

deutung und moralischen Orientierung stehen demgemäß im Vordergrund. Ältere Vorbilder dieser Zugehensweise sind etwa Alfred Bertholet, "Kulturgeschichte Israels" (1919); Ludwig Köhler, "Der hebräische Mensch" (1953) und Carl Schneider, "Kulturgeschichte des Hellenismus" (1967, 1969).

In neuerer Zeit ist besonders Gerd Theißen mit Werken zur Kulturgeschichte des frühesten, im Neuen Testament greifbaren Christentums hervorgetreten. Solche Werke weisen ein unterschiedliches Niveau theoretischer Integration auf; am einen Ende stehen Werke, die verschiedene Aspekte nebeneinander stellen, am anderen Ende Versuche, den Stoff mit Hilfe einer einheitlichen Theorie zu durchdringen und darstellbar zu machen. Das vorliegende Buch bewegt sich auf einem mittleren Niveau, so dass der Stoff weder nur in Einzelteile zerfällt, noch eine streng durchgeführte Systematik erreicht wird. Dadurch bleibt der Leser gewissermaßen frei – er wird weder zu sehr gelenkt, noch bleibt ihm die Deutung einfach selbst überlassen. Der alttestamentliche Teil, gipfelnd in den schönen Kapiteln "Kulturgeschichte Israels" und "Herrschaft und Heilsversprechen", ist etwas deutlicher integriert als die neutestamentlichen Teile, doch auch hier bieten die Kapitel "Jüdische Kultur im 1. Jahrhundert" und "Christliche Lehre und Lebensform" interpretatorische Höhepunkte. Mehrere Schwerpunkte der Interpretation treten deutlich hervor: "mosaische Unterscheidung" und "mosaische Wende" (in Anlehnung an Jan Assmann formuliert) sowie "christologische Differenz".

Den größten Teil der fünfundzwanzig Kapitel hat der Grazer Religionsphilosoph Anton Grabner-Haider selbst geschrieben; kleinere Teile stammen von anderen Autoren: Peter Haider schreibt über das alte Ägypten, Karl Prenner über Persien, Johann Maier über Entstehung und textliche Bezeugung der Bibel und Karl Matthäus Woschitz über das johanneische Korpus des Neuen Testaments. Das von Grabner-Haider geführte Autorenkollektiv hat gute Arbeit geleistet. Ich kann mir gut vorstellen, dass ein Werk wie das vorliegende innerhalb der europaweit an den Universitäten einzurichtenden Bachelor- und Magister-Studiengänge sehr gute Dienste leisten wird. Der kulturgeschichtliche Ansatz, die Berücksichtigung gerade auch neuerer Forschung, und nicht zuletzt die angenehme und verständliche Sprache prädestinieren die "Kulturgeschichte der Bibel" dafür, als Lehrbuch zu dienen. Bernhard Lang

Grinev, Andrei Val'terovich: *The Tlingit Indians in Russian America, 1741–1867*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005. 386 pp. ISBN 978-0-8032-2214-4. Price: £ 35.95

This ethnohistorical work concerns transformations of the Tlingit indigenous culture that occurred in the course of the colonial period, in particular during the Russian rule of Alaska. Although the history of the Russian colonization of Alaska has been relatively well researched, many aspects of the intercultural contact in that region still remain to be clarified. Grinev's book,

which is based on a wide range of published and unpublished sources as well as on the existing scholarly works, addresses and partly fills those lacunae. As such, the book is a contribution to the steadily growing body of professional and popular literature on the subject – something that became possible due to the better accessibility to Russian archives after the Cold War. Some of those works, however, contain striking factual and interpretative inconsistencies, which Grinev's book is meant to address and correct.

Structurally, "The Tlingit Indians in Russian America" is divided into introduction, in which Grinev thoroughly discusses his sources, and three extensive chapters divided into 5–7 subchapters. The internal organization of the first and the third chapter, devoted to the "traditional" and the postcontact culture of the Tlingit, respectively, follows the division of culture into "material," "social," and "spiritual." Chapter 2 recounts the history of the European exploration and colonization of the Tlingit territory.

In a manner of many ethnographic monographs, Grinev begins his discussion of the precontact culture of the Tlingit by placing it within its geographical context. He thus identifies the geographical location of that indigenous group at the end of the 18th century – that is, at the onset of the Russian exploration – and describes the environmental characteristics of that part of North America. The author then turns to more particular matters, such as the "anthropological type" of the Tlingit, their linguistic affiliations, internal divisions, and demographical issues. Although Grinev's analysis of the "specific" racial features of that indigenous group seems a little obsolete, his analysis of the dynamic of interethnic frictions, expansions, and assimilations – and hence formation of new ethnic units that cannot be classified into neatly-cut categories – is particularly interesting in this part of the book. The next three sections of the first chapter concern the "material" aspects of the "traditional" Tlingit culture – that is, their economic activities, technology and tools, clothing, food production, dwellings and settlements, but above all the "prestige economy" – the phenomenon found also among other indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest. Surprisingly, only in this subchapter Grinev presents the theoretical premises of his work by giving the reader a brief lecture on Marxist historical materialism.

The discussion on the prestige economy is simultaneously an introduction to the section on "social culture." Here, Grinev describes the social structure and the institution of family among the Tlingit, and analyzes the role of war in that society. He intends to reconcile two contradicting opinions on that last topic (war was essential for the local economy vs. minimal economic function of war), and concludes that although the Tlingit were indeed bellicose, their society lacked war-related institutions, such as permanent warlords.

In the section concerning the spiritual aspect of the Tlingit culture, Grinev covers such diverse topics as the conceptions about the structure and nature of the universe and its phenomena, personal names, morals, and folk-

lore. Unfortunately, like in the case of his discussion of “material” and “social” dimensions of culture, the author does not show how all those “spiritual” components are interconnected, for instance, how Tlingit morals reflect their ideas about the universe. He links, however, some features of the moral conduct to prestige economy.

Chapter 2 deals very systematically with the history of Tlingit-European contacts, beginning with the first, largely conjectural, encounters with Japanese and Chinese sailors and with the better documented contacts with Spanish conquistadors in the 16th century. The memory of the latter still survives in folklore. These were followed by sporadic expeditions undertaken by French explorers, British merchants, and American fur traders, which, however, did not produce any significant impact on the Tlingit. Far more important politically, economically, and culturally was the coming of the Russians, which dates back to the Second Kamchatka Expedition that reached Alaskan shores in 1741. The remaining sections of chapter 2 are devoted to historical developments that followed that “founding event” of the Russian presence in North America. And what followed were almost 120 years of colonization fueled by fur trade and marked not only by smallpox pandemics that wiped out scores of natives, and by numerous armed clashes or even all-out revolts – like, for instance, the one of 1802 that presented a serious threat to the Russian settlers – but also by instances of intermarriage, compliance, cooperation, and – last but not least – conversion to Christianity due to the epic missionary endeavor of the Russian Orthodox Church. The chapter ends with a recount of the final decades of the Russian rule in Alaska that were characterized by an increasingly ubiquitous commercial and military American presence in the area, which eventually led to the purchase of the territory by the USA in 1867 and the withdrawal of the Russians.

The last part of the book concerns the impact of Europeans, particularly Russians, on “material,” “social,” and “spiritual” culture of the Tlingit, although Grinev mentions also some instances of Tlingit culture affecting that of the colonists, like, for example, the methods of processing and storing fish. The most significant change, according to the author, occurred in the area of trade. In fact, Grinev argues that trade was the most important catalyst of cultural innovations. This includes both the commercial exchange with colonists and the one conducted with the neighboring indigenous communities. Another consequential transformation took place in the way the Tlingit celebrated potlatch. This was marked primarily by the presence of European goods, although some decidedly negative innovations, such as consumption of alcohol, also occurred. On the other hand, the Tlingit social organization, which Grinev discusses in the next section of this chapter, did not undergo major evolution during the colonial period. One important exception was the increased number of slaves – the chief marker of social status. Far more important was the demographic change, namely, the gradual growth of the mestizo population due to intermarriage, and the decline of population in some areas brought about by diseases and warfare in which

firearms, another dubious cultural innovation, were being used.

The closing subsections of chapter 3 describe changes wrought by Europeans and Americans in the realm of the “spiritual.” Here, Grinev examines transformations of “religious beliefs” (a dubious category in the case of indigenous cultures in which the “religious” and the “profane” are hardly, if ever, separable) as well as “arts and games.” The author also shortly discusses the impact of literacy, which – in turn – cannot be seen apart from the work of the Russian Orthodox missionaries. He argues that because of the economic independence of the Tlingit and their access to abundant sources of food, the missionaries were able to influence their views only to a limited degree. This, however, seems to be contradicted not only by some other scholars, for instance, Sergei Kan, whose important work on the cultural role of Russian Orthodoxy in Alaska (1999) Grinev cites, but also a critical reading of his own account.

The book deserves praises in the first place for its documentary value and the thorough use of archival sources by the author. The appendix containing some of those sources is certainly valued by all students of the indigenous cultures of Northwest. Numerous and exact charts and maps (the latter could be larger though) support Grinev’s ethnographic account very well.

On the other hand, the vision of culture sharply divided into “material,” “social,” and “spiritual” blocks – one of the dogmas of the Soviet era ethnography in which, by the way, I was also trained – is simplistic and leaves such issues as, for example, social aspects of religion or the symbolic dimension of spatial organization of settlements out of this conceptual framework. Probably because of these particular methodological premises, Grinev also tends to downplay some of the factors that stimulated cultural change among the Tlingit and extol others. On p. 213, he states that “trade was the basic channel through which European culture penetrated Indian society.” Still, one can argue – even on the grounds of Grinev’s book – that the missionary activity of the Russian Orthodox Church transformed Tlingit culture not less thoroughly than the fur trade and epidemics. Traders come and go and missionaries, no matter how much an anthropologist may detest them, stay in native communities full time, and because of this permanent presence, they are in the position to affect native culture, for better or for worse, more than other culture brokers.

Darius J. Piwowarczyk

Harison, Marie Aimé Joël: Vier Jahrzehnte Unabhängigkeit Madagaskars. Eine Bilanz der politischen Entwicklung 1960–1998. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2006. 238 pp. ISBN 978-3-631-55516-3. (Europäische Hochschulschriften; Reihe 31: Politikwissenschaft, 538) Preis: € 42.50

Madagaskar zählt zu jenen Ländern, die in unserer medialen Berichterstattung üblicherweise nur Beachtung finden, wenn sie von Naturkatastrophen, Hungersnöten oder Bürgerkrieg heimgesucht werden. Politische