

proaches are conducted skilfully and the end result is not a set of discrete snapshots but an incitement to work with connections and contrasts. It is not that the two regions are identical or that a theory that has proved fruitful in one place must generate similar results elsewhere. Indeed, the chapters powerfully demonstrate diversity and diversification within both Amazonia and Siberia. Nonetheless, the varied ways of being in the world that might be called “animism” (or the plural “animisms”) generate topics that reward this kind of collaborative dialogue of experts.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, it is possible to see the book as debating the relative and shifting meanings and roles of categories like nature, culture, and the supernatural or spiritual. We meet animals (domesticated, hunted, consumed, predatory, and “spirit-charged”) and shamans (some of whom are animals, or vice versa) in every chapter. But the topics generated by these underlying themes engage with what it might mean to be a person – a self, an individual, a human, a “non-human” or “other-than-human”, a relation of plants and/or animals, a “spirit” or an “enemy”? – and what it might mean to own or be owned, consume or evade, to participate or differentiate, and otherwise relate to place and larger-than-human community. Widespread Amazonian and Siberian notions of transformability of persons (whatever that category means) might encourage a richer openness to a transformation of our ethnographic disciplines in the face of work by colleagues elsewhere. This, finally, is a significant part of this book’s interest, power, and promise.

Graham Harvey

Buckley, R. P.: *The Night Journey and Ascension in Islam. The Reception of Religious Narrative in Sunnī, Shī ʿī and Western Culture.* London: I. B. Tauris, 2013. 360 pp. ISBN 978-1-84885-986-9. Price: £ 59.50

Nach allgemein islamischer Überzeugung begab sich der Prophet Mohammed sowohl auf eine Nachtreise von Mekka nach Jerusalem (*Isrāʿ*), als auch auf eine Himmelfahrt (*Miʿrāġ*). Die harmonisierende Deutung der sog. Orthodoxie, die bereits in der paradigmatischen Prophetenbiografie von Ibn Ishāq aus dem 8. Jh. vorgestellt wurde, verknüpft die Erzählung der nächtlichen Reise nach Jerusalem unmittelbar mit der Himmelfahrt. Weiterhin hat sich in den verschiedenen Ausprägungen des Islams eine Mehrheitsmeinung herausgebildet, die besagt, dass die wunderbaren Reisen von Mohammed körperlich und im wachen Zustand stattgefunden hätten. Jedoch waren schon zu Lebzeiten des Propheten sowohl die horizontale als die vertikale Reise umstritten und im Laufe der Zeit ist das Thema in allen möglichen Facetten von islamischen Gläubigen durchdekliniert worden. Die einschlägigen Koranstellen und Prophetenüberlieferungen sind nicht eindeutig und haben deshalb Anlass für vielfältige Diskussionen gegeben, die bis heute fortdauern. Dem Arabisten Ronald Buckley ist es gelungen, ein Standardwerk zu verfassen, das eine wertvolle Übersicht der unterschiedlichen Interpretationen bietet. Klar thematisch strukturiert, schöpft dieses Buch vor allem ausgiebig aus arabischen Quellen. Aber auch (englischsprachige) Web-

sites aus der ganzen Welt und englischsprachige Debatten aus dem indischen Subkontinent werden berücksichtigt. Die Studie widmet sich hauptsächlich dem sunnitischen Islam, während die beiden Schlusskapitel sich mit Sonderthemen befassen: Kapitel 6 setzt sich mit den Auffassungen zu *Isrāʿ* und *Miʿrāġ* innerhalb der Strömung der Imamiten oder Zwölfer-Schiiten auseinander, während Kapitel 7 näher auf westliche Sichtweisen eingeht, wobei die Zeitspanne vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart behandelt wird. Buckley hat hier ein fast enzyklopädisches Werk geschaffen, das außerdem in einem sehr angenehmen, gut lesbaren Stil verfasst worden ist.

Edwin P. Wieringa

Couderc, Pascal, and Kenneth Sillander (eds.): *Ancestors in Borneo Societies. Death, Transformation, and Social Immortality.* Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2012; 390 pp. ISBN 978-87-7694-092-8. (NIAS Studies in Asian Topics, 50) Price: £ 19.99

This volume examines the various ways ancestors factor into social life in Borneo. Many studies have been done on mortuary rights, including the complex secondary mortuary rituals that involve exhuming the bones of the deceased and placing them in ossuaries. However, many of these studies ended there, without examining the role of ancestors in Borneo religions and societies. This volume seeks to situate Borneo ancestors within the literature on ancestorship and examine the types of ancestor spirits that play a role in Borneo societies.

To begin to position Borneo ancestors within the literature, Couderc and Sillander grapple with terminology in the introduction. Definitions of ancestorship that work well for unilineal societies fall flat in Borneo societies that reckon kinship bilaterally and collaterally. Additionally, ancestors integrate within the larger religious domain in Borneo, so we do not find the distinct ancestor cults one may find elsewhere. Becoming an ancestor requires more than simply dying; even complex mortuary rituals do not guarantee that one will become an ancestor. Conversely, while those who become influential in life may be more likely to receive complex mortuary treatment, failure to receive those rituals does not preclude one from becoming an ancestor. At the same time, ancestorship is not constrained by biological descent. In some cases, accomplished individuals may become important local ancestors despite not having left any descendants (see the chapters by Sillander, Couderc, and Oesterheld). Even death is not always necessary, as described in Couderc’s discussion of transformed ancestors among the Uut Danum and Béguet’s chapter on transformed ancestors among the Iban.

In addition to the issue of how one becomes an ancestor, there is a wide variety of types of ancestor spirits and of relationships with the living found in Borneo. Genealogical forebears may undergo mortuary rituals that separate them from the living, so that they become part of one collective unit that has little or no influence in the daily lives of the living. At the other end of the spectrum, some societies include distant mythological ancestors who actively aid the living within the list of influential ancestors.