

mins (eds.), *Native Traditions in the Postconquest World. A Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks, 2nd through 4th October 1992*. Washington 1998: 421–447) o de James Lockhard (Postconquest Nahuatl Society and Concepts Viewed through Nahuatl Writings. *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl* 20.1990: 91–116). Con referencia al matrimonio se hubiera podido incluir a Pedro Carrasco (El barrio y la regulación del matrimonio en un pueblo del Valle de México en el siglo XVI. *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Antropológicos* 17.1961: 7–26; y Royal Marriages in Ancient Mexico. En: H. R. Harvey and H. J. Prem (eds.), *Explorations in Ethnohistory. Indians of Central Mexico in the Sixteenth Century*. Albuquerque 1984: 41–82). Para tematizar el brujo o *nahualli* falta mencionar a Marie Musgrave-Portilla (The Nahualli or Transforming Wizard in Pre- and Postconquest Mesoamerica. *Journal of Latin American Lore* 8/1.1982: 3–62) y a Miguel León-Portilla (Those Made Worthy by Divine Sacrifice. The Faith of Ancient Mexico. En: G. Gossen (ed.), *South and Meso-American Native Spirituality. From the Cult of the Feathered Serpent to the Theology of Liberation*. New York 1997: 41–64). Respecto a la comida no se hace referencia por ejemplo a David Sutton (Remembrance of Repasts. An Anthropology of Food and Memory. Oxford 2001) o en lo particular a Katarzyna Mikulska Dąbrowska (La comida de los dioses. Los signos de manos y pies en representaciones gráficas de los nahuas y su significado. *ITINERARIOS* 6.2007: 11–37). Finalmente, para comprender mejor las fiestas indígenas se podría remitir a Henry B. Nicholson (Representing the Veintena Ceremonies in the Primeros Memoriales. En: E. Quiñones Keber (ed.), *Representing Aztec Ritual. Performance, Text, and Image in the Work of Sahagún*. Boulder 2002: 63–106) y a Michel Graulich (Mitos y rituales del México antiguo. Madrid 1990) solo para citar algunos estudios representativos.

Tomando en cuenta lo anterior, el volumen ofrece solo una perspectiva unidireccional desde el punto de vista español, cómo política y religión se expandieron en la Nueva España, a pesar de pretender un enfoque pluridisciplinar. Le falta claramente el lado teórico y la mirada antropológica.

Daniel Graña-Behrens

**Poser, Alexis Themo von:** *The Accounts of Jong. A Discussion of Time, Space, and Person in Kayan, Papua New Guinea*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2014. 292 pp. ISBN 978-3-8253-6290-4. (Heidelberger Studies in Pacific Anthropology, 2) Price: € 36.00

Von Poser's ethnography of the Kayan on the north coast of Papua New Guinea is so well contextualized in terms of sources and participants in the ethnographic process that it speaks as much to Kayan villagers as to a larger audience of outsiders. This account of Kayan personhood presents their worldview based on the version of one main informant, Jong, an elder of a particular clan. Jong's version is supplemented by the voices of other contributors and put into the context of known historical events and charter myths, several of which are included in German, English, and Tok Pisin. A "Gallery of Contributors"

with photographs and brief sketches introduces us to the other participants. These combined elements allow us to understand how this ethnographic account was developed and how the author's changing relationship to his informants provided insights into the ways that their life today draws on dimensions of their former lifeworld. Von Poser gives an exceptionally careful accounting of his own interactions and relationships with informants, including the contested gift to him of named mask and slit drum replicas, and a postscript describing his return to Kayan to present them with the fruits of their combined efforts, this book. The multiple reflexive dimensions of this work are appropriate to an exploration of personhood in the context of social change.

The argument of the book closely follows its title, beginning with a discussion of the former Kayan lifeworld as expressed in their origin story, which von Poser points out expresses their "traditional" cosmology and identity in prototypical terms. An especially illuminating discussion of the symbolism of water and ground, and of the association of water with spirits and spiritual power, reveals dimensions of "traditional" beliefs that continue to play a role in the current Christianized context of village life. While this account relies heavily on one main informant who has been recognized by others for his expertise, von Poser emphasizes that each of the main clans has its own version of the myth of origin, and in claiming this distinctiveness each group commands its own legitimacy and distinctiveness. Von Poser argues that the ongoing existence of multiple versions of these charter myths provides flexibility for reconstructing and renegotiating group identity, history, and claims to legitimacy over time in relation to changing circumstances. This insight is quite a useful one for understanding the widely recognized penchant in Melanesian societies for emphasizing differences of every sort at many levels in language, symbol, material culture, ritual, and practice.

Having laid this general groundwork, von Poser proceeds to explore local concepts of time as both cyclical and linear. Cyclical (subsistence-oriented) time is marked by points of sunrise in relation to the local geography and seasonal shifts in constellations, and it frames the cycle of work involved in gardening, hunting, fishing, and trade. These cycles relate to the orientation of village and household, the organization of men's houses (viz. social structure) and the water holes of spirits, such that group relations are inscribed in the local landscape of settlements, gardens, and places where significant events have taken place. The focus and intensity with which data were gathered to draw all of these elements together is impressive, and reveals a system at once coherent and flexible for organizing both work and ritual.

The discussion of person in Kayan is grounded in the ongoing scholarly discussion of the person in non-Western societies, specifically Melanesia. Von Poser emphasizes the development of personhood as the unfolding of individual characteristics, first recognized by a person's mother and instantiated through naming, which are then realized over time in the performance of multiple social relationships. Von Poser describes two ritual cycles, male

initiation and mortuary ritual, that, although adjusted to the contemporary context, maintain important elements of Kayan cosmology and link life cycles across generations. Minimal social units in Kayan are dyadic. In familial contexts dyadic relations express hierarchy in generational and/or gender difference, while ritualized relationships tend toward equality between members of the same generation. Among the latter are *wandik* and *njakumb* relationships of taboo and exchange, and joking relationships, which are broadly characteristic of north coast cultures. These same terms are used in Murik villages to the north-west, yet each relationship has a particular inflection in Kayan that would distinguish it from its counterpart on Manam or in Murik. It would be interesting to learn more about these shared features and local differentiations.

“The Accounts of Jong” provides a highly focused version of the Kayan through their myths, history, and male lore. Understandably women’s voices are only weakly heard in this ethnographic account, although it seems the women were very keen to be included in the project and made efforts to share even specialized women’s knowledge. Likewise, the regional world of the Kayan is also underemphasized, although even today von Poser acknowledges that they have a strong outward orientation, engaging in migrant labor, and developing performances for regional *singsing* competitions and for tourist venues. Having often heard of the three villages, Kayan, Borbor, and Marangis, as important trade partners of the Murik, I was hoping to learn more of their perspective on the regional trade network. Folk operas, wave sorcery, and the origin of specialized trade goods were attributed by Murik and other coastal groups to these villages. Kayan trade partners were still visiting Murik villages in the late 1980s for stays of several months. The historical role of the Kayan in regional ethnography, what von Poser calls their macrocosm, may be difficult to retrieve at this point in time, but it would add considerably to our understanding of the larger region. Von Poser’s insight about variation in mythical accounts could usefully be put to use in this larger context, and the multiple versions of the Jari myth he provides and cites would be important contributions to such a project.

“The Accounts of Jong” is a work of impressive care and precision with detailed accounting of the kinds of information from which it is created, and great attention to how unfolding events and relationships provided opportunities for the ethnographer to gain insight. This ethnography is a wonderful gift to the people of Kayan who so value their history and identity in the midst of radical change. At the same time, it is an important contribution to Melanesian ethnography for a region of the north coast that has been little documented in recent times.

Kathleen Barlow

**Prince, Ruth J., and Rebecca Marsland** (eds.): *Making and Unmaking Public Health in Africa. Ethnographic and Historical Perspectives*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014. 292 pp. ISBN 978-0-8214-2058-4. Price: £ 21.99

This book presents a collection of anthropological essays on public health in Africa. Based on historically informed ethnographic field research, the authors unpack programmatic notions of public health circulating in national and transnational communities of health providers, experts, politicians, donors, and agencies. Rather than presupposing a national system of public health, the authors investigate the connections between various forms of public health practice and the relations between the involved social actors. Geographically, the focus is on East Africa, with additional contributions from Nigeria and Senegal.

The introduction of Ruth Prince masterfully outlines changing anthropological, historical, and social science perspectives, from studies on ritual and healing to research on biomedicine and globalization in Africa, traces political developments from colonial governments over the developmentalist state, neoliberalism, structural adjustment to nongovernmental governance in Africa, and sketches the development from public health to global health. It provides an informative background but sets a rather broad frame for the ethnographic case studies.

The essays are grouped into three sections. The first entitled “Whose Public Health?” explores meanings of “public health” and how these meanings are shaped by wider historical and political processes in particular contexts. Drawing on his long engagement with Nigeria, Murray Last argues that the government – and the public – do not give much priority to what we know as classic conceptions of public health and embeds his argument in a discussion of political and religious forces which have shaped local understandings. From ordinary people’s points of view, he concludes, “you can get by with minimal health care provided by all kinds of people”, while public health is seen as “giving jobs and power currently to a set of individuals whose primary concern is not ‘the public’ but themselves ... primarily” (73). In a carefully crafted case study from southwestern Tanzania, Rebecca Marsland emphasizes local concerns about indigenous forms of public health and shows how they have become entangled with recent district government legislations against “misleading traditions” which were framed in conventional public health terms. Examining the relationship between private pharmacists and the state in Senegal since independence, Noémi Tousignant skillfully traces the ways in which this group of health professionals have succeeded in redefining themselves as citizens who speak and act on behalf of a vulnerable public in changing economic and political contexts.

The essays of the second section are grouped around the topic of “Regimes and Relations of Care.” All three accounts present experience near approaches which put real persons into the center of analysis. Lotte Meinert tells the story of Anna, an HIV-positive woman in Uganda who participated in a home-based care project providing antiretroviral therapy. Meinert followed Anna over several years and clearly documents how the “homework”-centered project regime made it increasingly difficult for Anna to reconcile the project aims with her own aspirations for further education. Hannah Brown examines the involve-