings of evidence, toxicity, and responsibility. Building on collaborators’ work to contest state and oil company insistence that harm is controlled and principally chemical in nature, Fiske shows that it is necessary to refigure harm as relational in order to reckon with unremediated contamination of the past while pushing for broad forms of accountability in the present. She theorizes that harm is both a relationship and an animating feature of relationships in this place, a contingent understanding that is needed to contemplate what comes next when living in a toxic world.

*Gabriela Valdivia*: An empathetic and reflexive ethnography of the expansiveness of the socioenvironmental burdens borne by peoples in the Ecuadorian Amazon because of the oil industry’s presence in the region. Fiske traces the myriad relations through which harm is constituted and evaluated, moving toward a theory of relational accountability—a reckoning—that calls for collective acts of reparation, remediation, and justice.

**Toelle, Jutta:** *Mission durch Musik. Stimmen zu Musik und Klängen in der europäischen Missionierung Hispanoamerikas.* Münster–New York: Waxmann, 2024. 172 pp. ISBN 978-3-8309-4728-8. (pbk)

Spektakuläre Nachrichten drangen im Laufe des 17. Jahrhunderts aus den Missionsstationen der Jesuiten, vor allem aus der Provinz Paraguay, nach Europa: Unter Anleitung der Missionare spielten indigene Menschen dort in Orchestern europäische Musik, sie stellten Instrumente, sogar Orgeln, selbst her und sangen, angeblich besser als in der Alten Welt. Dies ist das Narrativ von Mission durch Musik: Missionare wandten ihre europäischen Denkmuster – Musikpraxis als Hinführung zu einer vermeintlich höheren zivilisatorischen Stufe – im kolonialen Kontext Hispanoamerikas an, ohne indigene Traditionen, Sitten oder

Musiken zu beachten. Sie etablierten die Musikpraxis vor Ort, mit allen Folgen, und berichteten diese „Erfolgsgeschichte“ zurück nach Europa, um die Wirkung ihrer Arbeit zu beweisen: Denn je mehr und je bessere europäische Musik gespielt wurde, desto christlicher mussten die Menschen vor Ort wohl sein. Die in den Berichten der Missionare völlig ungebrochene Erzählung von Mission durch Musik wird hier erstmals durch bisher unbekanntes Quellenmaterial kontextualisiert und bis ins Heute nachgezeichnet.

**Meadows, Ruthie:** *Efficacy of Sound. Power, Potency, and Promise in the Translocal Ritual Music of Cuban Ifá-Òrìṣà.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2023. 254 pp. ISBN 978-0-226-82895-4. (pbk)

Hailing from Cuba, Nigeria, and various sites across Latin America and the Caribbean, Ifá missionary-practitioners are transforming the landscape of Ifá divination and deity (òrìṣà/oricha) worship through transatlantic travel and reconnection. In Cuba, where Ifá and Santería emerged as an interrelated, Yorùbá-inspired ritual complex, worshippers are driven to “African traditionalism” by its promise of efficacy: they find Yorùbá approaches more powerful, potent, and efficacious.

In the first book-length study on music and Ifá, Ruthie Meadows draws on extensive, multisited fieldwork in Cuba and Yorùbáland, Nigeria, to examine the controversial “Nigerian-style” ritual movement in Cuban Ifá divination. Meadows uses feminist and queer of color theory along with critical studies of Africanity to excavate the relation between utility and affect within translocal ritual music circulations. Meadows traces how translocal Ifá priestesses (ìyánífá), female batá drummers (bataleras), and priests (babaláwo) harness Yorùbá-centric approaches to ritual music and sound to heighten efficacy, achieve desired ritual outcomes, and reshape the conditions of their lives. Within a contentious religious landscape marked by the idiosyncrasies of revolutionary state policy, Nigerian-style Ifá-Òrìṣà is leveraged to transform femininity and masculinity, state religious policy, and transatlantic ritual authority on the island.

*Robin Moore:* With this innovative book, Meadows significantly expands our understanding of Afro-Cuban religious music and its ever-changing manifestations. Her exploration of ritual music associated with divination across the island, her focus on transatlantic religious dialogues between Nigeria and Cuba, her emphasis on the contested nature of religious orthodoxy, and her close attention to the struggles of women all represent major contributions to existing scholarship.

**Messeri, Lisa:** *In the Land of the Unreal. Virtual and Other Realities in Los Angeles.* Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2024. 312 pp. ISBN 978-1-4780-3023-2. (pbk)

In the mid-2010s, a passionate community of Los Angeles-based storytellers, media artists, and tech innovators formed around virtual reality (VR), believing that it could remedy society’s ills. Lisa Messeri offers an ethnographic exploration of this community, which conceptualized VR as an “empathy machine” that could provide glimpses into diverse social realities. She outlines how, in the aftermath of #MeToo, the backlash against Silicon Valley, and the turmoil of the Trump administration, it was imagined that VR – if led by women and other marginalized voices – could bring about a better world. Messeri delves into the fantasies that allowed this vision to flourish, exposing the paradox of attempting to use a singular VR experience to mend a fractured reality full of multiple, conflicting social truths. She theorizes this dynamic as unreal, noting how dreams of empathy collide with reality’s irreducibility to a “common” good. With “In the Land of the Unreal”, Messeri navigates the intersection of place, technology, and social change to show that technology alone cannot upend systemic forces attached to gender and race.

*Alexandra Juhasz:* With careful, easy, and fun-to-read prose, Lisa Messeri examines the efforts to build and promote a new technology and related industry, thereby introducing readers to current hot-button concerns in our culture: about the role and power of technology, the changing nature of the real and fantasy, and the assaults on truth and humanity. A compelling ethnography.

**Lamadrid, Enrique R., and Jose A. Riviera** (eds.): *Water for the People. The Acequia Heritage of New Mexico in a Global Context.* New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 2023. 272 pp. ISBN 978-0-8263-6463-0. (pbk)

“Water for the People” features twenty-five essays by world-renowned acequia scholars and community members that highlight acequia culture, use, and history in New Mexico, northern Mexico, Chile, Peru, Argentina, Spain, the Middle East, Nepal, and the Philippines, situating New Mexico's acequia heritage and its inherent sustainable design within a global framework. The lush landscapes of the upper Río Grande watershed created by acequias dating from as far back as the late sixteenth century continue to irrigate their communities today despite threats of prolonged drought, urbanization, private water markets, extreme water scarcity, and climate change. This book celebrates acequia practices and traditions worldwide and shows how these ancient irrigation systems continue to provide arid regions with a model for water governance, sustainable food systems, and community traditions that reaffirm a deep cultural and spiritual relationship with the land year after year.

*Carlos G. Ochoa:* “Water for the People” shows how acequia community organization and activism paired with traditions and culture are a powerful framework to adapt to worldwide climatic and social changes.

**Joseph, Simon J.:** *My Grandfather’s Altar. Five Generations of Lakota Holy Men.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2024. 209 pp. ISBN 978-1-4962-3691-3. (pbk)

This book is an oral-literary narrative account of five generations of Lakota religious tradition. Moves Camp is the great-great-grandson of Wóptu?’a (“Chips”), the holy man remembered for providing Crazy Horse with war medicines of power and protection. The Lakota remember the descendants of Wóptu?’a for their roles in preserving Lakota ceremonial traditions during the official prohibition period (1883–1934), when the U.S. Indian Religious Crimes Code outlawed Indian religious ceremonies with the threat of imprisonment.

Wóptu?’a, his two sons, James Moves Camp and Charles Horn Chips, his grandson Sam Moves Camp, and his great-great-grandson Richard Moves Camp all became well-respected Lakota spiritual leaders. “My Grandfather’s Altar” offers the rare opportunity to learn firsthand how one family’s descendants played a pivotal role in revitalizing Lakota religion in the twentieth century.

*Rani-Henrik Andersson:* Richard Moves Camp provides a rich, powerful narrative based on his family's experiences. This book gives us an intimate window into Lakhóta spirituality and way of life. This is a Lakhóta story told in a uniquely Lakhóta way by those who experienced it firsthand. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in Lakhóta past and present.

**Noack, Karoline, Ana Maria Presta** (eds.): *Repensando la sociedad colonial. Perspectivas, abordajes y desafíos de los enfoques multidisciplinares – Perú y Nueva España, siglos XVI–XVIII.* Bonn: V&R unipress, Bonn University Press, 2023. 201 pp. ISBN 978-3-8471-1576-2. (hbk)

El libro analiza la época colonial en su diversidad social, contextualize el momento histórico en el que surgió y la conceptualiza en términos de sus variables epistemológicas. La diferencia colonial que aparece entre ellos creó sujetos racializados. Figuras como la del buen salvaje son extraordinariamente duraderas y, a pesar de que los contextos temporales y espaciales cambian constantemente, pueden ser activadas hasta la actualidad. Las preguntas que las autoridades coloniales exploraron como parte de la imaginación de la sociedad comienzan por indagar quiénes eran los “indios” y cómo, finalmente, podían ser integrados. Desde perspectivas multidisciplinares, las contribuciones presentan estudios de caso para una nueva comprensión de la época colonial, también con vistas al presente.

**Siddiqi, Anooradha Iyer:** *Architecture of Migration. The Dadaab Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Settlement.* Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2023. 432 pp. ISBN 978-1-4780-2524-5. (pbk)

Environments associated with migration are often seen as provisional, lacking both history and architecture. As Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi

demonstrates in this book, a refugee camp's aesthetic and material landscapes—even if born out of emergency—reveal histories, futures, politics, and rhetorics. She identifies forces of colonial and humanitarian settlement, tracing spatial and racial politics in the Dadaab refugee camps established in 1991 on the Kenya-Somalia border—at once a dense setting that manifests decades of architectural, planning, and design initiatives and a much older constructed environment that reflects its own ways of knowing. She moves beyond ahistorical representations of camps and their inhabitants by constructing a material and visual archive of Dadaab, finding long migratory traditions in the architecture, spatial practices, landscapes, and iconography of refugees and humanitarians. Countering conceptualizations of refugee camps as sites of border transgression, criminality, and placelessness, Siddiqi instead theorizes them as complex settlements, ecologies, and material archives created through histories of partition, sedentarization, domesticity, and migration.

*Miriam Ticktin*: This beautifully written and brilliantly original work elucidates a seemingly irresolvable tension, central to the condition of migrants, between the transience of the refugee category and how refugees' lives are anchored in hard infrastructures and histories. By tracing the entanglement of aesthetics and politics in the Dadaab refugee camp, the author ties migration to encampment in a visceral and material way.

**Watson, Janet C.E., Jon C. Lovett and Roberta Morano** (eds.): *Language and Ecology in Southern and Eastern Arabia*. Bloomsbury: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. 296 pp. ISBN 978-1-3501-8447-3. (pbk)

Regions of the world with greatest biodiversity are shown to exhibit greatest linguistic diversity, strongly suggesting that the relationship between language and ecology is both symbiotic and spatially and temporally determined. This volume examines the expressions of, and threats and challenges to, this relationship in southern and eastern Arabia.

Exploring the ways in which indigenous languages reflect the close relationship between people and their natural environment, this book presents an overview of the key threats and challenges, and introduces the methodologies used to investigate them. Across the chapters, case studies are presented dealing with language, gesture and ecology, the significance of naming, the role of narratives in the language–ecology relationship, and conservation and revitalisation of bio-cultural diversity in Arabia. Taking a multidisciplinary view, this book argues for the central role that language plays in facing the challenges and threats to bio-cultural diversity, and presents methods for the study of the language–nature relationship that can be applied globally.

**Bobbette, Adam**: *The Pulse of the Earth. Political Geology in Java*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2023. 248 pp. ISBN 978-1-4780-2505-4. (pbk)

In “The Pulse of the Earth” Adam Bobbette tells the story of how modern theories of the earth emerged from the slopes of Indonesia's volcanoes. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, scientists became concerned with protecting the colonial plantation economy from the unpredictable bursts and shudders of volcanoes. Bobbette follows Javanese knowledge traditions, colonial geologists, volcanologists, mystics, Theosophists, orientalist, and revolutionaries to show how the earth sciences originate from a fusion of Western and non-Western cosmology, theology, anthropology, and geology. Drawing on archival research, interviews, and fieldwork at Javanese volcanoes and in scientific observatories, he explores how Indonesian Islam shaped the theory of plate tectonics, how Dutch colonial volcanologists learned to see the earth in new ways from Javanese spiritual traditions, and how new scientific technologies radically recast notions of the human body, distance, and the earth. In this way, Bobbette decenters the significance of Western scientists to expand our understanding of the evolution of planetary thought and rethinks the politics of geological knowledge.

## Review of Articles

(by Darius Piwowarczyk and Stanisław Grodź)

**Michaud, Jean:** Priest, Rebel and Scholar. François-Marie Savina in Tonkin (Vietnam), 1901–1941. *Anthropos* 119/1.2024. 1–17.

With this case study of a French Catholic missionary in Tonkin, as north Vietnam was called during colonial times, Michaud illustrates how individuals might find ways of expression in spite of severe hierarchical clashes. Put differently, he critically reflects on a case where the scientific inclination of a given missionary, in this case François-Marie Savina, working on the missionary frontier became his calling. The surprising result being that instead of meeting the expectations of conformity or “toeing the line” of Catholic conversion duties, he intentionally took a significant step outside dogmatic morality.

François-Marie Savina (1876–1941) was at odds with his bishop, Paul Marie Ramond (1855–1944). For nearly 40 years, Bishop Ramond resented Savina and what he represented, and tried to discipline him in a variety of imaginative ways. Stemming from a rural Breton background that had embedded in him a habitus of defiance towards authority – especially centralised French state authority – Savina responded by standing his ground and dodging blows. He did so while reinventing himself as a self-taught scholar, linguist, historian, and a distinctly skilled ethnographer. Thus, he made very few converts; instead, he published thousands of pages of grammars, lexicons, and dictionaries on obscure Asian languages he came to grasp, as well as historical studies and ethnographies. He studied one minority culture in particular, the Hmong (Miao), and is widely acknowledged as the author of the pioneering work on this group, his “Histoire des Miao” (1924).

In September 1897, aged twenty-one, Savina entered the Séminaire des Missions étrangères de Paris, where he studied for an additional four years towards priesthood and missionary life. At that time, missionary societies such as

MEP were recruiting vigorously for the booming colonies, and youth with rural background were highly prized for their hardiness and pliability. Ordained in June 1901 at age 25, Savina pronounced his perpetual vows of poverty and chastity – but not obedience as the MEP did not require that. Within a few days, he learned that he was assigned to the new Upper-Tonkin Vicariate founded in 1895 in the distant colony of French Indochina, and boarded a ship for Hanoi the following month. Thirty years would pass before he saw France again.

Unlike the vast majority of MEP field priests committed to reaping souls for the glory of God and Church, Savina did not make it his calling to convert nor civilize. He was more akin to his junior MEP colleague Jacques Dournes (1923–1993), whom we met briefly in the Introduction, posted in the Central Highlands of Vietnam from 1946 onwards, who also encountered institutional difficulties in squaring his apostolic life with his passion for ethnology. Over a lifetime in Indochina but also past his death it seems, François Savina has been seen in certain circles as somewhat toxic. Historian Charles Keith, in his book “Catholic Vietnam. A Church from Empire to Nation” (2012) wrote that Savina was one of the most notable missionary ethnographers colonial Vietnam had known.

**Pandya, Vishvajit:** Talking Trees, Silent Forests. Notions of Relationality in the Forest Cosmologies of the Andaman Islands. *Anthropos* 119/1.2024: 29–42.

Basing on several years of his ethnographic fieldwork among the Ongee and Jarawa tribal groups of the Andaman Islands, Pandya seeks to understand the responses of both communities to state-imposed regimes of horticultural and plantation work in their forest reserves. The article brings together a series of conversations with Ongee and Jarawa elders whose purpose was to understand why any work in the forest that demands either felling of trees or the introduction of new species or planting

techniques in the existing forest ecosystem is deemed by both communities to be a disruptive intervention that threatens their lives and wellbeing. As such, the article is structured around a series of key ideas elicited from conversations with the elders that point to the complex ties of kinship, mutuality, and reciprocity that sustain human and plant lives in the forest. These include: the notion of a human/non-human collective in the forest, the notion of a plant ancestry for both communities, the identification of a “guardian tree” and the practice of “talking” to trees, the significance of endemicity in the forest, and finally the fears of outside intervention and disruption. All these ideas cohere around a relational cosmology that continues to invest order and meaning to Ongee and Jarawa lives in their natural environment. The article also draws on relevant anthropological literature that has deepened our understanding of relational cosmologies that animate indigenous lives in various regions of the world. It ends with a critique of state projects of tribal welfare that refuse to engage in a productive dialogue with communities whose lives, paradoxically, it seeks to protect and improve.

In terms of a larger Andamanese cosmology, all that is living, is animated by an internal heat or light, *boney*. It is a light that is also conceptualized as a soul that is subjective, intentional, and internalized in a body. This is very much like an inner vitality of all things in the forest that essentially forms the basis of an animistic ontology. Deaths are felt by a sense of a decrease in temperature in the forest, whereby the *boney* or light sluggishly moves out of the deceased body. Disembodied souls are potentially regenerated by their ability to enter another body in spiritual form. This transformed spirit residing in a new body ensures re-growth, regeneration of that specific living form. In the case of trees death marks the same departure of the spirit, but here the “tree spirit” can only enter the body of a tree of the same species. Unlike humans and animal spirits that can transform into any animals or plants the plant spirit can only reside in the same species of the plant in order to regenerate or perpetuate life. This unique position of plants in the Jarawa and Ongee construct of

world makes their cosmology an instance of a “scalar view of animacy.” So, with the loss of a tree its family becomes dependent on the availability of a similar tree for its spirits to reside in. With agriculture, horticulture, or plantation and the depletion of the forest that comes with these acts of intervention tree souls remain without a “container” and this leads to an inevitable decline of the forest.

Moreover, for both Ongee and Jarawa there is a homology between the forest world and the social world both of which sustain diverse forms of human and non-human lives. Forests are regarded as collectives of different trees and plants found in different places. So, there are kinds of trees that grow deep in the forest interiors, those that grow along the coast, and those in the mangrove forest; the difference between them resembles that between pig hunters and turtle hunters who make up the community of hunter-gatherers in the forest. The Jarawa and Ongee do not just live in the forest but form a total ecology within which the forest lives with humans. To grow as a human being in the forest and to be a plant growing in the forest are metaphorical signifiers of each other. In this worldview outsiders and a disruptive imposition on the very basis of community life Jarawas and Ongees have sustained for millennia, in fact any human intervention that undermines the collective human/non-human life or *eneykutata* of the forest are seen as an assault.

**Rapoppoort, Dana:** Time to Sing. Musical Practices and Perception of Time in Eastern Indonesia (Lamaholot, Flores Island). *Anthropos* 119/1.2024: 43–58.

If it goes without saying that music is an art of time, we rarely question the way in which music participates in the perception of time. In the Tanjung Bunga peninsula (island of Flores, Indonesia), populated by ten thousand farmers, agrarian work constitutes one of the privileged moments of vocal practices. Two types of music repertoires punctuate the rituals related to rice cultivation: narrative and non-narrative. These two types refer to various temporalities: the ancient time, the annual time, the diurnal time. This differentiated

marking of time by music produces a variety of affects and representations, awakening the memory of a past time, vague and distant, punctuating the seasons of the cyclical calendar, and finally, in periods of collective activity, “sounding” different moments of the daily routine, from dawn to dusk – the practice of singing thus building three types of temporality.

Thus, in Western Lamaholot, spoken in the west of Flores, two terms correspond to the general notion of time, *nuan* and *ekan*. Used alone, *nuan* designates a period of time in the past (“formerly, in my childhood”); coupled with a determiner, it designates periods of the year (*nuan warat*, “rainy season,” *nuan kolin*, “dry season,” *nuan nobo*, “time to sit,” referring to the free time after the harvest). The second term, *ékan*, is polysemous and encompasses both a place and a time: a place (*ékan amun*, “empty space,” *tana ékan*, “the earth” as space) but also a time, an atmosphere (*ékan kolin*, “palm season, dry season,” *ékan gulen*, “morning,” *ékan miten*, “darkness,” *ékan owa*, “the end of the day,” *ékan nokok*, “the night”). When the two terms (*nuan* and *ékan*) are affixed, they are synonymous (*nuan ékan kolin*, “the dry season,” *ékan nuan matung nalan*, “the season of weeding and transgression,” which would seem to indicate that time is conceived together with space. This association of space with time, as seen with the term *ekan*, is common. For example, “distant space” (*ékan doan*) can refer not only to a distant place but also to “ancient time,” and thus to temporal distance.

The study of vocal repertoires reveals a distinction between three types of temporality: that which links to the rhythm of rice cultivation, that which links to the rhythm of an agrarian workday, and that of the distant past of myth. In the first two cases, the song essentially acts as a clock sounding the collective’s movements during the different stages of rice cultivation. This time is punctuated by a succession of recurring musical repertoires which are inserted into a macro-period formed by the closing and opening of the territory (*puro-léa*). In these first two cases, the song also isolates and colors each of the agrarian sequences with a different emotional nuance, synchronizing the emotions of individuals and creating a community of emotions. Each rep-

ertoire produces a type of affect linked to collective representations of nature (sunshine) and agrarian culture (the maturation of rice). Finally, in the third case, the account of past migrations since the origins of man, the song marks out a territorial succession and no longer a chronological one.

Performed in the same social space, the various musical formations of time – the sounding of the present, the reminiscence of the past – play out across varied scales. In singing, humans are enmeshed in different temporalities. During the day, they convey their present emotions, which are turned towards the anticipation of the difficulties of the future (that of separation), whereas at night they connect with the past, rooting their present in a long-term history. This superimposition of temporalities through musical practice introduces a range of awareness, both of oneself and of the group. It acts by sharing visions and common emotions varying according to the seasons, thereby intensifying the consciousness of belonging to the group.

**Gariba, Joshua Awienagua:** Dealing with Death (and the Departed): The Changing Face of Funerary Rites among the Balsa of Northern Ghana. *Anthropos* 119/1.2024: 103–113.

How families and communities across different ethnic groups in Ghana deal with the dead and the departed has remained unchanged for the past three decades. Presently, however, changes are observable in the increased number of mortuaries, funeral homes, expensive funeral cloths, use of digital technology and big donations. Scholars have attributed these changes to factors such as religion, migration, money economy, mortuary technology, education, and urbanization. Drawing on ethnographic data in the Balsa area of northern Ghana, Gariba examines how a money economy, mortuary technology, and urbanization among other factors have changed the meaning and purpose of funerary rites in the area. Today, the Balsa in the two districts have a Catholic population of 29.1. The traditionalists are 92.4 with the Islam constituting 17.9 percent.

The article is divided into four parts. First, it offers a brief introduction of the *Bulsa*. Second, it presents the methodology used in gathering the data. Third, the article examines the funerary process, which is in two major parts, namely, the wet/fresh funeral and the dry/final funeral rites. The dry funeral is further divided into six phases in the following order: “wake keeping” – “the burning of the funeral” – “the resting day” – “the day of oils” – “the day of divination” and “the rite of ushering the soul of the deceased into the land of ancestors.” The fourth part of the article examines the changes in funerary rites and the cultural practices that ensure continuity.

Among the *Bulsa*, death is categorized into a “natural or unnatural” event depending on the circumstances such as accidents, murder, strange diseases, poison or punishment from the ancestors and godly spirits. When a person dies at the age of 70 or 80, his death is categorized as natural. And when a person dies, for example, at the age of 15 or 20, such a death is said to be unnatural. But death can also be visited upon a person who has caused the death of another person. This can be known through divination or by invoking the spirit of the dead during the concluding funeral rites. In the past, when the final rites of older members of the family, e.g. family heads, have not been performed, those of younger members cannot be performed. For example, a son cannot perform his father’s final rites, when his grandfather’s funeral has not yet been performed. The practice is also respected when it comes to women. Gender, seniority/age and social position are very important considerations in the hierarchy of power relations between older and younger folks, not only when they are alive, but also when they are dead.

The author concludes that funerary rites will only continue to be meaningful and memorable to the *Bulsa* when the changes taking place in this cultural practice are well integrated into the way that funerals are celebrated in the families and in the community.

**Lixinski, Lucas:** *The Legal Limits of Decolonizing Heritage. Emancipation, the Nation-State, and Racial Capitalism in Brazil. American Anthropologist* 126/2.2024: 333–336. DOI:10.1111/aman.13956. (OpenAccess)

Cultural heritage law and processes, the author states, authorize certain forms of identity that are more often than not aligned with a national project – that is, the one supported by nations states. What happens, however, when the national project turns away from being one of harmony and continuity with the “mythologized” past, and becomes about a break with – or at least renegotiation of – the past? (like, for example, in the communist countries). What happens when heritage becomes part of a project that is not just about recognition of the current, elite-supported social project (including stratification), but also contains within it at least some elements of redistribution? Can heritage be used as a register that can deliver on decolonial possibilities and promises? A recent example in Brazil, the author argues, speaks to these questions and suggests that there is potential, albeit limited, for decoloniality through heritage.

Thus, in 2018, the Brazilian Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of legislation that grants land rights to Afro-descendants in Brazil. These populations, known as *quilombolas* (who live in *quilombos* – originally, settlements of runaway slaves) are entitled to their lands partly as a measure of reparation against their oppression, rooted in slavery. The land rights are grounded in particular legal mechanisms that protect cultural heritage in the Brazilian Constitution. Using this example, Lixinski argues that the current legal discourse unable to live up to the aspirations of heritage as a decolonial tool, but it can still be, in some measure, promising strategically for historically oppressed groups, both Afro-Brazilians and Indigenous.

The 1988 Constitution is the first constitutional text in Brazil to openly discuss Blackness. Among the few provisions successfully added to the Constitution is one that recognizes *quilombolas*’ rights to the lands they occupy. Another article mentions *quilombos* as part of Brazil’s national heritage. These two provisions were at one point merged in the drafting but ended up separated through maneuvering that sought to eliminate land rights and merge *quilombola* identity into a (“racially harmonious”) national heritage.



Part of the challenge in the further legal struggle was whether the provision on land rights allowed for titles held by private parties (many of whom were descendants of slave owners, since *quilombolas* often established their *quilombos* within the boundaries of the massive properties on which they had lived) to be expropriated. The decree said so, but the constitutional basis for this authorization was not clear in the Constitution's Transitory Article 68. The court then looked elsewhere in the Constitution and relied on the designation of *quilombos* as heritage. Specifically, the court's majority said that, since land rights allow for the cultural survival of *quilombolas*, *quilombos* were heritage, and expropriation was allowed in the name of heritage safeguarding, then the titles of landowners could be expropriated (with compensation paid) in favor of *quilombos*.

**Melanie Martin, Alejandra Nuñez de la Mora, Claudia Valeggia, and Amanda Veile:** Can Women Hunt? Yes. Did Women Contribute Much to Human Evolution through Endurance Hunting? Probably Not. *American Anthropologist* 126/2.2024: 365–369. DOI: 10.1111/aman.13970. (OpenAccess)

In their recent article, Cara Ocobock and Sarah Lacy, titled “Woman the Hunter: The Physiological Evidence” (*American Anthropologist* 126/1: 2023) argue that human females are “just as, if not more, capable as males at performing arduous physical tasks” and therefore likely to have “meaningfully engaged in hunting during our evolutionary past.” This is a direct challenge to the (generally accepted) thinking that gendered subsistence activities are a key feature of the human ecological niche, with men typically contributing more to subsistence via endurance hunting and women through plant and small-prey foraging and other activities more compatible with women's reproductive roles and energetic trade-offs.

However, Martin et al. strongly disagree with a central premise that appears to motivate this thesis, namely that the idea of gendered subsistence activities derives largely from incorrect assumptions extrapolated from patriarchal norms today and/or rationalizations of

“implicit male superiority” based solely on anatomical gender differences. Such claims are belied by extensive ethnographic and human behavioral ecology research across multiple extant hunting-gathering societies, including the Aché Indians of Paraguay. These studies document the near universality of gendered divisions of labor, with women's large-scale participation in hunting occurring only in specific societies (i.e., the Agta from the Philippines) or contexts (i.e., small-game hunting). Martin et al. further argue that the review and reconstruction of women's evolved physiological capabilities is overly reliant on, and may misapply, data from Western industrialized populations.

Essentially, when focusing on the features of women's biology that confer physical fitness advantages, Ocobock and Lacy do not consider (1) what aspects of reproductive fitness this physiology would have been selected for; or (2) what the energetic costs and benefits are to women engaging in hunting vs. the myriad other behaviors that enhance their reproductive fitness, particularly in resource-limited environments. In short, what women are physiologically capable of and how they optimally allocate their energy are two different questions. The well-documented physical and time costs of human reproduction – from gestation and lactation to prolonged infant and child care – cannot be easily discounted or extrapolated from one environment to another, let alone from the present day to the ancestral past.

Assuming equivalent physiological potential to hunt, becoming a successful hunter requires years of observation, practice, and experience. Like hunting, women's foraging is highly skilled, with peak returns occurring after the third decade of life. Meanwhile, women's foraging (including small-prey foraging) may contribute as much or more to group subsistence as men's endurance hunting, which can be risky, unreliable, and confer as much social as caloric benefits.

**Jobson, Ryan Cecil:** Facing the Flames. The Herskovitses, Trinidad, and the Anthropological Imagination. *American Ethnologist* 50/3. 2024: 368–374. DOI:10.1111/amet.13189. (OpenAccess)

In June 1939, the American anthropologist Melville Herskovits and his wife Frances arrived in Trinidad. Already committed to his famous thesis of African cultural survivals, he identified the rural municipality of Toco in Trinidad as a site to observe “African ways of life ... in greatest purity.” The oil field strikes that gripped the island just two years earlier received only a passing mention in his monograph, “Trinidad Village.” This article concerns Herskovits’s field notes to consider how the then dominant Boasian cultural paradigm compelled Herskovits to exclude the oil field labor from his study. Still, he is aggravated throughout by oil troubles of his own. Vexed by a faulty gasoline generator, Herskovits used his field diary to document his frustrated efforts to record audio of Shango songs in Toco. In this context, the author addresses the question how Herskovits could have charted a distinct methodological ground for discipline of anthropology.

During his fieldwork, Herskovits documented African diasporic expressive forms across the Americas to dispel the myth of African cultural discontinuity and resolve domestic racial antagonisms in the United States. As a graduate student at Columbia University, Herskovits followed Franz Boas in adopting a four-field approach. In his studies of the anthropometry of the “American Negro,” Herskovits observed skeletal and phenotypic variation that compelled him to question the existence of “pure” races altogether. [The four-field approach in anthropology sees the discipline as composed of the four sub fields of Archaeology, Linguistics, Physical Anthropology, and Cultural Anthropology, known jocularly to students as “stones”, “tones”, “bones”, and “thrones”) – D.P.].

Nonetheless, whereas Trouillot, in his article published in *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21: 1992) warns us that the Caribbean does not easily yield to the culture concept given the assiduous historical “mess” of colonial plantation societies, the Herskovitses sought a fix in the remote field site of Toco. Despite their best efforts, Toco did not submit to a linear model of acculturation. Herskovits threaded Trinidad into his scale with an added

conceptual stitch. In their book “Trinidad Village,” Melville and Frances introduced the concept of “cultural focus,” according to which diasporic communities retain those features of an original culture “which hold greatest interest for them.” Moreover, Herskovits championed the village of Toco as an exemplary locus of cultural continuity under conditions of contact and change, which “form a representative segment of the range of New World Negro cultures that together give us a veritable historical and social laboratory,” as he put it. The purification of a cultural laboratory in Toco cohered at the expense of other promising directions for his Trinidad research, including the then developing labor struggle on Trinidad’s oil fields.

Where Herskovits failed to face the flames of workers’ agitation in south Trinidad in the name of anthropology, Jobson concludes, we should consider what anthropology permits and what we fail to confront in the name of disciplinary survival. When anthropology finds itself on the chopping block as a casualty of university budget cuts – as many departments of anthropology have in recent years – it is not a classical investment in culture and relativism that will rescue us from bureaucratic retrenchment. Jobson invites anthropologists to be unabashed in their rejection of a stable object that they often adopt as a shorthand for our contributions to university curricula and the credentialing circuit of higher education.

**Vera Santos, Rocío:** Saint Martin de Porres: “The Black Saint of the Afro-Descendant Community in Quito-Ecuador.” Between Segregation, Racism, and Black Resistance. *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 29/1.2024: 92–102. DOI: 10.1111/jlca.12712. (**OpenAccess**)

In the neighbourhood Caminos a la Libertad, located in the north-western part of Quito, every November, a group of Afro-Ecuadorian women called the “Community of Saint Martin and The Martinas” pay tribute to Saint Martin de Porres – “the Black saint of the Afro-descendant community.” This celebration is relevant in a context in which the Afro-Ecuadorian inhabitants of the neighbourhood

suffer segregation, racism, and discrimination. What happens in the neighborhood Caminos a la Libertad is, in part, a reflection of the experience of the whole Afro-descendant population in the capital – a city which has historically created an image of itself as white-*mestizo*, and where the presence of Afro-descendants has been systematically rejected. Based on ethnographic work, participant observation and semi-structured interviews, in this article Vera Santos analyses how this community uses the image of Saint Martin de Porres and his celebration to combat racism, promote social cohesion and ethnic and gender empowerment in the neighbourhood, by creating “places of enunciation” and “spiritual citizenship.”

Racialized individuals can use religion to define their ethnic and class identities, as well as to occupy leading roles in religious and cultural celebrations. Students of this subject identified, for instance, how Afro-Ecuadorian women use the public sphere for religious celebration, positioning themselves as “deeply spiritual women.” Spirituality in this context has a political character since it is used as a cohesive element to transform women’s lives through links with social, cultural, and political projects. Similarly, for an Afro-Ecuadorian, “being a Christian” may also produce an equivalent to “being a citizen” with the need to be treated equally because “we are all Christians,” regardless of “race,” ethnicity, class, and religious affiliation. According to other studies, Afro-Ecuadorian women may even use their religious affiliation with Evangelical Christianity as an element to perceive themselves as superior in their social and ethno-racial identity.

Consequently, turning to religious images allows the inhabitants of the marginalized urban neighborhoods to get organized and form spaces for dialog and for cultural, religious, and political expression. In these spaces, their organizers occupy a position of leaders with power, gaining the recognition and respect of all the neighbors and inhabitants, thus achieving a certain status. Religion becomes a kind of symbolic compensation which helps them to live, to leave a private or working environment where they usually play a subaltern role,

and to enter a public sphere through the organization, in this case religious, whose political scope plays a leading role.

**Jacobsen, Casper:** Does Being Indigenous Imply Being Religious? *Anthropology, Heritage, and Historiography in Mexico. Critique of Anthropology* 43/2.2023: 185–204. DOI:10.1177/0308275X231175972.

**ABSTRACT:** For decades, indigenist anthropology has been considered indefensible in Mexico. Its conception of Indigeneity persists, however, as a resource for national heritage and identity construction. This article analyses works on Indigenous peoples by prominent Mexican scholars and traces their links to contemporary heritage narratives and practices. It discusses how a national anthropological historiography, embedded in a secularizing ideology and state project, has generated a popular, transhistorical view of Indigenous peoples as embedded in a world of religious belief. I contend that this gaze has a dematerializing discursive effect, dissociating Indigenous peoples, past and present, from material agendas and practices. This is a dispossessive narrative tradition that is being regenerated through the framework of intangible heritage.

**Luyckfasseel, Margot:** “How Will God Hear Us?”: Sonic and Linguistic Difference among Kinshasa’s *Églises des Noirs*. *Africa* 93/3.2023: 351–370. DOI:10.1017/S0001972023000542.

**ABSTRACT:** This article studies how anti-Christian, ‘traditionally African’ organizations, locally known as *Églises des Noirs*, navigate religious competition in the Congolese capital through sonic and linguistic strategies. It focuses on the understudied Mpadist community, a ‘dissident’ branch of the better known Kimbanguist church. Mpadists mobilize diverging appreciations and meanings of sound and language to set themselves apart from the dominant Lingalophone Pentecostal loudness of the city. In doing so, they pursue a delicate balance between Kongo traditionalism, the source of their spiritual legitimacy, rooted in colonial prophetic movements, and tactics of ‘modern’ community making in order to remain competitive within Kinshasa’s

prolific religious setting. The article argues that ideologies of sound and language should be analysed within the same nexus, for they operate and are operationalized in similar ways. It therefore proposes to expand the sociolinguistic notion of indexicality to incorporate elements of the volume and modalities of sound making. The article also shows that sonic and linguistic ideologies are bound by context. In Kinshasa's 'low-fi' soundscape, the indexical values of the languages Kikongo and Lingala, and of unamplified and amplified sound production, share similar features, yet they are evaluated differently in rural 'hi-fi' sonic environments.

**Keese, Alexander and Annalisa Urbano:** Researching Post-Independence Africa in Regional Archives: Possibilities and Limits in Benin, Cabo Verde, Ghana and Congo-Brazzaville *Africa* 93/4.2023: 542–561. DOI: 10.1017/S0001972023000621. (**OpenAccess**)

**ABSTRACT:** Africa's regional archives offer crucial records to explore the continent's postcolonial past. Although these archives are often difficult to locate and access and are exposed to several challenges that might even threaten their existence, this article presents a solid case for reconsidering their importance. Recent trends, aptly labelled 'postcolonial African archival pessimism', have mainly pointed to problems and often to the limited accessibility of state archives in some regional and local contexts. This article instead engages with their potential, discussing four case studies in Benin, Cabo Verde, Ghana and Congo-Brazzaville. Results stemming from these case studies are brought into contact with wider debates on custodial cultures and the regional archives' role in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa. The intention is to provide a more positive and empirically based overview of research possibilities at regional archives and ultimately to change the nature of our approach to these resources.

**Berry, Sara:** Acting Like an Owner: Land Claims and Judicial Practices in Twentieth-Century Ghana. *African Affairs* 122/487.2023: 225–244. DOI:10.1093/afraf/adad013.

**ABSTRACT:** Using court records of legal disputes over transfers of land, this article explores the way transfers of landed property have impacted social relationships and the governance of land rights in Ghana in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. As urbanization, commercial agriculture, and natural resource extraction pushed up the value of land, disputes over land ownership have multiplied. In adjudicating such disputes, courts are often confronted with claims based on unverifiable oral histories invoking events of the distant past. Rather than simply dismiss such forms of evidence as hearsay, judges have often supplemented them with documentary and/or oral evidence on recent histories of land use. By doing so, they have tended to sustain customary forms of ownership, effectively recognizing the authority of landholding collectivities such as families and stools alongside that of individual owners. In effect, they are inferring ownership from land use, inverting the standard economic argument.

**Wu, Di and Wei Zhang:** US and Chinese Aid to Africa: A Relational Approach to Impact on Soft Power. *African and Asian Studies* 22/3. 2023: 290–323. DOI:10.1163/15692108-12341604.

**ABSTRACT:** Over the last two decades, China has become increasingly influential in Africa, and the US policy pivoting to confront domestic challenges and withdrawing from its role in international fora has raised many concerns. Based on this global context, this paper examines the US-China soft power competition through foreign aid. It takes a relational lens to analyze their aid to the African countries. It first looks at how foreign aid could be transformed into soft power assets, and then innovatively puts the two countries side by side and examines the relational powers of their foreign aid and the impacts on the other's national image. The paper uses ordered (Ordinary Least Squares) OLS, ordered logit, and IV regression to analyze aid data and opinion poll data. The results show that foreign aid can promote the African perceptions of both countries. It also finds that Chinese aid has a negative impact on the image of the US in Africa, while American aid has no significant effect

on African perception of China. This conclusion aligns with the competitive nature of the US–China relationship. China’s model of aid may be preferred by Africans, while the US may need to revisit its approaches in Africa in order to turn this situation around.

**Musariri, Linda** *et al.*: A Call to Rethink African Scholars beyond “Local Experts”: Mobility, Race, and Gender in Europe. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 47/1.2024: 4–23. DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2023.2206464. (OpenAccess)

**ABSTRACT:** Development discourses have been widely criticized for creating hierarchical dichotomies, such as “developed” (the global North) and “developing” (the global majority), with the former being the ideal standard to which the rest must catch up. The development paradigm has infiltrated academic spaces globally, including international research collaborations, creating various categories such as (non)scientific (local) expertise. We see such hierarchies as mechanisms of legitimation to maintain the ongoing subjugation of African scholars based on the historical and contemporary asymmetries in global knowledge production. Informed by the experiences of five female African doctoral researchers in the Netherlands, this paper problematizes and disrupts the concepts of “Expert” and “local expert”. We question the relevance of these concepts in a context where global knowledge production continues to feed from coloniality and also question the old power relations that continue to enable knowledge inequalities between the global North and global South.

**Mgaya, Edward Simon:** The Meaning, Spiritual Foundation, and Mythology of African Sacred Landscapes. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 53/3–4.2023: 289–316. DOI:10.1163/15700666-12340253.

**ABSTRACT:** In various cultures around the world, past and present, many natural and cultural sites are deemed sacred. What are sacred landscapes? What are the spiritual foundations for their formation? How are they formed? How are they protected? The answers to these questions help frame a discussion of

sacred landscapes within the context of their meaning, origin, and management processes as lived experiences of specific societies. In Tanzania the linkages between biodiversity and the worldview of a society have partly been acknowledged but remain unexplored. This paper applies a mixed research approach to studying sacred forests among the Bena community of Njombe in Tanzania. Rather than looking exclusively at the sacred forests in themselves as places, the paper underscores the linkage of human-nature-spirituality as key in explaining the history of sacred forests. It establishes that, among the Bena, the sacredness of a place was founded on the relationship between the visible and the invisible worlds – relations that led to the formation of various mystical-religious homelands’ sacred places that are protected through mythologies.

**Atiemo, Abamfo Ofori and Seth Tweneboah:** Religious Conversion, Proselytization, and the Marginalisation of Indigenous Religions in Ghana. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 53/3–4.2023: 317–340. DOI:10.1163/15700666-12340268.

**ABSTRACT:** This paper probes the intricate connection of conversion, proselytization, and the state of Ghana to achieve three overarching goals. First, it unravels how colonialism, Christianity, and Islam have historically and collectively marginalised African indigenous religions. Second, it demonstrates a clever state maneuver to continue the historic joint colonial and missionary projection of Christianity and Islam at the expense of other traditions. Third, it interrogates how the state of Ghana is mindful of the political implications of frustrating the principle of separation. Against these positions, the paper argues that despite tacit attempts to privilege Christianity and Islam over indigenous religion, the state of Ghana maintains a moderate secularist stance that enhances free and equal participation of its religiously diverse populations in the public space.

**Hassan, Hamdy A.:** Sufi Feminism. Women Leaders in African Sufi Movements. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 53/3–4.2023: 353–382. DOI: 10.1163/15700666-12340258. (OpenAccess)

**ABSTRACT:** Men founded and have ruled over Sufi orders since their inception, and thus the position of Khalifa or shaykh has been traditionally held by men. However, this study argues that in some Islamic mystical traditions women have assumed a senior leadership role with all the power that such a prominent position entails. More research is needed to understand the challenges Sufi women have faced in legitimizing their power, their experiences in a patriarchal society, and the various methods they have used to establish and protect their religious authority. By adopting a qualitative approach, this study seeks to explain the shift in Sufi women's leadership role in society, specifically within the African context, focusing on two women who were influential spiritual leaders, Nana Asma'u and Sharifa 'Alawiyya al-Mirghani. The study concludes that African Sufi feminist traditions overcame the challenges posed by their complex societal contexts.

**Agada, Ada:** Rethinking the Concept of God and the Problem of Evil from the Perspective of African Thought *Religious Studies* 59/2. 2023: 294–310. DOI:10.1017/S0034412522000294. (OpenAccess)

**ABSTRACT:** In this article, I show that: (1) There is a transcendence strain in African Traditional Religion (ATR) and traditional African thought that agrees perfectly with traditional monotheism and legitimizes the question of the relation of God with evil in the world. (2) There is incontrovertible evidence of the conception of God as a limited deity that subverts the categories of omnipotence and omniscience. (3) African philosophers of religion must show how a transcendent or, conversely, a limited God is related to the evil that exists in the world, since the overwhelming stance of ATR is that God is the creator of the world and wields effective power. I substitute the categories of omnipotence and omniscience with the novel categories of power and glory and argue that while a powerful and glorious God is not the author of evil and cannot eliminate evil in the world, such a God can be conceived as working to reduce the evil in the world through the instrumentality of human moral agency.

**Keita, Shomarka:** Tracing a Genealogy of Ideas, Seeing, and Not Seeing Bias: Legacies in Science and Society of Charles Seligman's Biocultural Theory of Africa (Hamitic Hypothesis) and Ashley Montagu's on Race. *American Anthropologist* 125/4.2023: 797–808. DOI:10.1111/aman.13903.

**ABSTRACT:** Some ideas about populations in Africa that were called "races" are addressed in the works of two influential scholars of the twentieth century: Charles Seligman and Ashley Montagu. Seligman is remembered for his notable students and a discredited theory called the Hamitic hypothesis. Montagu is primarily known for his early public interrogation of the term race. There are inconsistencies in aspects of both their works and lives. Seligman recognized and critiqued the problems in Aryanism/Nazi theories and practices, but not in his theory about Africa or colonialist behavior. Contrary to common understanding, Montagu did at one time postulate the existence of biological races, while simultaneously and trenchantly rejecting a race construct that linked non-biological traits to ancestry or phenotype. However, at an important moment in sociopolitical history Montagu contradicted this latter position in uncritically citing Seligman. Aspects of their work can be found to have continuing and sometimes unrecognized influence in academic and non-scholastic contexts.

**Engmann, Rachel Ama Asaa:** Slaving and Slave Trading in Africa. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 52.2023: 491–510. DOI: 10.1146/annurev-anthro-052621-022531. (OpenAccess)

**ABSTRACT:** Slavery in Africa dates to antiquity. Slave trading networks in Africa transported people across the Sahara and the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, with significant numbers of people sent to the Middle East, India, central Asia, and South and Southeast Asia. Africa, however, was not only a source of export of people; enslaved persons were also imported into the continent. This article reviews scholarly research into the capture, trade, and use of enslaved men, women, and children in Africa, with a focus on Ghana. It



suggests that the history and legacies of slavery and slave trading cannot be understood without reference to African historiography, the politics of knowledge production, and present-day heritage tourism. In reviewing the historical and anthropological research, it also introduces some of the possibilities, problems, and challenges of archaeological approaches to studying slavery and slave trading to demonstrate that archaeology is in conversation with—and of value to—those outside the discipline.

**Jiang, Qiuyu:** Giving and Belonging: Religious Networks of Sub-Saharan African Muslims in Guangzhou, China. *Ethnography* 24/3.2023: 371–388. DOI:10.1177/14661381221134432.

**ABSTRACT:** This paper presents empirical data on how religious giving structures African Muslims' transnational lives in Guangzhou, China. It provides insight into mechanisms of mutual aid within a socially and economically marginalized migrant group in a Muslim-minority society. I argue that in this context Islamic charitable giving helps enable African Muslims to cope with everyday challenges, especially those related to their tenuous immigration statuses and social exclusion. Giving that promotes mutual charity is especially important for African Muslims in Guangzhou since the city's formal welfare system is inaccessible to most migrants. The article argues that African Muslims' religious giving creates a social network that safeguards group members from socioeconomic hardship and offers African Migrants a sense of belonging. It concludes by discussing the limitations of religious giving when ties of religious engagement are weak, with individuals failing to fulfil their religious responsibilities in the eyes of the community.

**Larouche, Catherine:** Autonomous Care? Muslim Transnational Giving Networks and Perceptions of Welfare Responsibilities in India. *Ethnography* 24/3.2023: 389–406. DOI:10.1177/14661381221134417.

**ABSTRACT:** In Uttar Pradesh, many middle-class Muslims increasingly view local and transnational religious giving as a pragmatic

way to create tangible socioeconomic improvements in the lives of underprivileged Muslims and mitigate their growing marginalization in India. How does their turn toward transnational religious giving influence their perception of the state's responsibilities regarding social welfare provision? Based on ethnographic fieldwork research with registered non-profit organizations collecting and distributing Islamic alms (zakat and sadaqa) in the state of Uttar Pradesh, this article examines how local and transnational religious giving affects the ways in which members of these Muslim philanthropic organizations imagine citizenship and welfare responsibilities in India. Distributive practices within these organizations show a dual focus on fostering Muslims' economic independence and self-sufficiency by mobilizing local and transnational charitable networks on the one hand and improving access to state welfare on the other. The co-existence of these somewhat divergent strategies suggests that while the state is considered partial and uncaring, it also remains viewed as an indispensable welfare provider. More generally, these observations bring forth a discussion on the extent and effects of the transnationalisation and privatisation of welfare in globally connected South-Asia.

**Moll, Yasmin:** Can There Be a Godly Ethnography? Islamic Anthropology, Epistemic Decolonization, and the Ethnographic Stance. *American Anthropologist* 125/4.2023: 746–760. DOI:10.1111/aman.13911. (**OpenAccess**)

**ABSTRACT:** Can there be a Godly ethnography? This article explores how the epistemic entailments of this question trouble our taken-for-granted notions about what decolonizing anthropology demands. Disciplinary decolonization aims at more-just futures through interrogating Eurocentric ways of knowing and approaching marginalized histories and perspectives as good to think with, not merely about. I argue that far from being a radical challenge, such decolonizing calls are internal to a secular liberal anthropology. The ethical norms they embed take paradigmatic form in the ethnographic stance and its imperative to take difference seriously as a way toward self-transformation. This stance needs to itself be

provincialized as belonging to secular traditions of critical inquiry and their attendant emancipatory politics. By contrast, a Godly ethnography, as put forth in the 1980s call for an “Islamic anthropology” by some Muslim scholars working within a broader Islamization of knowledge movement, is a more radical challenge to the discipline. Here, the study of human differences is oriented neither towards self-determination nor solidarity but towards divine devotion. Indeed, Islamic anthropology's transcendent telos is difficult to reconcile with the secular ethic of “taking seriously” motivating call for epistemic decolonization. This difficulty necessitates more-carefully disentangling the question of disciplinary decolonization from political liberation, asking what happens the day after epistemic decolonization.

**Kravel-Tovi, Michal:** Making a Difference: The Political Life of Religious Conversion. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 52.2023: 19–37. DOI:10.1146/annurev-anthro-052721-101416. (OpenAccess)

**ABSTRACT:** This article reviews the anthropological scholarship that engages with religious conversion as a political phenomenon, broadly defined. It develops the idea of making a difference as an overarching framework with a double meaning. First, this idiom captures how, by framing religious conversion in political terms, anthropologists have claimed to have substantially intervened – have made a difference, so to speak – in the discussion of conversion. Second, the article sets aside the prevalent problematization of conversion as a category of change, showing instead how anthropologists have sought to establish how religious change makes a difference – in the interweaved realities of individuals, collectives, and polities. I scrutinize and contextualize the belated consolidation of this area of inquiry, map its major strands, and identify the interrelated theoretical developments within anthropology. Seeing these strands as a generative domain of inquiry, I conclude with a number of suggestions for future research, such as paying closer attention to political conversions and to the links between religious conversion and political crises.

**Fians, Guilherme:** The Others' Others: When Taking Our Natives Seriously Is Not Enough. *Critique of Anthropology* 43/2.2023: 167–184. DOI:10.1177/0308275X231175982. (Open-Access)

**ABSTRACT:** Since Malinowski, taking the natives seriously has been a core issue for ethnographers, as this principle encloses two terms nurturing much theoretical debate in sociocultural anthropology: ‘native’ and ‘point of view’. Yet, this entails a parallel issue: aside from taking one’s natives seriously, have anthropologists been taking other anthropologists’ natives equally seriously? The discipline came to take for granted the legitimacy of Others constituted by discourses of race, sex, class, ethnicity and colonialism. However, anthropology seems to continuously marginalize groups – from children and speakers of ‘invented’ languages to UFO witnesses – whose practices are routinely mocked or dismissed as foolish. This article analyzes certain anthropologists and their ethnographies of unsanctioned interlocutors who were cast aside by scholarship. I argue that ‘taking seriously’ must be not only an experiment that builds rapport between individual anthropologists and natives, but also one that makes room for the natives’ viewpoints to flow within the discipline.

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