

These texts were repeatedly recited, so that the people could memorize them. García also notes that Latin, the language in which the texts were written, was innovated with borrowings from Greek, Hebrew, or Armenian in order to translate the religious concepts that were missing in Latin.

In Mesoamerica and South America the meta-language or source language was usually Spanish or Portuguese, but it could also be Latin. As García, Otto Zwartjes likewise encountered Hebrew loans in the Latin and Spanish sources analyzed by him, and he also found “technical terms derived from the Arabic grammatical tradition” (47), such as the term *al-‘awāmil*<sup>14</sup>, i.e., “operators, producing a certain effect upon something,” which could be subdivided into *lafziyy* (expressed) or *ma‘nawīl* (abstract). In addition, Zwartjes discusses the translation of the Latin verb *sum, es, fui* (to be) and its connotations into languages spoken in Mesoamerica and South America (Chiapaneco, Cholón, Dohema, Huasteco, Kakchikel, Mam, Mixe, Náhuatl, Tupí, Tzotzil, Xinka, Zoque), the Philippines (Iloco, Tagalog), and Granada (Arabic).

For the transmission of religious texts the missionaries also used a lingua franca as meta-language instead of Spanish, Portuguese, or Latin. The meta-languages treated in the present volume are Maya (Arzápalo), K’iche’ (Sachse), Tarascan (Jiménez y Monzón), Náhuatl (Danielewski, Ruhnau), Quechua (Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz, Husson), Guaraní (Chamorro), Tupinambá (Barros e Monserrat), Chiquitano (Falkinger).

As regards the transmission of Christian concepts, the missionaries used the following methods: the use of borrowings (from Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Spanish, and Portuguese), calques or loan translations, neologies, literal (word-for-word/sense-for-sense) translations, transpositions, modulations, adaptations, and periphrases. Borrowing seems to be the most frequently employed method in the translations of religious documents. In addition to Spanish or Portuguese loanwords, the translators at first also used words from the object language or target language, i.e., the indigenous language at issue. Ramón Arzápalo shows that in such cases the indigenous “equivalents” of Catholic concepts retained their cultural load, so that they did not produce the translation desired by the priests. In “Calepino de Motul” (ca. 1600), for instance, the lexeme “church,” is translated into Maya as *kuuna* (divine house) or *yotuch kuu* (house of God). For the Maya the lexeme *kuu* referred to “deity/deities,” and, since the Spanish word “iglesia” did not mean “the place where the God lives” but “a place of divine cultus,” they considered *kuuna/yotuch kuu* as “the place for worshipping their deity/deities.” This heathenish interpretation is not what the priests had in view. Later on, the Spanish borrowing “iglesia” is employed for the translation of the concept “church.” Frauke Sachse also talks about the reuse of K’iché words to transmit Christian concepts, such as the terms *kojb’al* and *okisab’al*, both meaning “belief” (105) and *q’anaxal* meaning “yellowness-greenness” (107). They were used for the translation of the concepts “faith” and “(divine) glory,” respectively.

Nora Jiménez and Cristina Monzón show that the notion of “faith” is explained by means of the hagiogra-

phy of Saint Eustace in Tarascan, in other words, “having faith” = “to live as Saint Eustace.” Monzón, Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz and Elke Ruhnau shed light on the translation of the concept *alma/ánima* (soul) in Tarascan, Quechua, and Náhuatl, respectively. The missionaries tried to translate “soul” as *mintzita* (heart) in Tarascan, as *kama* (spirit), or *sunqu* (heart) in Quechua, and as *teyolitia* (the one who makes someone live) or *tonally* (warmth, summer, day, sign (of the birth) of the day, destiny) in Náhuatl. Angelika Danielewski deals with the translation of the word “paradise” in Náhuatl. The translators employed the terms *illhuicatl ihtic* (inside heaven) and *tonatiuh ichan* (house of the sun) to interpret the meaning of “paradise.” Jean-Philippe Husson shows that the salutation “Ave Maria” (Hail Mary), for lack of an equivalent, is translated as *muchaycusayqui* in Quechua, literally meaning “I nicely adore/kiss you.” The Guaraní people used several nouns to indicate “God” and “devil.” Graciela Chamorro reveals that all these “equivalents” are in fact neologies. The same happens in Brazil with the vulgarization of Tupinambá. Cândida Barros and Ruth Monserrat show, for instance, that *Tupã* (God) became *Tupána* and the discontinuous negation “a ...i” became *niti(o)* in the vulgar language.

In conclusion, we can say that “La transmisión de conceptos cristianos a las lenguas amerindias” is worth consulting. It contains many phrases and terms in a large range of indigenous languages, used by different missionaries to exemplify certain religious notions and ideas. By comparing the examples from different sources and by scrutinizing them in detail, the authors of the articles could reveal the real, underlying meaning of the native term in question. Arzápalo, Jiménez y Monzón, and Monzón also added a text transcribed in the indigenous language followed by a translation in Spanish. Arzápalo includes a transcription of the first folio of “Chilam Balam de Chumayel,” a pre-Hispanic manuscript, in which he shows that a Maya discourse has a quadripartite arrangement based on the points of the compass: East, North, West, and South. In the text, they are indicated by means of the colours red, white, black, and yellow, respectively. The text added by Jiménez y Monzón is “Vida de San Eustaquio” (Life of Saint Eustace). Monzón appends to her article “El testamento de Magdalena Ocuyma (Ocuyma 1596),” that is, “The Testament of Magdalena Ocuyma (Ocuyma 1596).” So, “La transmisión de conceptos cristianos a las lenguas amerindias,” in sum, is a fascinating book. It not only gives an insight in the strategies of the Church to propagate the faith and to convert non-Christian souls, it also contains a wealth of concepts and texts in indigenous languages all over the world.

Astrid Alexander-Bakkerus

**Ehret, Christopher:** The Civilizations of Africa. A History to 1800. 2nd ed. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016. 470 pp. ISBN 978-0-8139-2880-7. Price: \$ 35.00

The first edition of this book appeared in 2002. It is addressed primarily to teachers and students in North

American universities. Whereas most textbooks on African history gallop through the period before the Atlantic slave trade in a few short chapters, Ehret offers us systematic and thoughtful coverage of Africa's early history, dividing the period between 22,000 B.C.E. and 1450 into six long chapters, which draw mainly upon his own publications in the field of historical linguistics but also upon archaeology and occasionally other disciplines. As reviewers of the first edition pointed out, the two final chapters on the "Early Atlantic Age" and "Africa in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade" are less original and less speculative than the preceding ones, but here too the focus differs from that of conventional histories of Africa.

The book remains a *tour de force*, providing confident answers to dozens of questions that most of us thought could never be answered. In the second edition, the 83 illustrations and 24 maps are in colour, making them easier to look at. At first glance the maps seem otherwise to be the same as in the first edition, but then one notices subtle changes. Map 6, for instance, covers the period 8500–6500 B.C.E. rather than 9000–6700 B.C.E.; some names are spelt differently ("Khoesan" and "Afasian" rather than "Khoisan" and "Afrasan"); the Albany culture has become the Oakhurst culture; and the question marks after five locations of "BaTwa" have vanished.

We find similar small shifts in the list of contents. Chapter 2, "Africa before the Agricultural Age", which formerly covered the period from 16,000 to 9000 B.C.E., now extends backwards to 22,000 B.C.E. and ends in 9500 B.C.E. The subchapter on "Niger-Congo Civilization" has been transferred from this chapter to the following one, where it is merged with a subchapter on agricultural invention in West Africa; and in its place we find a new subchapter on "The Batwa Tradition of Equatorial Africa". In chap. 3 the subchapters on "Themes in the History of Culture" and "Persistent Gatherer-Hunters: The Southern Third of Africa" have been dropped. These differences are matched by small revisions in the text, taking account of recent research. For instance, whereas in 2002 Ehret suggested that ceramic technology emerged among the people he calls Northern Sudanians "some centuries" before 9000 B.C.E., in the new edition he attributes this invention to Niger-Congo women south of the Niger Bend "by around 9500 BCE" (57).

But on the whole the author has stuck to his guns, and the second edition contains few surprises. Iron technologies were, we are again told, independently invented in sub-Saharan Africa (no reference is made to Stanley Alpern's 2005 review of the debate or to more recent criticisms); and Ehret's account of the early "movements" of "Bantu peoples" is largely unchanged, despite a special issue of the *International Journal of African Historical Studies* (2001) largely devoted to criticisms of it – a debate which he evidently thinks he won. Judging by Ehret's notes (153–155) one might think that both matters have finally been resolved. The intriguing table of "Major Civilizations of Africa: Typical Features of Culture, ca. 5000 BCE" is almost exactly the same as in 2002, listing distinguishing features of social organisation, material culture, and religion for the four big phyla Niger-Congo,

Sudanic/Nilo-Saharan, Afrasian/Afroasiatic, and Khoesan in a manner more reminiscent of Leo Frobenius than of modern archaeological studies. The book is indeed, as the blurb tells us, "the most *authoritative* text available on early African history" (my emphasis), and although Ehret qualifies some assertions with phrases such as "we suspect that ...", the book as a whole requires us either to take it or to leave it.

Of course, one would hardly expect a textbook to provide scholarly footnotes. Those who want to guess how Ehret reached his conclusions can consult his well-received collection of methodological essays, "History and the Testimony of Language" (2011), which is mentioned here. But whereas a textbook normally aims at a balanced synthesis of the debates and consensus among scholars of the topic concerned, Ehret presents in a fairly authoritative manner a remarkably speculative version of what happened. At the end of each chapter we are offered "notes for readers and teachers" and a handful of titles for further reading. Many are by Ehret himself or his close associates; others seem to have been selected only by the criterion of not contradicting Ehret's text.

Let us take just a few examples of Ehret's reluctance to heed criticism. As David Henige pointed out in 2007, it is astonishing to learn that historical linguistics can prove that two of Africa's four proto-religions, those of the Niger-Congo and Sudanic civilizations, "were distinctly monotheistic several thousand years before the idea of monotheism ever occurred to Middle Easterners or Europeans." Yet the same sentence is repeated in the second edition (14), again without evidence. I feel equally sceptical about many of Ehret's claims regarding medicine, kinship, or leadership roles, but like Henige I lack the skills in historical linguistics and in archaeology which might enable me to challenge them. How nice it would be if we could feel sure that the Chaga – assuming that it makes sense to talk of such a group more than a millennium ago – adopted clitoridectomy "from the Southern Cushitic side of their ancestry" in the period A.D. 300–1450 (273)! While accepting that there is linguistic evidence for the early existence of a cycling age-set system in the Ethiopian Rift region and perhaps for it having "arisen first in the Konsoromo society," I wonder whether there is convincing evidence that it must have come into being "no later than sometime in the second millennium BCE" (128).

Likewise Ehret repeats (albeit in slightly modified language) his assertions in the first edition regarding music: the xylophone spread from Southeast Asia to Southeast Africa, the *mbira* originated "in the lower Zambezi region before 300," and polyrhythmic music is a trait that has always distinguished music of all members of the Niger-Congo phylum from all other African musical traditions (not just those recently influenced by Islam). All three claims have been criticised, notably by Roger Blench (2005), and one might have expected some discussion of the difficulties raised.

Not unusually for a book addressed to North American students and teachers, this one is at pains to slay any dragons from the Eurocentric past that might still be alive somewhere. One is reminded of the writings of Basil Da-

vidson in the 1960s. The emphasis is on splendid accomplishment, agency, achievement, flowering, innovation, and independent invention – an approach not all that different from what Wole Soyinka once termed “drum and trumpet history,” albeit with less emphasis on great men and big battalions. Many times a finger is wagged, warning us not to think of Africans as exemplars of “isolation and difference” or as “passive receivers.” We are told in the introduction why not to talk of African tribes; yet in the rest of the text Ehret often uses “people(s)” almost as a euphemism for tribe.

This in turn raises a bigger question: given the insights of the past four decades with regard to the non-primordial nature of ethnicity, does it still make sense to explain cultural difference within Africa in terms of four quasi-primordial, linguistically defined “civilizations,” from which virtually everything derives either by descent or by borrowing? In a milder form we might discern a similar approach in chapters 4–9 of Roland Oliver’s “The African Experience” (first edition 1991); but Oliver’s argument was more subtle, more open to historical contingency and to the contradictions that different genres of source pose.

Students trained in Ehret’s rather idiosyncratic terminology and his approach to historical reconstruction are likely to get a shock if they one day meet someone who does African history or archaeology in a different way. After all, relatively few archaeologists have hitherto made much use of Ehret’s comprehensive framework. Yet this is far more than just a student textbook, and scholars should get to grips with it. Even if a large number of Ehret’s claims are one day shown to be wrong, for the time being the book poses an exciting challenge.

Adam Jones

**Espírito Santo, Diana, and Anastasios Panagiopoulos** (eds.): *Beyond Tradition, Beyond Invention. Cosmic Technologies and Creativity in Contemporary Afro-Cuban Religions*. Canon Pyon: Sean Kingston Publishing, 2015. 251 pp. ISBN 978-1-907774-37-9. Price: £ 60.00

Das überaus informative Sammelwerk zu afro-kubanischen Religionen ist eine interessante Ergänzung zur Literatur über kubanische Religionen. Der Schwerpunkt der Beiträge liegt auf sogenannten Mischreligionen (syncretic religions), welche nach den beiden Herausgebern ein besonderes Problem darstellen, da es schwer sei, aus ihren “‘pre-cooked’ strains of belief” (5) einen Sinn zu erkennen. Wenngleich ich diese Schwierigkeiten nicht sehe, sondern darin gerade die Faszination dieser Traditionen ausmache, präsentiert die Diskussion um Synkretismus in der Einleitung einen guten theoretischen Rahmen für die folgenden Beiträge. Daneben verweist die Einleitung auch auf Werke über Religionen außerhalb Kubas (insbesondere Brasiliens, aber auch über andere Regionen), was das Buch auch für Forscher anderer Regionen interessant macht. Weiterhin ist in der Einleitung die Vorstellung der religiösen Landschaft Kubas relevant, vor allem da sich die Herausgeber bewusst nicht, wie oftmals üblich, auf die *Santería* beschränken, sondern einen guten Überblick über eine Reihe von Religionen, einschließlich des Volks-

katholizismus, anbieten. Obgleich mich hierbei die Vernachlässigung europäischer Ethnologen in dem Überblick etwas verwundert, so ist der Einblick vor allem in die US-amerikanische Forschung (und einigen ausgewählten kubanischen Autoren) informativ. Gerade der Blick auf Kuba nach dem Ende der Sowjetunion und den daraus resultierenden gesellschaftlichen Veränderungen ist spannend und lässt im Hinblick auf die jüngsten dramatischen Ereignisse in Kuba auf interessante Entwicklungen hoffen. Ich hätte mir hier allerdings gewünscht, dass die Herausgeber in der Einleitung stärker auf die kubanische Diaspora (vor allem in den USA) eingehen, welche einen starken Einfluss auf die kubanische religiöse Landschaft hat. Dennoch ist die Einleitung überaus informativ und bietet einen interessanten Einblick in das Kuba im 21. Jahrhundert.

Die folgenden neun Beiträge behandeln jeweils ausgewählte Themenkomplexe im weiteren Umfeld von “beyond tradition” und “beyond invention”. Die Vielfalt ist begrüßenswert, zeigt sie doch die Komplexität der Thematik auf. Es ist auch wichtig, dass zwei Beiträge Fallbeispiele außerhalb Kubas behandeln. So geht Greyc Pérez Amores auf die kubanischen Religionen auf Teneriffa ein und Claire Garoutte und Anneke Wambaugh in ihrem gemeinsamen Beitrag auf Seattle. Vor allem dieser Beitrag, mit dem das Buch abschließt, ist überaus faszinierend, präsentiert er doch eine Region, die in Studien zur kubanischen Diaspora vernachlässigt wird. Daneben ist der Beitrag auch aufgrund des thematischen Fokus überaus relevant für die Ethnologie. So liegt der Schwerpunkt des Beitrags auf einem Priester, dessen Initiation in mehreren kubanischen Religionen (*Santería* und *Palo Monte* sowie Mitgliedschaft in der *Abakuá*-Geheimgesellschaft) hervorragend die Vermischung zeigt, welche die Herausgeber in ihrer Einleitung ansprechen. Daneben wird ein weiteres Phänomen angesprochen, welches in der Afro-amerikanistik bekannt ist, aber oftmals nicht thematisiert wird, und zwar die persönliche Beziehungen zwischen Forschern und Forschungsfeld. So ist der Priester nicht nur Ehemann und Ritualpartner einer der beiden Autorinnen des Beitrags, sondern auch “Pate” der Initiation der anderen Autorin. Es handelt sich bei den Autorinnen um sogenannte Grenzgänger, die in ihrem Beitrag gekonnt die Grenze zwischen eigener Religionsausübung und wissenschaftlicher Analyse aufzeigen. Wenngleich es sich hierbei um eine detaillierte Fallstudie handelt und die Autoren es versäumen, genauer auf ihre Methodik oder die Ethnologie allgemein einzugehen, so bezieht sich der Beitrag auf zentrale methodologische Aspekte, die in der Ethnologie des 21. Jh.s von zunehmender Bedeutung sein werden. Ein ähnlicher Grenzgang wird auch im Beitrag von Dayron Carrillo Morell angesprochen, in dem ebenfalls persönliche sowie familiäre Erfahrungen in die Analyse visueller und materieller Aspekte der *Santería* in Havanna einbezogen werden. Während es auch in diesem Beitrag nur am Rande erwähnt wird, thematisiert Geraldine Morels Studie zur *Abakuá*-Geheimgesellschaft bewusst die eigene Religionsausübung. So beginnt ihr Beitrag mit dem Eingeständnis, dass sie sich entschied, an *Abakuá* teilzunehmen um die Praktik von innen darzustel-