

Reviews

UTE SCHÜREN / DANIEL MARC SEGESSER / THOMAS SPÄTH (eds), *Globalized Antiquity. Uses and Perceptions of the Past in South Asia, Mesoamerica, and Europe*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 2015. 352 pages, 20 illustrations, €45.00. ISBN 978-3-496-01600-7

Over the last few decades constructivist approaches in social sciences and the humanities have become ubiquitous. In the field of history this has spawned an impressive number of largely insightful works deconstructing narratives of the past – especially European imaginings of non-European cultures’ and societies’ history – following Edward Said’s fundamental critique of Western orientalist thought in academia, culture and politics, and drawing from concepts such as Benedict Anderson’s “imagined communities” or Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger’s “invented traditions”.

The volume reviewed in this article contributes to this scholarship. Furthermore, it provides a refined interpretation of such processes in accordance with the program of Dipesh Chakrabarty’s “Provincializing Europe”, which urges us to refrain from euro-centric master narratives and instead to see Europe as only one of many provinces in a multi-centric world. The study thus intends to show Europe and its concept of classical antiquity as positioned “on the margins” (p. 19). Accordingly it conceptualizes a polythetic and relational understanding of “antiquity” circumscribed as “a notion of a remote past upon which specific functions for the present are bestowed” (p. 325), subject to particular historical and cultural conditions and needs. The scope of the book consequently goes beyond the deconstruction of European colonial and elite narratives on non-European pasts to provide insights into pre- and postcolonial appropriations of history. Adding archaeological, anthropological and philologist expertise as well as personal experiences to standard historiographical approaches the collected articles offer a wide range of understandings and perspectives to the reader.

The publication, which resulted out of a conference held in Berne, Switzerland, in 2010 is arranged in three parts covering the geographical areas studied. Each part is prefaced with a brief introduction and consists of 3–5 articles. The first research article by Romila Thapar sets out to correct still prevailing narratives from orientalist and colonial times depicting India as a static society lacking historical and historiographical traditions. Thapar analyses various textual (and early oral) traditions of the subcontinent’s ancient history and localises sophisticated understandings of historicity in texts and inscriptions, especially of Buddhist and Jain origin, which often refer to social and political transformation. Jamal Malik’s article follows chronologically with its description of Indo-Islamic views on the subcontinent’s past during the Delhi Sultanate and

Mughal period. Malik argues that there were two main perspectives on India's Hindu, Greek and Islamic heritage: One approach assesses this heritage through a rather strict interpretation of Islamic law, while the other, influenced by liberal Sufi discourses, reviews it more flexibly, the two different positions being designated by Malik as *adab* and *akhlaqi* respectively. The author emphasizes both the multivocality of the discourse as well as the shared interpretation of historiography in these differing traditions as a "moral and meaningful science serving religion" (p. 68). Daniel Marc Segesser reflects the familiar and well-researched colonial debate between orientalist (in the pre-Saidian sense) and anglicist judgements of Indian culture and history, focusing on the contested topos of a long-gone "Golden Age" recurrently used as a means of legitimizing colonial and imperialist aspirations.

The image of the Golden or Classical Age is further analysed by Jakob Rösel in his contribution on regionalist politics in post-colonial India. Rösel describes how the concept is widely used by political agents both on the regional (Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu) as well as on the national level, though interpreted in different ways. While nationalist Nehruvian historiography has to draw from a further distant and universalized ancient past to reinforce its vision of a pluralist and secular state, Indian regionalisms often refer to local or regional kingdoms and heroes and their importance in Indian history. In the last article of the volume's section on South Asia, Clemens Six provides an interesting case study on the concretization of ideologies of the past. He presents us with the contested urban space of Delhi in the aftermath of the subcontinent's violent partition in 1947. Six focuses on the (re)construction plans of the Nehru administration which saw the restoration of mosques and temples as a means of promoting Jawaharlal Nehru's synthetic image of the nation.

The second part of the book on Mesoamerica starts with an article by Maarten E.R.G.N. Jansen. The archaeologist explains the complex cosmology broadly shared by the various pre-Columbian Mesoamerican cultures and its relationship to dynastic historiography by means of an extensive and detailed description of its iconography. Wolfgang Gabbert in his essay is concerned with references to the past of the elite creole population of the New World. He shows the rhetorical strategies they used in referring to pre-colonial Mesoamerican civilization to delegitimize colonial rule while at the same time cutting off the actual indigenous population of the country from this glorious past. In conclusion, Gabbert points out the similarities between this type of 19th-century nation-building in Latin America and projects of "internal colonialism" as they were pursued in Europe at the same time.

The persistence of such domestic colonialist policies in contemporary Mexico is highlighted by Gabina Auora Pérez Jiménez. Standing out from the other articles, Pérez' essay constitutes a personal and serious critique by an actual member of the Ñuu Sau (Mixtec people) of still existent colonial structures in cultural and historical research. She calls for a decolonization of memory

while at the same time warning of essentializing and idealizing “indigenous” past (and present). The contribution by Jeremy A. Sabloff provides an instructive periodization of the historiography on pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, showing the persistence of older models that newer research tries to overcome. Ute Schüren contrasts (Pan-)Mayan movements in Yucatán (Mexico) and Guatemala where until recently there was only little interest among indigenous groups in their pre-Columbian heritage. Schüren argues that the relative success of Pan-Mayan movements in Guatemala compared to Yucatán can be traced back to the country’s troublesome history of civil war, repression and social inequalities which necessitated the emergence of an integrative ideology.

The last part of the volume opens with a reflection by archaeologist Alain Schnapp on the various ways of remembering the past in the Graeco-Roman world, pointing to an absence of a “poetry of ruins” in Greek tradition which later emerged in Roman culture. In the next essay Manuel Baumbach describes how German Classicism was influenced by a new creative way of treating the Graeco-Roman past and its aesthetics proposed by romanticists in the late 18th century and showing how “the fragmentary” itself became seen as an object of art. The late 18th and early 19th century is discussed again in Stephan Rebenich’s article on Wilhelm von Humboldt’s neo-Humanist ideals of education and appreciation of Classical Greek language and culture. He outlines how *Hellas* became a pivotal reference point in the self-imagining of Germany’s bourgeois society and middle class culture, often contrasted with a narrative of France as the inheritor of the Roman past.

The concluding chapter by Thomas Späth provides a well-structured summary of the individual contributions, highlighting interesting similarities in rhetorical and functional mechanisms and proposing two ideal-type modes of constructing the past; one is described as somewhat primordialist and ahistorical and termed “autochthony”, the other shows more hybridising tendencies and is called “transformation”. Späth underlines the plurality, convincingly shown throughout the volume, of constructions of antiquity beyond the quite diverse notions of the Graeco-Roman classical period in itself, and stresses that “in the long term, no past escapes transformations” (p. 324), history being a significant form of capital for a society.

Unfortunately, with the exception of Späth’s synthesis and some minor references such as mention of comparisons between classical European and Indian cultures by British orientalist Daniel Segesser’s essay or Maarten Jansen’s remarks on the similarities between Aztec/Mixtec and European heroic narratives as divine legitimization of power-structures, the individual articles rarely attempt to trace connections between the three geographical areas of research. It is, for instance, somewhat disappointing that although thematically multifaceted, the contributions on the reception of Graeco-Roman antiquity largely analyse German actors and discourses, thus ignoring British(-Indian) and Spanish(-Mesoamerican) interpretations possibly influenced by colonial experi-

ence. The volume here seems to have missed a chance to extend its scope in a more transnational direction. Other rarely academically treated themes could have been added such as, for example, the interesting topos of ancient cultural contacts between South Asia and Mesoamerica, suggested by early anthropologists and today still present in Western fringe archaeology and New Age mythology, but also taken up by South Asian authors pandering to nationalist feelings.

While the volume thus does not really show the “globalization” of antiquity as its title suggests but rather its “globality”, the wide range of examples and the comparative and theoretically-informed perspective still make it a worthwhile read for people interested especially in South Asian or Mesoamerican cultural history and historiography and constructions of the past.

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TAKAO AOYAMA / GREGOR PAUL / MICHAEL PYE / HELWIG SCHMIDT-GLINTZER / LAMBERT SCHMITHAUSEN / ROLAND SCHNEIDER / MUNETO SONODA (†) (Hrsg.), *Das Große Lexikon des Buddhismus. Erste Lieferung: A–Bai*. München: Iudicium Verlag, 2006. X, 107 Seiten, € 19,50. ISBN 978-3-89129-200-6 (Redaktion: Gregor Paul)

TAKAO AOYAMA / GREGOR PAUL / HARTMUT O. ROTERMUND / LAMBERT SCHMITHAUSEN / RAJI CHRISTIAN STEINECK / CHRISTIAN WITTERN (Hrsg.), *Das Große Lexikon des Buddhismus. Zweite Lieferung: Bait–D*. München: Iudicium Verlag, 2013. XIII, 412 Seiten, € 82,00. ISBN 978-3-86205-154-0 (Herausgabe und Redaktion: Gregor Paul mit Elisabeth Schneider und Irene Paul)

TAKAO AOYAMA / GREGOR PAUL / HELWIG SCHMIDT-GLINTZER / LAMBERT SCHMITHAUSEN / CHRISTIAN WITTERN (Hrsg.), *Das Große Lexikon des Buddhismus. Zeittafeln und Karten. Indien, China, Japan, Westliche Rezeption*. München: Iudicium Verlag, 2008. II, 312 Seiten, € 47,70. ISBN 978-3-89129-528-1 (Texte: Tobias Bauer, Annette Heitmann, Gregor Paul und Christian Wittern; herausgegeben von Gregor Paul)

TAKAO AOYAMA / GREGOR PAUL / HELWIG SCHMIDT-GLINTZER / CHRISTIAN WITTERN (Hrsg.), *Das Große Lexikon des Buddhismus. Zeittafeln und Karten. Tibet, Südostasien, Korea*. München: Iudicium Verlag, 2012. II, 301 Seiten, € 72,00. ISBN 978-3-86205-153-3 (Texte: Karl-Heinz Golzio, Annette Heitmann, Samuel Melzner, Gregor Paul und Jörg Plassen; herausgegeben von Gregor Paul)

Obwohl an Nachschlagewerken zum Buddhismus kein Mangel herrscht, fehlen doch umfassende Werke, die sich mit der *Enzyklopädie des Islam*, der *Encyclopaedia Iranica* oder gar Paulys *Realencyklopädie der classischen Altertumswissen-*