

hest.” Since the Kivung movement was not just Berger’s but Lima’s as well, Valentine’s public attack must have seemed a shaming rebuke to his hospitality. In his notes Valentine wrote that Lima convened a series of meetings in different localities at which he reaffirmed his allegiance to Berger and asserted that the priest could be bested by “no other master” – apparently a reference to Valentine. Around this time, Valentine’s fieldnotes begin to convey “an impression of failure.” His intervention led Nakanai people to renew and redouble their support for his nemesis. His calls to have the priest disciplined or expelled from New Britain were dismissed by the colonial authorities. Finally, Valentine received a sharp letter from his doctoral supervisor Goodenough, who had left the field some months earlier, reproaching him for overstepping the bounds of appropriate conduct for an anthropological fieldworker. Overwhelmed by misgiving and stymied by his burnt bridges, Valentine eventually adopted a new supervisor and a new dissertation topic.

In telling this story, Jebens generously accords Valentine the respect due to one’s predecessor. However flawed it may be, Valentine’s view of the Kivung is infinitely more valuable to the project of retrospect than the silence we would have if Valentine had not recorded his experiences. But the connections Jebens traces between his own fieldwork and Valentine’s pale against the dramatic – and surely ethnographically significant – links that are evident between Valentine and the priest. Discounting as facile the explanation that they were both simply paranoid, how could these men have wound up behaving in such eerily similar ways? The conclusion Jebens draws is cautionary: they were both responding reflexively to expectations of whites that derived from Nakanai culture. The “construction of Other and Self” in the cultures we study is not just a matter for theory. Every fieldwork is potential ground for figures like the anthropologist Valentine and the priest Berger, who came to act out ideas of themselves as Other that they did not fully grasp. Ira Bashkow

Jenkins, Timothy: *The Life of Property. House, Family, and Inheritance in Béarn, South-West France.* New York: Berghahn Books, 2010. 181pp. ISBN 978-1-84545-667-2. (Methodology and History in Anthropology, 21) Price: £ 35.00

A number of high-profile attempts have recently been made to think “beyond” the local-global distinction, involving assemblages, a focus on interconnectedness and translocality, fractals and chaos theory, and other terms-of-art, with varying degrees of success. Timothy Jenkins’ new book accepts the challenge with characteristic subtlety. “The Life of Property” is no conventional ethnography of rural France, despite a former life as the Evans-Pritchard lectures at Oxford, and Jenkins’ acknowledgement of Evans-Pritchard’s own guiding influence. His aim is both to adumbrate central features of social life in a well-known rural region of South-West France, the Béarn, which borders the central Pyrenees; and notably, to analyse the multiple ways in which cultural practices in that region have influenced the broader national and interna-

tional cultural frame. It is an intriguing approach that, while remaining conceptually aligned on the “local-global” axis, brings a fresh set of perspectives that are all the more relevant to anthropologists for touching on one of the key thinkers of contemporary social science, himself a *Béarnais* by birth: Pierre Bourdieu.

Considering, to begin with, the structure and content of the volume, we are confronted with a composite arrangement, both in date of composition, and theme. Ostensibly, the book focuses on the nature of property in the French Pyrenees, its forms of ownership and transmission, along with continuities in these forms and their mutations. The proposition is that these forms effectively comprise a core cultural resource – “a key in our world to human being and order, to personality and politics, to extent and duration” – whose impact can be traced in a range of contexts, both at a local level, and of wider-ranging scope. In this regard, the first four chapters – the original Evans-Pritchard lectures – address the locality, although reflexivity is present from the start. Chapter 1 begins with the “discovery” of the Pyrenean family in the 19th century, exploring its manifestation as the “stem family” unit in sociological and anthropological theory, and its subsequent emergence in contemporary political debates concerning local social reform with regard to political, economic, and cultural issues. Chapter 2 moves on to examine the elements of local social life which underwrote this “discovery,” and reflexively analyses the sources that enabled historical continuity in the cultural forms themselves – notarial and legal records – and which thus, to a degree, facilitated this sociological conceptualisation. In this regard, it is already clear how a nuanced tracking between local contexts, wider social realities, and academic discourses, is immediately foregrounded in the text.

Chapter 3 is based on fieldwork, examining contemporary rural life, and how categories of property shape and influence it. Both continuities and ruptures are addressed, notably the significant influence of new agricultural technologies and the consolidation of land holdings, and particular attention is given to how the new is assimilated into the *longue durée* of social continuity. Chapter 4 then takes a wider view, discussing matters of local politics with regard to themes of authority, legitimacy, and power, in the context of land use and land sales. These four chapters, Jenkins argues, taken together, provide readings of the same phenomenon – property – from a variety of perspectives. The “life of property” consists precisely in these plural manifestations, interactions with wider frames, and a measured continuity over time, and such perspectivism draws attention, finally, to property’s own elusive nature. Rather than property’s “essence,” we are presented with overlapping strands of a mutable cultural form and their interaction, which underpin key social practices at different levels. One thinks while reading such a discussion, perhaps, of those well-known French historians who examined long-term cycles of economy and society – and whether mention of their work (and influences) might also be pertinent. But within the limits set, the ethnographic portrait developed is complex and multi-layered.