

einen “homogenen Machtblock” auszumachen (435). Demnach sind in Amerika neben den Azteken das ebenso kurzlebige Inka-Reich (1300–1540) die beiden einzigen Beispiele für eine imperiale Herrschaftsform, die politische Strukturen etwa in Form von Architektur dauerhaft auf die eroberten Provinzen übertrug.

Der Band überspannt damit mehr als 3500 Jahre Geschichte Amerikas vor der Eroberung durch die Europäer und bietet damit ein anschauliches Beispiel einer autochthonen und vom Rest der Welt losgelösten Entwicklung menschlicher Formen des Zusammenlebens, der politischen Organisation sowie der wirtschaftlichen und militärischen Unterwerfung von Räumen. Nicht nur die Langlebigkeit mancher Gesellschaften wie der Olmeken, Maya oder der Moche verwundern im Rahmen der im Buch immer wieder angesprochenen politischen Organisationsformen, sondern auch die Kurzlebigkeit anderer bedeutender wie die der Azteken und Inka im Zuge der spanischen Eroberung. Zugleich verweisen die Autoren immer wieder auf klimatische Faktoren (Dürre, Kälteperiode, Vulkanausbruch), die neben politischen Faktoren den Niedergang einzelner Gesellschaften mit beeinflusst haben. Aus dieser immer wieder von den Autorinnen angesprochenen vergleichenden Perspektive betrachtet dürfte der Band sowohl solche Leser ansprechen, die sich erstmalig einen Überblick über die Kulturen Amerikas verschaffen möchten, als auch bereits kulturanthropologische interessierte Studierende wie auch Fachexperten anderer Weltregionen.

Den Band runden anschauliche Karten des Verbreitungsgebiets der besprochenen Kulturen, Zeittabellen zu einzelnen Epochen und Gesellschaften sowie eine allgemeine, für Gesamtamerika geltende Zeittafel am Ende des Bandes ab. Daniel Grana-Behrens

Harris, Mark, and Nigel Rapport (eds.): *Reflections on Imagination. Human Capacity and Ethnographic Method*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. 299 pp. ISBN 978-1-4724-1728-2. Price: £ 70.00

“Reflections on Imagination” is an impressive volume that brings together 15 essays by 16 scholars from different countries and, more importantly, different anthropological traditions. Most contributors (five, including the editors, Harris and Rapport) come from the University of S. Andrews (and at least two others were postgraduate students of Nigel Rapport), and there are also scholars from the universities of Bahia (Brazil), Ohio State and West Chester (USA), Durham, Manchester, Roehampton (UK), Macau (China), Aarhus, Copenhagen (Denmark), and Western Australia. The places and traditions provide for a fascinating exercise in story telling about an issue that has been with anthropology since its very beginnings in the late 18th century – the debate between universalism and relativism. The debate is far from settled, and this book serves well to present one point of view with great passion and lucidity. Or, as put by the editors, the present book “is concerned to redress anthropological tendencies towards cultural relativism and see, instead, the human being as a universal figure” (xiii).

In the introductory part of the book, and starting from the premise of “imagination as a kind of human-scientific source of true knowledge” (5), Rapport argues for the crucial role that imagination plays in understanding the social reality. He considers it as “a key part of our human consciousness” (20). Mark Harris explores the role of imagination in local histories of the Brazilian Amazon, and then traces the histories of imagining the great river and some of its inhabitants in the last couple of centuries. Adopting a kind of Batesonian “ecological understanding,” he envisions cognitive maps that “represent the activities and memories of the discovery of the imagination and serve to guide personal orientation in the future” (38).

The second part of the book presents case studies, with Paul Stoller writing on “Re-Imagining Ethnography,” Jonathan Skinner turning his attention to dance (Tango Heart and Soul: Solace, Suspension, and the Imagination in the Dance Tourist), Roy Dilley explores the historical imagination in West Africa, and Peter Collins turning to the anthropological narratives about ghosts and haunting. Taking Vincent Crapanzano’s “Imaginative Horizons” (2004) as one of his starting points, Mattia Fumanti explores the notion (and the limitations of) “the real” in anthropology. In the next chapter, Andrew Irving “explores the relationship between the thinking, moving and imagining body and surrounding city’s industrial architecture, infrastructure and buildings” (135). His primary fieldwork site are four dominant bridges that connect different parts of New York. A different kind of interdisciplinarity is present in Hideko Mitsui’s exploration of the “Uses of Finland in Japan’s Social Imaginary.” Finland seems to be “part of imagined, alternative futures,” that connect to the imagined past and add to a construction of different (often mutually irreconcilable) narratives (175). Paulo César Alves takes social imaginary and literature in order to better understand the popularization of modern medicine in Brazil. In the 11th chapter of the book, Leo Coleman turns his attention to political anthropology. I found his chapter especially interesting, with its readings of several influential scholars from different disciplines, but also with his acceptance of Beidelman’s definition of imagination as “story telling” and “fable-marking” (211 f.). Camilla Morelli explores the imagination of Matsigenka children from Peruvian Amazonia, in the chapter whose title invokes the famous Philip K. Dick’s novel, “Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?” While very ambitious in scope, this is the chapter that seems slightly at odds with other contributors’ attempts to construct a new, humanistic anthropology. In the only co-authored chapter, Morten Nielsen and Morten Axel Pedersen offer comparative views of Mozambique and Mongolia, concluding that their “comparative study of collapsed infrastructural futures in Mozambique and Mongolia ethnographically extends the Bergsonian understanding of time and human perception” (258). In the final chapter of this part of the book, James Leach offers a somewhat more theoretical exploration about the role of the others in the formation of anthropological knowledge. Finally, in the third part of the book, Huon Wardle offers some interesting insights about the limits of imagination (and imagining).

The book is ethnographically rich and theoretically challenging. It brings some of the most important figures of Western philosophy, from Kant to Bergson and Heidegger, with Wardle's important references to Arendt. It would have been interesting to see whether some non-Western thinkers could bring a slightly different perspective, and perhaps even a different kind of imagination. To go back to the "universalism vs. relativism" debates more than two centuries ago, German writer and philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), who claimed that, essentially, each people (*Volk*) was endowed with a particular "spirit" (*Geist*), and that this should be taken into consideration when trying to understand it. On the other hand, French author François-Marie Arouet, better known as Voltaire (1694–1778), claimed that there is only a "universal" humanity and that human being was universal. To which Herder replied that in Voltaire's "universal humanity" everybody spoke French.

Aleksandar Bošković

Hegewald, Julia A. B.: In the Shadow of the Golden Age. Art and Identity in Asia from Gandhara to the Modern Age. Berlin: EB-Verlag Dr. Brandt, 2014. 584 pp. ISBN 978-3-86893-149-5. (Studies in Asian Art and Culture, 1). Price: € 98.00

We all do it. We tend to think in terms of evolution and change leading from one level of achievement to the next. A path that may wind upwards, but unavoidably must move downhill again at one point. The study of the arts of Asia has been strongly informed by such evolutionary thinking. Seeing and describing historical developments along stages of origin and rise, efflorescence and overachievement, decadence and decline, is quite common and perhaps even expected. Art historians have often linked these phases to political circumstances, such as the rule of a specific king or dynasty. Packaging the arts in dynastically labelled parcels indeed helps us keep a level of control over the data. It is difficult then to let go of such thinking, even after realising that the factors behind change, for the better or the worse, usually prove to be more complicated than expected.

A conference at the Institute of Oriental and Asian Studies of the University of Bonn in 2011 brought together a group of scholars who, each from their own field of expertise in Asian or Islamic arts, were to engage with the "Golden Age" as a pivotal concept in evolutionary, historical, and art historical thinking. Or rather with what happens in the aftermath of a "Golden Age." The convenor of the conference, Prof. Dr. Julia Hegewald, collected fifteen of the contributions in a solid, first volume of a new series entitled "Studies in Asian Art and Culture."

Physically, the book makes pleasant reading through the use of heavy paper, a relatively big letter size, and a consistently applied formatting of the text. The chapters each offer an introduction to their main text. After their conclusion, we find separate sections for photo credits, acknowledgments, and excellent referencing through well legible footnotes and a full-fledged literature list. Each of the "bibliographies" also distinguishes between primary,

secondary, and internet sources and thus invites us to read and see more.

The editor gave her contributors ample opportunity to send in large colour illustrations for their text, and these make the book not only a good read, but also a feast for the eye. The images have been placed immediately adjacent to the text requiring them, sometimes in smart image-juxtapositions. At the end, we find a glossary explaining names and terms (many from Sanskrit), a list of the 240 illustrations, a section with "Notes on Contributors" and a rather flat index (e.g., who is going to check 103 hits for "India" without further qualification?). The index works best when the number of hits is relatively low, which is the case for most entries in it. All this comes in a hard-cover book which perhaps on the outside may not be as sturdy as one would expect, seeing the signs of wear at the top and bottom of the spine after I took the book along on many train rides to and from work.

Julia A. B. Hegewald first offers an introduction to the theme of her book, in which she problematises the linear art historical model as it has been applied to Asian arts. She reiterates how narratives of Golden Ages and Dark Ages developed. By request, many of the contributors focus on the shadow of a Golden Age, its aftermath, which in the linear model would be perceived as darkening a downhill path. Change indeed meant adapting to new situations, sometimes even through struggle, but not infrequently with a surprisingly positive turn. "Such politically, socially and regularly religiously challenging periods can artistically be surprisingly fertile. Destroyed temples get rebuilt, looted icons are replaced, and communities show a marked effort in search for new identities. Through their art and frequently through the re-use of old symbols in new settings or the adaptation of new forms in old settings, they can succeed in redefining themselves so as to strengthen their religious, cultural or political position" (38 f.). Many of the contributions one way or another indeed deal with the re-orientation of a shared identity vis-à-vis "the other(s)."

In his foreword, Partha Mitter first offers us a glimpse into the long history of thinking in "Golden Ages" and the subsequent, expected decline. During the European Enlightenment, this "downhill" view was replaced in the West by the optimistic idea of linear progress for the better (13). However, "[t]he rise of nationalist thought in the nineteenth century, which aimed at constructing identity on the basis of shared memory, intensified the need for a mythical golden age" (14). Mitter emphasises that the Golden Age concept thus became an essential building block of collective memory, which then helped create modern nationhood.

The sixteen chapters in the book have not been arranged into separate sections but were organised thematically and chronologically. They take us from the early Historic period to the present. Chapters 2 to 7, one way or another, deal with Buddhist arts and architecture; from Pakistan (Gandhara in the early days), Central Asia and China to Cambodia and Thailand. They were contributed by Susan L. Huntington, Ciro Lo Muzio, John C. Huntington, Petra H. Rösch, William A. Southworth, and Sa-