

down of socialism) rather than some primordial and self-perpetuating attribute of the society in question.

Historical reconstructions are always fraught with problems, and the one presented here is no exception. In order to substantiate their repudiation of the unilinear model of interethnic relations, Ladányi and Szelényi try hard to convince the reader that Csenyéte underwent a radical break with tradition when the village was “ethnically cleansed” at the end of the 19th century and local Roma were expelled to a new ghetto. But the evidence for this claim is pretty shaky, based as it is solely on two village maps, of which only the more recent one indicates the presence of a segregated Roma quarter. While it is possible that some Roma had, indeed, resided in the village proper, the fact that there is no genealogical connection between the integrated and the segregated Roma makes it plausible to speculate that the ghetto was built for a new wave of Romani immigrants who may have had little in common with the integrated old-timers. The authors show that immigration of new groups of Roma, often followed by the exodus of the old elite, has been a constant factor in the recent history of the village, and one wonders why they fail to take it into consideration when explaining the more distant past. Its speculative elements aside, though, this is a most interesting case study which makes a significant contribution to our knowledge of Hungarian Roma.

David Z. Scheffel

Lesorogol, Carolyn K.: *Contesting the Commons. Privatizing Pastoral Lands in Kenya.* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008. 250 pp. ISBN 978-0-472-05024-6. Price: \$ 28.95

This volume concerns a comparison between two Samburu group ranch schemes situated on the Leroghi Plateau of Northern Kenya. The first, Mbaringon, was selected as representative of Leroghi grazing schemes in general, where private ranches for some pastoralists coexisted with group ranches for others who shared grazing rights to the exclusion of nonmembers. The second, Siambu, was the most progressive scheme in the region. It was situated in an unusually fertile area and had reconstituted their group ranch scheme to allocate suitable plots for individual cultivation, while retaining less suitable parts for shared grazing. This scheme has attracted younger and more educated members, all from the Masula section of Samburu, and it displays a shift towards individualism as compared with Mbaringon.

The author provides a detailed comparison of the recent history of land adjudication in these two communities in order to clarify the contrasts between them. The account is slow moving, but very clear. The tables and charts, showing very relevant socioeconomic data and based on meticulously conducted surveys, are less easy to follow, but they are very consistent with the text and reveal few surprises in these earlier chapters. On just one point, I would question the author's evidence on the more progressive outlook in Siambu, and concerning recent violations of clan exogamy. Earlier published accounts and colonial archives reveal that the Masula have long

regarded themselves as the most progressive section of Samburu, and they had displayed violations of clan exogamy and indeed of established age restrictions more than 40 years earlier.

This work builds up towards the penultimate chapter on “experimental economics,” which is evidently still in its infancy and much harder to follow for those who are unfamiliar with this field. The clear exposition of earlier chapters now gives way to specialist outlines of work on this topic. This was pioneered by involving American students in hypothetical “games,” and then elaborated by adapting these games for relevance to other societies in a search for universal patterns underlying individual choice.

In this series of games, volunteers from Mbaringon and Siambu were each offered a free stake, broadly equivalent to the wage for a day's labour, and they were invited to invest any portion of this stake according to rules that were based on the premise of authority in one game, of trust in another, of influence over the choices of others in a third, and so on. It was at this point that the consistent differences between the two communities seemed to break down, and the author's predictions of their responses to the games were repeatedly rebutted. Thus she expected the more traditionally oriented members of Mbaringon to be less individualistic and more community oriented in their choices and to endow a larger portion of their “stakes” on their fellows as an investment in an unknown future. But in fact, these Mbaringon players consistently retained a larger portion of their stake for themselves than those from the more progressive Siambu. One applauds the author's ambition in attempting this approach and her frankness in admitting the way in which it questions the consistency of her earlier analysis. However, in trying to explain the anomaly, she does not consider a basic premise underlying this whole approach. This is an assumption that the monetary economy had been equally integrated with the traditional economy in both communities. In other words, the findings do not necessarily suggest a greater measure of individualism in Mbaringon, contradicting all the previous chapters. They may instead reflect a lower stake in the monetary economy, which remained a more separate sphere of exchange than among the sophisticated Siambu, where the cash economy had penetrated the expectations of community life to a greater extent.

That this work displays little concern for traditional aspects of Samburu society limits discussion, but it does not really affect the argument. Beyond the two communities, the loose grasp of Samburu history under successive administrations on issues affecting land use and grazing restrictions raises a more serious concern. It is ironic that a work that builds up to experimental games pioneered using university students, should refer to group ranches as a “rather direct translation of ideas generated in academia into government policy” (44). Whatever the shortcomings of group ranches, these were aimed at coping with the problems of overgrazing and soil erosion, which are apparently dismissed as misconceived. The author spent ten years in the area, mostly concerned with

development, and she should know. Again her contention that the Samburu developed a habit of obeying government authority through their experiences of British colonial rule is a gross oversimplification of a complicated relationship before and after independence.

The descriptions of the two principal communities could provide a useful set of data for any more comprehensive study of economic change among the Samburu in the long term. At one end of a continuum, Siambu is at the cutting edge of change in an atypically fertile area that permits a greater degree of individualism in land use. Towards the other extreme beyond Leroghi, there are the dryer, harsher lowlands occupied by scattered groups of Samburu for whom nomadism is a necessary way of life for the survival of their herds, and the privatization of common land can only be practicable on a very small scale in selected areas. The dilemmas facing those at this bleak end of the commons are not considered in this volume.

More pertinently, the problem of population growth overshadows any attempt to plan for the future, and the author does point briefly to the need for further research on this topic. Even Mbaringon and Siambu are not designed to contain any growth in their families, while the annual increase among Samburu generally is estimated at 2.5%, doubling their numbers in less than 30 years (11, 21, 87). The question then arises, what is the future of the privatization of land among the Samburu? And which model points towards their future – the progressive Siambu who occupy the best land in the region, or those caught in a poverty trap in some of the worst common areas?

Paul Spencer

McLean, Matthew: *The Cosmographia of Sebastian Münster. Describing the World in the Reformation.* Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2007. 378 pp. ISBN 978-0-7546-5843-6. Price: £ 60.00

In dieser Untersuchung geht es um die Herausarbeitung von Hintergründen und die Analyse von Inhalten eines für die weitere Entwicklung der Kulturwissenschaften und der Geographie in Europa grundlegenden Werkes der Renaissancezeit. Zwischen 1544 und 1618 erreichte die „Cosmographia“ des Sebastian Münster 35 immer wieder aktualisierte Auflagen, davon die meisten auf Deutsch, aber mehrere auch in Latein, auf Französisch, Tschechisch und Italienisch. Sie enthielt eine Beschreibung der Welt nach dem jeweils neuesten Kenntnisstand hinsichtlich naturgeographischer Verhältnisse, Teile der Pflanzen- und Tierwelt und besonders der Menschen, ihrer Siedlungen und der kulturellen Verhältnisse einzelner Regionen sowie deren Geschichte. Die inhaltliche Auseinandersetzung des Autors mit dem Werk bezieht sich auf die lateinische Auflage von 1550, der letzten, die Münster noch selbst betreut hatte.

McLean hat zwei einleitende Kapitel zu Hintergründen aufgenommen, nämlich eine Biographie Münsters und Ausführungen zu den geistesgeschichtlichen Entwicklungen seit dem Altertum, die zu den kosmographischen Arbeiten der Humanisten geführt haben, aus deren

Kreis Münster als führende, gänzlich herausragende Gestalt hervorging.

In den biographischen Ausführungen wird gezeigt, dass Sebastian Münster (1488–1552) seine wissenschaftlichen Interessen zunächst als Mitglied des Franziskanerordens entwickelte, dann aber im Rahmen der Reformation ab 1529 als Professor an der Universität Basel wirkte. Es wird aber verdeutlicht, dass Münster seine wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten eher überkonfessionell betrieb und sich aus allen scharfen theologischen Kontroversen heraushielt, was dazu führte, dass seine Arbeiten in ganz Europa über die Konfessionsgrenzen hinweg anerkannt wurden. Es wird gezeigt, dass er gleichzeitig auf zwei Gebieten tätig war und zu beiden Hervorragendes leistete. Einmal war er der seinerzeit führende Erforscher der hebräischen Sprache, wobei er sich auf eine enge Zusammenarbeit mit jüdischen Gelehrten stützen konnte – damals etwas sehr Ungewöhnliches, aber, wie sich zeigte, sehr Fruchtbringendes; diesem Bereich, in dessen Rahmen er auch als erster aramäische Studien betrieb, war seine Basler Professur gewidmet. Aber er beschäftigte sich eben gleichzeitig ebenso intensiv mit der ganzen Breite der Kosmographie mit vielen Veröffentlichungen. Diese Aktivitäten gipfelten in der alle sonstigen Arbeiten der Zeit weit überragenden großen „Cosmographia“. Dies alles wird differenziert, aber prägnant vom Autor herausgearbeitet.

Dann zeigt McLean, dass die mit Kosmographie befassten Humanisten vor allem an die zwei einschlägigen Richtungen der Antike, die mathematisch-vermessende des Ptolemäus und die beschreibende des Strabo, anknüpften, aber in mancher Hinsicht auch mittelalterliches Gedankengut weiterführten. Es wird im Übrigen hervorragend herausgearbeitet, dass eine empirische Orientierung, die sich zunächst auf praktische Kenntnisse der Seefahrt, neue technische Hilfsmittel und die vielen geographischen Entdeckungen stützte, gegenüber überkommenen Konzepten für die Kosmographen vorrangig war, was für Münster dann auch in besonderem Maße galt. Es wird auf verschiedene Ansätze und Aspekte, die seinerzeit die Kosmographie ausmachten, kurz eingegangen. Obwohl nicht völlig unerwähnt, werden allerdings die Entwicklung der Globuskonstruktion – Martin Behaim wird gar nicht erwähnt – und des Kunst- und Raritätenkammerwesens nicht angemessen berücksichtigt. Insgesamt aber werden die Gedankenwelt, aus der heraus Münster für sein Werk schöpfte, und die Gelehrten, mit denen er zumeist eng zusammen arbeitete, überzeugend charakterisiert.

Der größte Teil der Untersuchung ist dann aber Münsters „Cosmographia“ im Speziellen gewidmet. McLean zeigt, wie sich das Konzept des Werkes über Jahrzehnte entwickelte. Münster hatte sich zunächst mit Regionen in Süddeutschland befasst, dann mit dem gesamten deutschsprachigen Raum, wobei er an Ideen und Vorarbeiten anderer Humanisten zu einer „Germania Illustrata“ anknüpfte. Er weitete aber seine Arbeiten bald auf ganz Europa, dann auf die ganze Welt aus, so dass auch die erste Auflage des Werkes bereits eine wirkliche Weltbeschreibung war. Allerdings spiegelten Umfang und Ge-