Although Asmat are renowned internationally for the quality of their wood carving, and particularly for the towering, ancestral *bisj* poles which are displayed prominently in those Western museums fortunate enough to hold examples, there is a remarkably small corpus of literature available on Asmat society and lifeways.

Restrictions on social and cultural research in Indonesia's two Papuan provinces place strong limits on access to the sort of sustained field enquiry required for a close understanding of issues of conversion and belief, but the author managed to spend a total of five months in the Asmat area during two periods in 2001 and 2004. She then fleshed out this field material with a very productive series of interviews with art collectors and former missionaries in the Untied States, Canada, the Netherlands, and Germany.

The broad topic of the book – an enquiry into the nature of "conversion," as conceived by Catholic and Protestant missionaries and their Asmat subjects – is largely novel in the context of Melanesian ethnography, and exceptional in the manner in which it addresses the three different perspectives. Effectively, this study offers us three ethnographies in the one, and the respectful impartiality of the author's approach to all three of her ethnographic subject groups is admirable.

The argument moves from a very useful reflection on questions of method and context, through a series of chapters in which questions of conversion are folded and refolded through alternating examinations of Catholic, Protestant, and traditional Asmat forms and structures of belief, towards a conclusion that addresses the global and regional contexts for Asmat conversion. If at times the sequence of chapters appears somewhat involuted, it does usefully mimic the imbrication of contemporary Asmat and missionary beliefs and practices, each subtly inflected and altered through contact with the other.

The basic conception of the volume as a form of internal comparison in a three-way encounter is particularly impressive. The American origin of both the Catholic Crosiers and Protestant TEAM missionaries allows for direct and effective comparison of their theologies and conversion strategies, and for an insightful treatment of their different conceptions of syncretism and the role of culture in conversion. A historically sensitive account of the microevolution of conversion strategies is especially illuminating in its demonstration of the flexibility of the Crosiers, as distinct from the seeming doctrinal rigidity of the TEAM missionaries. While there is evident sympathy for the more scholarly Catholics, some of whom have undertaken graduate training in anthropology, there is also respect for the medical and language work of the Protestants, though there is little love lost between them. The author's interviews with retired Catholic and Protestant missionaries generate commentaries that prove to be more revealing of themselves and of each other than their more direct self-representations in interview and through their writings.

Two areas for further research can be readily identified. The first would consider more closely the positions and perspectives of the many non-Papuan Indonesians with experience in the Asmat region – both the mission assistants, such as the Kai Islanders employed in the Catholic frontline, and the government officials and "economic migrants" who dominate local trade (only three foreign missionaries – all of them Catholic – remained in the Asmat region during the period of the author's visits, all other church positions having been localised).

The second might address the persistent opacity of Asmat perspectives on Asmat life and belief, and on their engagement with outsiders, strikingly evident here as in most writing on Asmat, and particularly so when contrasted with the abundance of testimony and documentation from the two sets of missionaries. In part, this presumably reflects the author's lack of mastery of Asmat language. It is evident that most if not all interviews with Asmat were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, and Asmat Indonesian is probably not a very precise vehicle for comprehension. The present volume, for all its obvious merits, leaves one hungry for a substantially more profound account of Asmat experience and exegesis. No index is provided but there are useful appendices, with lists of interlocutors and a glossary of key terms. An English edition is in preparation, which should serve to bring this provocative and important text to a wider readership and into broader debate. Chris Ballard

Jenkins, Philip: God's Continent. Christianity, Islam, and Europe's Religious Crisis. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. 340 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-538462-8. Price: $ 16.95

In his latest book, "God's Continent. Christianity, Islam, and Europe's Religious Crisis," Philip Jenkins gives a realistic and historically well grounded evaluation of the future of Christianity in secular and globalizing Europe. He asks the important question: Is the Christian church in Europe doomed to collapse under the weight of globalization, Western secularism, and a flood of Muslim immigrants? Once again he raises the question if Europe is on the brink of becoming "Eurabia," which he addressed previously in his other books: in the very successful "The Next Christendom. The Coming of Global Christianity" (Oxford 2002, 2007), the first book to take the full measure of the changing balance of the Christian faith worldwide; in "The New Faces of Christianity. Believing the Bible in the Global South" (Oxford 2006, 2008), where the author tried to show that the most rapidly growing Christian churches are in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The issue was followed recently in "The Lost History of Christianity. The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia – and How It Died" (New York 2008), where he tells the little known story of how the earliest Christian churches of the East (Middle East, China, India) became almost totally extinct.

"God's Continent" reveals the flaws in arguments about the floods of Muslim immigrants, exploding Muslim birthrates, and the demise of European Christianity. Frankly acknowledging current tensions in Europe, Jenkins exposes the overheated rhetoric about a Muslim-

dominated Europe as based on some politically convenient myths. Muslims are not the only new immigrants in Europe as also Christians from Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe are pouring into the Western countries, transforming the face of European Christianity. At the same time both Christianity and Islam face similar real difficulties of how to survive within Europe's secular culture. Jenkins presents how they both adapt at the same time changing the religious scene of Europe. In addition, making analogies to the religious situation in North America he claims it is not the European Christianity that seems to be ill. Its weakness lies in the institutional crisis of Christianity and particularly in the case of the Roman Catholics, who until fairly recently maintained a high level of practice, the religious nonparticipation. He also points to the lack of alternative churches unlike, e.g., to United States.

The study has twelve chapters but some main questions are discussed thoroughly again and again in different places. First chapter, "Your Religion Tomorrow," characterizes generally the contemporary cultural, political, social (demographic), and religious situation in Western Europe where the three rival powers – Christianity, Islam, and secularism – clash together. Jenkins agrees that European nations are changing culturally and socially, first and foremost undergoing a transformations with a sharp decline of religious practice among the old stock white Europeans. Certainly, Europe is acquiring greater ethnic (racial) and cultural diversity. Its religious implications are not clear yet, though the religious character of a future Europe seems to be of greater importance than its social, economic, and cultural issues. No reasons allow upholding the thesis that Christianity in Europe has already vanished or is approaching extinction. There are intriguing signs of its growth within the secular framework. The European continent starts to be a laboratory for new forms of faith, new structures of organization and interaction, which successfully accommodate to a dominant secular environment.

In chapter two, "Godless Europe?," Jenkins names the different factors that demonstrate – according to several different surveys – the weakness of European Roman Christianity: a sharp decline in belief and church attendance coinciding with the trend to small families (empty pews, empty cradles), the growing number of divorces, the giving up of the rite of confession, the lowering of priestly prestige, falling numbers of candidates to the priesthood and religious live, changes in rules for fasting and abstinence, sex scandals, and so on. Jenkins observes that similar trends have also affected the Judaism. As an explanation of this decline, if not "death of Christian Europe," he indicates on the inside of the Roman Catholic Church its doctrinal stiffness and totalitarian nature, its traditional opposition to contraception and abortion, and on the outside of it the welfare state, secularization, globalization, a multifaith and multicultural society and the changes in gender attitudes. If these explanations are correct, writes Jenkins, this decline will have implications for the fate of the rising Islam, which will not be expanding into an ideological vacuum. These factors make Europe an excellent model of secularization theory in action, but – as Jenkins states shrewdly – are symptoms of decline as much as its causes.

Chapters three, "Faith among the Ruins," and four, "New Christians," characterize thoroughly the situation of European churches, with special attention to the Roman Catholic Church. Jenkins consents that trends in secular society have hit church institutions hard but even if the European religious picture is by no means uniform, the religious belief is still an important force for many Europeans, and Europe still has a solid minority of believing Christians of about 531 million people (including Russia). Strict secularism is advanced among cultural and political elites, but not significantly among ordinary people. Moreover, Christian values have penetrated European thought and have become an inextricable part of social consciousness and cultural identity. This allows Jenkins to speak about a "latent faith," a "ghostly presence," and of a "cultural, latent, and residual" Christianity. Some evidence of this presence is the foundation of new religious orders, the activity of charismatic Christians, and among others the numerous and influential Christian immigrants from Asia and Africa who already now represent a potent religious and cultural force. This new Christianity in Europe has a great deal in common with Muslims: they both struggle against moral and sexual decadence. Alas, European media and officialdom demonstrate rather greater tolerance toward Islam than to immigrant Christianity, viewing it as a peculiarly sinister faith not worthy of legal protection.

Chapter five, "The Moor's Return," chap. six, "Making Muslims", and chap. seven, "Young and Old," are concerned with the critical question of Muslim presence in Western Europe: Can they be absorbed into societies that have traditionally been Christian or secular? How such interaction will transform both sides? The upsurge of Muslim communities raises also the question of what kind of Islam will be practiced in the growing communities: a moderate Euro-Islam (seen as a hope by white Europeans) or a kind of fanatical, intolerant, and violent Islam. Jenkins doubts that we can speak without qualification of a European Muslim. Such a generic individual is not easy to find. There are deep divisions within the Muslim communities and over the past quarter of the century, European Islam has witnessed freewheeling debates over the nature of Islam (battle for the soul of Islam), particularly its political role. The deep alienation from mainstream society is observed among the uneducated and poor adolescent and young adult Muslims for whom rigid forms of Islam seem to be an island of stability and a bedrock of cultural identity. It is the classic dilemma of the second generation residents: caught between cultures, they feel utterly separated from the country of family origin and yet cannot identify with their own country of birth and upbringing.

Chapter eight, "Revolutions at Home," and chap. nine, "Ultras," continue to discuss the points of clashes between the Islamic lifestyle and European cultural assumptions, and especially the multicultural dilemmas of European Muslims: place of religion in society and cul-

ture, sexual libertarianism, the changing role of women (feminist ideologies) and the education of children (girls), premarital sex, and homosexuality. Fears about secularization, especially challenges to parental authority and the transformation of male and female roles in the society serve as a powerful incentive to Islamist extremism. Multiculturalism and European freedoms permit Muslims to enforce traditional rules and to practice Islamic fundamentalism in Europe in ways they cannot legally do in their homelands. But finally, Jenkins, while not trivializing the real dangers posed by terrorist violence, is optimistic about the general prospects for ethnic and religious assimilation of Muslims: the longer they live in Europe and experience its powerful cultural trends, the more they are likely to acquire common European cultural and social attitudes.

Chapters ten, "Transforming Europe," and eleven, "Transforming Faith," state a more general question: How can the European Union preach certain values as secularism, tolerance, individualism, freedom of expression, equal treatment of men and women, heterosexuals and homosexuals, a progressive view on gender, family, and sexuality while at the same time Muslim communities uphold radically different values? Christianity emphasizes the value of an individual, traditional Islam, in contrast, is communal and collective. But what does indeed, asks Jenkins, make the core of European values that should be imposed on the newcomers? The dilemma of cultural politics is that if multiculturalism means glorification of every society and tradition, then on what grounds should the European expect Muslims to respect constitution and Western and Christian roots of Europe? According to Jenkins this is not so much a Muslim problem as a religious problem on the side of the European elites, which failed till now to understand the importance of religious thought and motivation. This is also a problem of the fundamental clashes between Christian and Islam belief and the secularism, the official ideology of Europe. Even if the outcome of contemporary debates is not evident, both Islam and Christianity will change radically in coming decades, through the experience of living in Europe's social and cultural environment but also from the fact of living side by side and having to interact with each other in a multifaith setting.

In chapter twelve, "Europe's Religions Tomorrow," Jenkins projects some consequences of the fact that within a foreseeable future, European nations will have more Muslims who as prospective citizens will have voting rights. European Christians will have no alternative but to look closely at Islam to find there many familiar and inspiring elements, in the first place, the belief in the existence and power of a personal God who intervenes directly in human affairs. They will have to tackle the question what is then Islam? A Christian deviation or a divinely revealed and by God himself founded religion? If the latter is true, is Christian evangelism toward Muslims right? One thing seems certain for Jenkins that the religion will play a more and more intense role in public debates. From this point of view the advent of Islam might be a good news for European Christianity, as the European states will have to take into account the presence of Christianity together with the renewed interest in the Christian roots of their culture. "'God's Continent' still has more life than anyone might have thought possible only a few years ago."

Seldom have I read a book with such an intellectual pleasure and lively interest as Jenkins' "God's Continent." Written in a clear style and supported by solid arguments it helps to understand the processes happening in Europe and the European world we live in. The author shows convincingly the complicated political, social, cultural, and religious situation in Europe and at the same time escapes any easy generalizations. He also demonstrates, among other things, that paradoxically Islam – the traditional enemy of Christendom – could be a desired ally for Christianity in the fight with a common enemy: the secularization. Andrzej Bronk

Kan, Sergei: Lev Shternberg. Anthropologist, Russian Socialist, Jewish Activist. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009. 550 pp. ISBN 978-0-8032-1603-7. (Critical Studies in the History of Anthropology, 15) Price: £ 45.00

This long-awaited intellectual biography of the founder of the Leningrad School of Ethnography, Lev Shternberg, by Sergei Kan is a landmark study both as a biography of an influential scholar and as a foundational work in the history of Russian anthropology. Through both interviews and an exhaustive use of archival material, Kan documents both the scholar's debut as young revolutionary activist, pioneer fieldworker on Sakhalin Island, and most significantly as the patriarchal founder of professional ethnography at the end of the imperial period and start of the Soviet period. The book is published within a series devoted to the history of anthropology from an American publisher and is one of the first to document the history of a European scholar. The volume fully documents previous biographies of Shternberg, and as the title suggests, departs from the established literature by giving equal weight not only to his political activism as a member of the Populist "terrorist" organisation the People's Will but as a prominent and committed member of the Jewish community in St. Petersburg.

The biography follows a standard chronological format with chapters, or rather sections, organised according to major periods of the scholar's life. There is a very short section on his early upbringing in Zhitomir, a surprisingly short section on his fieldwork on Sakhalin, and far more developed sections documenting the sometimes shocking turns of fortune as he built a school of ethnography through the Russian civil war, the Bolshevik "coup," and institutionalisation of Soviet power in the NEP period. The book reads well also as a testimony, and political argument, about the founding of Soviet power. Kan spends a lot of space explaining the various struggles and organisations during the civil war period and also devotes a lot of energy scrutinising the archival record to deduce which side Shternberg may have taken. It should be noted that the latter chapters of the book have a rather dark