

than this, many believe that these idiosyncracies of vinyl are in fact special properties that can be aesthetically exploited” (59).

Chapter 3: “Things. Qualities and Entanglements,” provides a thorough and theoretically sophisticated examination of the materiality of the format, and as a thing which is culturalised: “Well beyond its musical capacities, it is something to behold and touch, to display and to offer as a gift, a medium to play and play with” (63). Included here is the actual production of vinyl records, with a fascinating discussion (and illustrations) of cutting the template, and pressing the copies. The discussion of vinyl as a commodity (chap. 4) embraces issues of value, including rarity, vinyl as an art form, and marketing. There are multiple markets for new vinyl releases, driven by the recent emphasis on marketing “heritage” within the music industries, especially though reissues, and by the new prominence of boutique labels and small-batch production. The consideration of music retail in chap. 5 is of particular interest, given this has been a relatively neglected topic within popular music studies. Drawing on their fieldwork and personal shopping experiences, they identify three types of shop involved with vinyl, and consider how these have managed to survive, and at times prosper, during a period of the decline of physical music retail.

Bartmanski and Woodward are at pains to eschew a reliance on privileging one aspect or factor in vinyl’s revival: “A specific advantage [of our research] is that we emphasize contemporary *vinyl culture* and focus on the vinyl as material object from a variety of perspectives rather than exploring just one aspect of it, such as vinyl consumption or collectorship, for example. We find that it is precisely the combination of different features that makes vinyl enduringly interesting for various publics” (167). That recognized, I feel the authors tend to rather overstate the importance of producers and consumers associated with electronic dance music in the revival of vinyl and the importance of the format in the current music market. I would argue, as they do, that EDM has been significant in the production and consumption of *contemporary* vinyl recordings. However, the wider vinyl culture continues to rest on the on-going historical preference of most “record collectors” for the format. Admittedly this preference is largely based on nostalgia, but the majority of collectors emphasise the use value of their records, and their collecting is based firmly on a love of music rather than some sort of commodity fetishism (though that is also present).

As the conclusion shows, what is emphasised is the manner in which vinyl demonstrates the social life of things, following and building on the work of writers such as Daniel Miller and Arjun Appadurai. The emphasis throughout is on how “vinyl culture forms tight knit communities and ever-expanding social networks based on trust and communality of style,” primarily through independent scenes in cosmopolitan settings. The authors are passionate about their subject: “our book is about a love” story (xvi), with their analysis informed by their own experiences with the format, especially in relation to electronic dance music: “we are both vinyl lovers as well, personally immersed in the scenes we have researched”

(xvi). This facilitates their access to those scenes, and those engaged in them. Throughout, the discussion attests to the importance of immersion in the social field. This is a fascinating and instructive study.

Roy Shuker

**Bassett, Molly H.:** *The Fate of Earthly Things. Aztec Gods and God-Bodies.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015. 283 pp. ISBN 978-0-292-76088-2. Price: \$ 60.00

Molly Bassett attempts to reanalyze pre-Hispanic Aztec religion and religiosity through three important concepts: *teotl* (god), *teixiptla* (localized embodiment), and *tlaquimilolli* (sacred bundle). She does so by asking how Aztecs conceived what they termed *teotl* and what they perceived in ritually fabricated objects like the *teixiptla* and the *tlaquimilolli*. In order to understand these concepts, she elaborates on their etymology, rituals, agency, and embodiment (3 f., 9 f.). She enriches her approach by confronting Aztec ethnohistorical documentation with contemporary religious practices among the Nahuatl in Central Mexico. Careful not to draw direct links between them, she uses the contemporaneous devotion of the Nahuatl to paper figures/effigies in the festival of Chicomechitl – as living beings representatives of the Maize God – to argue for some resemblances (14–25, 198 f.).

The book covers five chapters plus an introduction and a concluding section, and there is an endnote apparatus and an index as well. The introduction centers about the question what animacy means to contemporaneous Nahuatl in their linguistic and ritual practice. She shows how the Nahuatl divide the cosmos into a spectrum of animacy in which deities, planets, elements of the natural environment like mountains or the wind, and animals are categorized as animate beings, whereas things like plants or stones are not (12–14, table I.1). However, it is clear that none of these boundaries are permanently fixed. She relates this permeability to a fundamental question on how the Nahuatl transform material of non-animacy (like paper) into something highly animated, (the paper figurines) as Chicomechitl. Her investigation into this ritual complex leads her to conclude that animacy results from the ritual process itself – that the ontological transformation is through the change and the treatment of the material by the devotees and how they verbally address the objects during the transformation (15). These findings are made relevant in the subsequent chapters in regard to how the Aztecs conceived and constructed ritually molded effigies (*teixiptla*) or bundles containing sacred objects (*tlaquimilolli*) as animated representatives of various deities.

Unexpectedly, she opens the discussion in chap. 1 with the debate of whether the Spanish conqueror Hernán Cortés upon his arrival on the coast of Veracruz was recognized by the Aztecs as Quetzalcoatl, a deity who, according to ancient chronicles, had fled proclaiming to return (28). In contrast to Captain Cook’s presumed deification as a native god by the Hawaiians two centuries later (because of his return to the island and his ritual killing by the natives), Bassett does not center upon the debate about a Western construction of history or indige-

nous conception of the world like Marshall Sahlins (How “Natives” Think. About Captain Cook, for Example. Chicago 1995) and Gananath Obeyesekere (The Apotheosis of Captain Cook. European Mythmaking in the Pacific. Princeton 1997). Instead, she wants to show, how the gifts offered by Aztec emissaries to Cortés and his willingness to accept and use them confirmed him as a representation of Quetzalcoatl – a localized embodiment (*teixiptla*). Europeans confounded by such thought errantly believed that the natives mistook Cortés for Quetzalcoatl (43 f.). Hence, in Bassett’s view, it is a misconception to consider that Aztec religiosity was that simple and totally ignorant of understanding the historical reality. Thus, as Bassett remarks, basing on Camilla Townsend (Burying the White Gods. New Perspectives on the Conquest of Mexico. *American Historical Review* 108.2003: 659–687), Aztecs needed to reference the Spaniards within their own cultural memory and so the invaders were linked to a returning deity (*teotl*) (46).

Chapter 2 develops on the term *teotl* and on two different argumentative lines represented most prominently by the scholars Alfredo López Austin and J. Jorge Klor de Alva. She criticizes both lines of argumentation as they take *teotl* for something that has force and power whereas she relies more on the colonial perception that the term means “deity” (62, 87). She deepens her argument in chap. 3 where she analyzes first the context in which the term *teotl* appears in Aztec ethnohistorical sources – especially in the so-called Florentine Codex compiled by Fray Bernardino de Sahagún – followed by the morphology of *teotl* in specific word compounds and its metaphoric associations. Based on several examples, she figures that *teotl* (god, deity) modifies the object or entity in such compounds in the sense of an ontological transformation. Examples are *teoxihuitl* (*teo*-turquoise), *teotetl* (*teo*-stone), and *teocuitlatl* (*teo*-excrement) (100). Moreover, she argues that the word *teotl* implies five qualities inherent in each context of its appearing that alter the concept’s connotation. These are *axcaitl* (possessions, property), *tonalli* (heat; day sign; fate, fortune, privilege, prerogative), *neixcahuilli* (an exclusive thing, occupation, business, or pursuit), *mahuiztic* (something marvelous, awesome, worthy of esteem), and *tlazohca* (valuable, beloved) (91 f.).

Besides criticizing the *teotl* concept of López Austin and Klor de Alva as well as other scholars who followed them, she also analyzes the concept of *teixiptla* as developed by Arild Hvidtfeldt in the late 1950th in tandem with *teotl*. Here she shows, based on dictionary entries, that *teixiptla* is not simply an “image” but must be understood as representing something tangible and that *teotl* cannot be equated with the intangible, such as the Polynesian *mana* (power) as Hvidtfeldt proposes (60). She further elaborates (in chap. 4) on the concept of *teixiptla* by showing how Aztecs ritually produce such representatives of deities by means of employing either human beings (e.g., captives) or materials (e.g., dough). Whereas human beings allow the communication between devotees and representative, as *teixiptla* already disposed of eyes to see and a mouth to speak, *teixiptla* made from other materials like dough required obsidian or other items to provide

them with the same facilitates. As a result, *teixiptla* is a representative of deities by virtue of special adornments (skin, coat, garments), on the one hand, and by means of the ability to communicate. Thus, for her, animacy results not only from the material composition of *teixiptla* (human body, dough, maize, beans, etc.) but also in the social interaction between devotees and the representative (150–153). The materiality and interaction make for distinct groupings between ritual animacy, as in the case of *teixiptla*, and biological animacy in the case of humans, animals, or even plants.

Chapter 5 finally draws a distinction between *teixiptla* and *tlaquimilolli*, the sacred bundle that represents both deity and icon. In contrast to *teixiptla*, as Bassett clearly elaborates, *tlaquimilolli* are special bundles by virtue of their contents. They contain the remains of a deity (e.g., femur, ashes) and some of their most important belongings (e.g., mirror, green stone), and, thus, represent the corporeal of a deity and *axcaitl* (possessions, property). But they do not have eyes and a mouth to communicate and are neither anthropomorphic nor zoomorphic, because they were guarded by the *teomamaque* (god-carriers) and “lived protected lives” (191).

To sum up: Bassett’s book is a formidable analysis of well-known Aztec religious concepts in order to re-evaluate the discussion between native comprehension of physical representation and ritual acceptance of deities. It deepens not only our understanding of pre-Hispanic or early colonial Aztec religiosity and world perception but it also enriches our ethnographic perception of contemporaneous Nahua ritual practices and animacy.

Daniel Grana-Behrens

**Bechmann, Ulrike, Karl Prenner und Erich Renhart** (Hrsg.): Der Islam im kulturellen Gedächtnis des Abendlandes. Graz: Uni-Press Graz Verlag, 2014. 207 pp. ISBN 978-3-902666-34-5. Preis: € 23.20

Der Anlass für das Buch ist die lateinische Koranausgabe “*Machumetis Saracenorum principis, eiusque successorum vitae, doctrina, ac ipse Alcoran*”, die sich in der Handschriftensammlung der Universität Graz befindet. Sie wurde von dem Züricher Theologen Theodor Bibliander herausgegeben und in Basel im Jahr 1543 von Johannes Oporinus zusammen mit anderen Schriften über den Islam – vor allem widerlegenden Charakters – gedruckt. Die damaligen wohl starken Widerstände gegen das Druckvorhaben und die beigegebenen Abwehrschriften regten dazu an, die christlich-europäische Auseinandersetzung mit dem Islam in einem großen zeitlichen Rahmen zu beleuchten. Der Band versammelt daher hauptsächlich spätmittelalterliche bis frühneuzeitliche Traktate dieses Typs, um abschließend auf die gegenwärtige Situation zu sprechen zu kommen.

Man fragt, in welcher Weise der Islam dargestellt wird, nach antimuslimischen Gehalten, nach Negativbildern in der christlichen Polemik und in der antimuslimischen Propaganda. Auf diese Weise ergibt sich aus den einzelnen Interpretationen ein Füllhorn von Versatzstücken, die in der Konfrontation mit dem Islam in jener