

In “Words from the Primordial Times”, most narratives depict Made-from-Bone in a world of violence, as many powerful enemies like Great Sickness (Kunáhwer-rim) or Anaconda-Person (Malfhwerri) try to kill the protagonist. In various situations, Made-from-Bone’s kinsfolk are murdered and he faces challenges in resurrecting or avenging them. Especially the narratives “from Primordial Times” offer a pool of examples for transformations and illusions, which are often present in indigenous oral literature, as well as for the theories of perspectivism and multinaturalism as formulated by Viveiros de Castro in 1996. However, the expected in-depth analysis in the following “Ethnohistorical Interlude” stays at a fairly superficial level and only provides some more or less speculative comparisons of regional colonial history with excerpts from “Made-from-Bone and Anaconda-Person,” showing parallels which are not too surprising – it would be more surprising if colonial history had passed by the Wakuénai without leaving a trace in their mythology.

The second part, “The World Begins” features also three narratives, where Made-from-Bone does not appear in person. However, he is present as the new protagonist Káali’s older brother. The stories in “The World Begins” are apparently less violent than the preceding ones, and excel in trickery and smart actions, as Made-from-Bone, his brother Káali, or an unnamed man in “The Origin of Bocachico-Fish Dances” obtain material or social items from different non-human beings. The narratives about Káali introducing the *madzerukái* ceremonial drinking songs and the man who learns a dance from fish people lead to the following “Ethnomusicological Interlude.” Again, one might expect an analysis of ceremonial or dance music, but Hill chose to tell us mainly about his personal involvement in Wakuénai social life while organising the “Catfish Trumpet Festival of 1981,” which is an interesting story, but leaves us without much knowledge about the music itself.

The third part, “The World Opens,” finally lets Made-from-Bone retire from the human world in the second narrative, “The Struggle between Made-from-one and First-Woman.” Especially this one (besides the preceding “*Kuwái*, the Powerful Sound that Opened Up the World”) is very important for the history and sociology of Wakuénai ceremonial music: It tells about musical instruments which Made-from-Bone obtained from his son Kuwái, and about his long struggle with his aunt and wife First-Woman (Ámaru) about who were to play the flutes, women or men, and who were not even be allowed to see them, men or women. Here we encounter a masterpiece of inversion of social practices, which is not mentioned by the author. In the final chapter, “Ethnological Coda,” he limits the analysis to the very last story about a man who went to live in the “City of Gold,” in the world of the Water Spirits *Yópinai*. The narrative is a basis for a new, positive interpretation on recent historical and social changes in pre-Chavez Venezuela. Hill concludes, “Along with Made-from-Bone, . . . the Wakuénai of Venezuela are navigating into the new millennium between the historical weight of centuries of discrimination and marginalisation and the promise of unprecedented

political recognition for indigenous cultural and territorial rights under the constitution of 1999” (156). As this was ten years before the book was published, it would be interesting to read at least a note about what finally happened under Chavez’s promising government, but Hill’s analysis ends with 1999.

“Made-from-Bone” obviously lives from the narratives presented in the book and I think this was intended by the author. The English translations are outstanding. However, at least a sample of original Curripaco text would have been an inspiring addition, as speaking rhythms, parallelisms, and onomatopoeics are important factors in Amazonian storytelling (as was shown, e.g., by Bruno Illius in “Das Shipibo.” Berlin 1999). The original texts are archived at AILLA (Archives of Indigenous Languages of Latin America, University of Texas at Austin) and in part retrievable from the internet (after a registration process), but even nowadays not every reader may have the possibility to get them, and it is cumbersome anyway.

Those who expect to find a profound analysis of “Myths, Music, and History” in this book will be disappointed. The analytical chapters are not as inspiring as might have been expected from an author who had been working on the subject for almost 30 years. However, I highly recommend the stories themselves in their excellent translations, but heed my warning: do not read the chapters titled “Overview,” or read them after the following narratives. In these sections, the author anticipates every problem or riddle Made-from-Bone and his fellow protagonists are confronted with along with their solutions and outcomes.

Bernd Brabec de Mori

de Hontheim, Astrid: Chasseurs de diables et collecteurs d’art. Tentatives de conversion des Asmat par les missionnaires pionniers protestants et catholiques. Bruxelles: P. I. E. Peter Lang, 2008. 317 pp. ISBN 978-90-5201-380-0. (Dieux, Hommes et Religions, 12) Prix: € 35.20

The study of indigenous Christianity in the Pacific is an increasingly well-subscribed and sophisticated field for research, and this volume contributes handsomely to our understanding of the subtle variations across the region in the historical experience of proselytization and conversion, and in the nature and expression of faith. Two aspects of this study stand out in particular: the evenhanded treatment and comparison of Christian conversion to both Catholic and Protestant Churches; and the selection by the author of Asmat communities of south-west New Guinea as her hosts.

The estimated 40,000 inhabitants of the Asmat region, resident along the southern coast and its hinterland in the Indonesian province of Papua, have been notoriously resistant to scrutiny – whether by missionaries, colonial and Indonesian administrators, or anthropologists. Like their neighbours to the west, the Kamoro, Asmat have developed a series of strategies that hold acquiescence and resistance in a delicate balance, to the frequent despair of their would-be administrators and proselytisers.

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 United 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-