

surtout du comportement exhibé lors du rituel. En conséquence, il semble à propos de se questionner : les masques amazoniens ne mettraient-ils pas en scène la problématique du continu et du discret où les idées de multiplicité et d'identification ne seraient, en fait, que deux facettes du même problème ?

Mis en rapport avec les trophées, distingués des ornements, les masques sont aussi contrastés à différentes pratiques rituelles. Quelques auteurs s'enquèrent de leur absence parmi certains groupes amazoniens (Tupi). D'autres présentent un aspect diachronique, décrivant des rituels qui, bien qu'endormis pendant des décennies, reprennent suite à un nouvel essor démographique. Plusieurs textes soulignent un paradoxe : puisque les membres de la communauté savent que le masque ne s'anime que par l'entremise d'un des leurs, comment expliquer l'efficacité de son port rituel ? Plutôt que de répondre en termes de croyance ou de métaphore consciente, comme le font certains auteurs, une hypothèse intéressante se base sur l'ontologie indigène et postule un déplacement de subjectivité qui permet de rendre présent l'absent (cf. Fausto). En résumé, quoiqu'elles se montrent riches ethnographiquement mais théoriquement inégales, certaines contributions apportent bel et bien de nouvelles approches quant à la problématique du masque en Amazonie.

Anne-Marie Colpron

Graf, Arndt, Susanne Schröter, and Edwin Wieringa (eds.): *Aceh. History, Politics, and Culture*. Singapore: ISEAS, 2010. 386 pp. ISBN 978-981-4279-12-3. Price: \$ 59.90

This volume was conceived in response to the destruction wrought on Acehnese lives and landscape by the tsunami of 26 December 2004. The editors' aim was to serve three distinct audiences: foreign aid and construction workers in Aceh; Acehnese wishing to learn of international scholarly approaches to the study of Aceh; and students seeking an introduction to Aceh's history, politics, and culture. Part 1, "History," is a summation of the state of present knowledge. Aceh's history is conceived as beginning in the 15th century.

Sher Banu Khan has pioneered research into the last five decades of Aceh's 17th century when rulers were women. She challenges the received view that female rule was welcomed by Aceh's merchants because weak in contrast to previous male autocrats. Khan argues that female rule (1641–1699) was characterised by successful diplomacy with Europeans, resulting in peace and prosperity. We are left with questions. How were the queens selected and by whom? Did female rule alter the position of women in Aceh? Who were the court eunuchs, who were the public face of female rule? Anthony Reid discusses contacts Aceh's sultans forged with Ottoman caliphs. The aura of world caliph was so powerful that Acehnese remained enthralled over two centuries of neglect from Istanbul. Reid tells us that Ottoman letters from the 1560s and 1840s worked an inspirational "magic" on this Islamic community so very much on the periphery of Ottoman consciousness.

Antje Missbach and Fritz Schulze examine the Aceh War (1873–1913). Causes are Dutch ones: fear of other encroaching imperial powers; determination to extend colonial control into north Sumatra and counteract southern expansion of the Acehnese. An 1875 map shows Aceh divided into over 100 chiefdoms. This cleavage in Acehnese society meant that invading Dutch forces found villages already fortified against outsiders. An Aceh-based perspective might illuminate why society was so fractured and who became *jihadis* (after all, most men do not join militias). Bambang Purwanto in his "Gagalnya Historiografi Indonesiasentris?!" (Has Indonesia-Centric Historiography Failed?!). 2006) urges Indonesia's historians to pay as much attention to the internal dynamics of Indonesian societies as they do to evidence of anticolonial resistance. Schulze says the war's legacy for Acehnese was a heightened sense of distinct identity and place; it fuelled armed opposition to independent Indonesia by GAM (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, Movement for a Free Aceh).

In Part II, "Contemporary Economy and Politics," two economists and an agronomist from Aceh examine the Suharto era (1967–1998). Nazamuddin, Shamsuddin Mahmud and Agussabti detail momentous shifts in Aceh's economy. Agricultural contribution to the economy has fallen and the indigenous workforce engaged in farming has dropped by about one half. One constant is the percentage employed in the petroleum and gas industries over this thirty-year period: four per cent. The authors establish social changes attendant on decentralisation policies and Aceh's new legal autonomy within the national state. Village institutions have declined as regional government rises in income and power. Funds from Jakarta support more financing of health and education; people now go to Western-trained medical specialists more than to traditional healers; parents choose schools preparing students for jobs in the modern sector, leaving *pesantrens* (Islamic boarding schools) to the poor. These scholars lament a decline in Acehnese values: people are no longer respectful of elders or willing to immerse self in family and community.

Manfred Rist's analysis of Aceh's economy could not be more different. Where Nazamuddin, Mahmud and Agussabti focus on thirty years of economic development, Rist focuses on endemic poverty. The Lhokseumawe Industrial Zone has concentrated wealth among non-Acehnese and left over 40 per cent of Aceh's villages below Indonesia's poverty line. Seventy-five per cent of Aceh has been deforested since 1949. In Rist's analysis, economic causes drove Aceh's war against its national government; military occupation gave people the sense of living under a foreign power. The tsunami's destruction forced Jakarta to reach a political agreement with GAM and to address local grievances by allocating to Aceh 70 per cent of the income from its land and sea resources.

Editorial oversight could have brought factual coherence and updated papers written almost ten years ago. For example, Rist gives the number of Aceh's dead due to the tsunami as 165,000; Patrick Ziegenhain's figure is 240,000, while Damien Kingsbury's is 180,000. Ziegenhain's analysis of Aceh's political relationship with Indo-

nesia's successive national governments and of armed resistance to them provides a context for Kingsbury's diary of negotiations between GAM and Jakarta. Kingsbury's chapter yields unique insights as he was himself an advisor to GAM. Here an update could have resolved for today's readers whether the 2005 Memorandum of Understanding did bring Aceh peace and democracy, whether sharia has contributed to democratisation and what its relationship is, if any, to the recent discovery of terrorist training camps there.

In Part III, "Foundations of Religion and Culture," Susanne Schröter notes that prewar studies emphasised Aceh's ethnic pluralism. She argues, however, that a collective experience of suffering under colonial and Indonesian governments has produced a general Acehnese identity, solidified by the influx, post-tsunami, of aid workers, journalists, scientists, and diplomats. Schröter finds Islam perceived as modern and global, Acehnese custom and culture as insular and backward. Aceh's matrifocal system is declining, local languages are losing out to Indonesian.

Islamic scholar, Hasan Basri contributes two chapters. His first, in Part III, contains propositions given the force of fact. For example, propagation of Islam in Aceh was historically "gentle and peaceful", and the result of direct contact with Saudi [sic] Arabia in the 7th century. Aceh in the 16th and 17th centuries is described as a centre of science, but no information is given as to the nature of that science, its practitioners or discoveries. Basri uses the derogatory term "infidel" throughout his account of the Aceh War. In a volume aiming at informing, this chapter perhaps faithfully repeats received ideas and gives a newcomer to study of Aceh an understanding of how people think; but it is not a chapter whose information is grounded in sociological or historical analysis supported by documented evidence.

Basri's other chapter is in Part IV, "Current Debates on Religion and Culture." Here he argues that Indonesia's constitution obligates national government to enforce religious belief in Islam and to prevent citizens from obstructing Islamic beliefs. Basri states that sharia has been faithfully followed in Aceh for hundreds of years. Werner Kraus, on the other hand, finds that mystical devotion, rather than the law, was the dominant experience of Islam in Aceh into the 20th century. Dutch scholars recognised the mystical dimension in Indonesian Islam, but attributed it to the legacy of Hinduism and Buddhism in the archipelago, rather than appreciating its roots in Islamic speculative thought and practice. Early 20th-century Muslim reformers condemned Sufi brotherhoods as a deviant form of Islam. Kraus sees a new social engineering in Aceh in which sharia-imposed practices of public flogging, enforced dress codes, and mandatory attendance at Friday prayers orient Acehnese to the Middle East.

In Part IV Kenneth George analyses the artistic production of Abdul Djilil Pirous (b.1932). Pirous started out as neither Islamic nor Indonesian, but as "humanist" and "universalist." He embraced abstract art despite President Sukarno's contention that the only acceptable art form for portraying Indonesia's people was socialist realism. Later Pirous came to see Acehnese artworks as "civilisational,"

meaning a local Indonesian expression of global, Islamic art. The chapter is lavishly illustrated with coloured photographs of his artworks.

Arndt Graf examines "Letters to the Editor" of *Serambi Indonesia* to get a sense from the province's leading newspaper of what individual Acehnese think. He chose 46 letters published in August 2005, the month the Peace Accord was signed. While newspaper letters emanate from a self-selecting group, Graf argues they still reveal "micro civil society." He finds the formulaic expression "as a victim of the tsunami" prefacing complaints about corruption and lack of government services, and a conviction of moral, rather than geological, causes for the tsunami. To blame are: young, unrelated people touching each other; women not covering their bodies; Western influences in schools; and covert Christian evangelising through NGOs. In the sentences given in this chapter it is striking that the original Indonesian identifies leaders as male (*Bapak*, sir or father), whereas the English translation given is neutral as to gender. In this case the translation gives a misleading view of who Acehnese perceive as leaders. Edwin Wieringa also finds the view in poetry that religious failings brought the 2004 tsunami upon Aceh's people and places.

A glossary and bibliography round off this volume. The book may have appeared too late to assist foreign aid workers in their tasks, but it will still bring to varied audiences a wide-ranging introduction to Aceh, conveniently within the covers of a single volume, and is to be welcomed for this.

Jean Gelman Taylor

Grasseni, Cristina: *Developing Skill, Developing Vision. Practices of Locality at the Foot of the Alps.* New York: Berghahn Books, 2009. 212 pp. ISBN 978-1-84545-537-8. (European Anthropology in Translation, 3)

Cet ouvrage fut d'abord publié sous le titre de : "Lo sguardo della mano. Pratiche della località e antropologia della visione in una comunità montana lombarda".

Ce qu'il faut traduire et interpréter, selon moi, par : "Le regard de la main. Etude sur les pratiques de l'auto-représentation locale de la communauté de résidence sur sa vie ordinaire, ou anthropologie de la perception dans une communauté de montagne, le Valtaleggio, au nord de Bergame".

En fait, ce livre passionnant est un cas d'étude sur la *bravura*, l'habileté, la compétence, l'adresse, qui selon le discours local, réside dans la personne et s'incarne dans un corps particulier, dans une identité spécifique, une façon d'entretenir des relations de parenté, d'apprentissage et d'appartenance. Bref une réinvention contemporaine des talents que les ancêtres du Valtaleggio ont transmis. Cette *vision pratique*, via l'accommodation au confort, la professionnalisation et la technification des gens de montagne, qui s'intègrent dans l'époque, est un éloge du caractère, de l'habitus apte à domestiquer et intégrer le progrès urbain dans la visée de l'adapter à l'élevage du bétail et à la fabrication du fromage : le fameux Taleggio. Le tour de main comme source, recours, marqueur et investissement de l'identité en marche.