

und angeblichen Rückzüchtungen von indigenen amerikanischen Hunden Stellung und das achte Kapitel faßt die Ergebnisse zusammen.

Mit dieser Arbeit wird deutlich, daß das Bild des berittenen Bisonjägers in unserem Bewußtsein eine Mensch-Tier-Beziehung ausgeblendet hat, die für die indigenen Kulturen der nordamerikanischen Plains von großer Tragweite war, nämlich die Beziehung zum Hund als dem ersten domestizierten Nutztier. Tatsächlich ist die Rolle des Hundes für die Ethnien der Plains trotz dessen beachtlicher Bedeutung für diese Kulturen bisher nicht systematisch wissenschaftlich aufgearbeitet worden, und bisher existierte keine wissenschaftliche Monographie zu den Hunden der Plains. Ulmer schließt diese Forschungslücke mit ihrer systematischen, detaillierten und akkuraten Arbeit, in der sie die oft entlegenen Quellen akribisch und kritisch auswertet. Sie liefert dabei eine übersichtliche Aufarbeitung wichtiger historischer, ethnologischer, archäologischer und indigener literarischer Fundorte.

Alle behandelten Themen sind nach Ethnien geordnet, wichtige Bereiche werden mit einem Fazit zusammengefaßt. Dabei kommen immer wieder kleine neue Erkenntnisse ans Licht, seien es Funktionen der Tiere, Konstruktionen von Hunde-Travois, Symboliken von Hunde-Festessen oder zeremonielle Bedeutungen, die weit über die „dog soldier“ genannten Männerbünde hinausreichen.

Diese Untersuchung über die kulturelle Bedeutung von Hunden auf den nordamerikanischen Plains zeichnet nebenbei ein lebensnahes Bild der traditionellen indianischen Kulturen, in denen die Hunde lebten. Dabei wird deutlich, daß man in den vorhandenen Monographien, Reiseberichten und Beschreibungen über indigene Plains-Kulturen Hunde nur deshalb so wenig beachtete, weil sie so selbstverständlich zum Lagerleben gehörten. Immerhin gab es in den traditionellen indigenen Lagern offenbar mehr Hunde als Menschen (Kapitel 2.2.) Detaillierte Sach-

kenntnis, aufwendige Recherche, übersichtliche Bearbeitung wichtiger historischer, ethnologischer, archäologischer und indigener literarischer Quellen sowie seine übersichtliche Struktur machen dieses Buch zu einem neuen Standardwerk der Plains-Ethnologie.

Andrea Blätter

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Amos Megged: *Social memory in ancient and colonial Mesoamerica*. New York: Cambridge University Press 2010. 342 pp., 41 ill.

Megged's book, "Social memory in ancient and colonial Mesoamerica", offers a very fruitful and innovative approach to the understanding of indigenous processes of remembrance, particular of the Nahuas in early colonial central Mexico. To achieve this aim, the author focuses on a vast amount of "Títulos primordiales", native documents of hybrid alphabetic and pictographic writing or painting dating from the mid-sixteenth to the end of the seventeenth centuries (Chapter 2). As these documents reveal, single indigenous towns and communities struggled for survival during the colonial period by reinforcing pre-Hispanic symbols, rituals, names or calendar information. Megged analyses the role and influence of indigenous remembrance itself in seeking to comprehend fully the meaning of these symbols and rituals. He treats remembrance and cultural memory metaphorically to demonstrate how the indigenous peoples utilised the past in order to explain the present, and how they vividly participated in creating their future in the light of new historical circumstances (6).

By turning exclusively to the memory approach, Megged centres on commemoration

as a process of 'communication with the past in a versatile and transcendental manner' (1). There is no fossilised past that the indigenous peoples tried to preserve. Instead, indigenous continuity results from the particular indigenous processes of remembrance itself. Megged points to an active indigenous participation in the process of preserving cultural identity, as manifested in native documents dating back long before the Spanish conquest.

In early colonial Mesoamerica, indigenous attitudes towards the past reflect the continuous process of interpreting and shaping the present in a manner that is deeply embedded in cultural self-awareness and practice. Thus, Megged's approach rejects earlier attempts to focus more on the process of amalgamation between pre-Hispanic and colonial representations during the early colonial period from the perspective of remembrance (Florescano 1987, Gruzinski 1993).

Although Megged's study centres on memory, he goes beyond well-known theories of social or cultural memory, like Jan Assmann's (1988) or Paul Connerton's (1989). Instead of simply applying these or other theories to explore the indigenous process of commemoration and the role of memory, Megged introduces and emphasizes his own view: the existence of two inseparable modes of indigenous memory, which he refers to as the 'subtextual' and 'supratextual' processes of remembrance (3). They are both inseparable in so far as the former contains the seeds for the memory plot of the latter, being reshaped and transformed in light of the emergence and settlement of particular groups according to identical patterns before and after the Spanish conquest.

For Megged, whereas the subtext represents the plot of the common identity of Mesoamerican peoples before their departure from a metaphorically heavenly abode, which he calls Tamoanchan-Tlalocan-Tollan, the supratext reflects the act of commemorating the local identity of each ethnic or other group within the framework of the social reality of

central Mexico. The point of departure or rupture from a shared past, as Megged himself stresses, is the story of exile from a subterranean realm, of wanderings through foreign lands and of rituals ultimately imposed solely by the politically, militarily and economically dominant faction within larger groups (4–5). This means that the shared religious beliefs among various groups are overwhelmingly expressed by the subtextual process of memory, whereas specific socio-political themes are reflected in the supratextual process and represent the proper and particular world view of dominant groups or factions within groups. In this sense, the controversial, yet simultaneous existence of harmony and divergence in Mesoamerica – for example, the existence of a common belief system on the one hand, and of multiple ethnical identities on the other – is explained by the process of remembrance itself. Thus, memory becomes the binding force between shared religious devotion and specific socio-political ambition.

In particular, Megged analyses how 'seemingly canonic plots of the glorious past become so diversified', and explains why 'such "canonic tales" were produced in opposition to the otherwise divergent plots that came to light out of the autochthonous memory of various ethnic and splinter groups' (185). However, by focusing on religious practices and rituals as pivotal spaces of shared experience among Mesoamerican peoples, Megged remains within the tradition of other scholars, such as Michael Graulich (1983) or Alfredo Lopez Austin (1995).

For Megged, cultural memory stands for the common religious belief, metaphorically represented by divine personalities, shared goddesses and the story of exile from the subterranean realm, along with subsequent emergence from the otherworld through a cave or through collective birth before entering into the earthly world. He thus correlates cultural memory with the subtext, for example, with the 'theme of harmony' attributed to Meso-

america ever since Paul Kirchhoff proposed to unify this region because of its common cultural traits (1943). In contrast to Megged's position, Assmann's view of cultural memory stands for the long-lasting manifestation of the collective identity of precisely ethnic groups, kingdoms or nations, in opposition to social or communicative memory as briefly underpinning the common experiences of smaller groups, like families, within the larger group. Moreover, Megged's metaphorical and common indigenous religious beliefs and practices are presented as something irreversible, vividly re-enacted by rituals and bodily practices. Viewed thus, Megged's approach shares much with Paul Connerton's thesis, namely that societies remember mainly by means of state- or church-dictated commemorations and bodily practices.

Last but not least, Megged questions the different subtextual layers in indigenous social memory by means of their symbolic representation. These lead to the 'utopian social model', for example, the subtext (17). As such, he carefully analyses the meaning of time (Chapter 1), binding (Chapter 3), water and land (Chapter 4) and rites and times of foundation (Chapter 6), in order to show how the subtextual process of memory shaped the supertext after its rupture from 'commonness', either because of exodus and re-settlement in pre-Hispanic times, or because of communal and territorial reorganisation during the early colonial period.

Finally, Chapter 5 explains the turning point in the process between 'harmony' and 'divergence'. Here, Megged shows that

fragmentation in indigenous social memory was basically the process of diverting the common memory of tales of migration and settlement, of gods and their ancient sites of worship, into separate versions and accorded landscapes, especially in times of crisis and challenges, when the rate of the breakdown of integrity and reciprocity was accelerating (194).

This may allude to the conclusion that social memory is always dynamic, always changing, always reshaping the traits of common tales or the religious belief system and practices. As a reflection of a reshaped common past, and in particular in light of re-adaptations to new circumstances, there also undoubtedly exists a process of amalgamation. However, as Megged demonstrates, in Mesoamerica, or at least in central Mexico, in times of crisis and change, people prefer to challenge the changing circumstances according to their own, unique manner of remembrance. 'Memory there is all about recording, prophesying, and guiding; the re-enactment of sacred events of the remote past juxtaposed with predictions of such actions to be repeated unconditionally in the future' (245). Thus, the "Títulos primordiales" and their encoded symbols are not colonial inventions, nor are they meaningless for the people who cherish them. Instead, they represent an encoded remembrance of the past by dominant factions of groups, as well as the vivid hope for cultural continuity.

In sum, Megged's book offers a new approach to understanding how Mesoamerica is shaped by social memory. On the one hand, he argues for continuity in the sense that there are common beliefs and practices shared by most ethnic groups in central Mexico; this is why Mesoamerica appears homogenous. On the other hand, he shows that ethnic affiliation and political power are the reason why these common beliefs and practices are constantly being modified and reshaped. This is, then, why ethnic groups are distinctive from each other and also why Mesoamerica appears culturally heterogeneous.

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Iris Därmann: Theorien der Gabe zur Einführung. Hamburg: Junius 2010. 191 S.

Mit einigem Recht ist Marcel Mauss als der eigentliche Begründer der französischen Anthropologie zu bezeichnen. Obwohl der „Essai sur le Don“ erst mit großer zeitlicher Verzögerung die ihm gebührende Resonanz fand, ist gerade das außergewöhnliche Interesse an diesem Werk ein Indiz für die Nachhaltigkeit seiner Argumente in verschiedenen Feldern anthropologischer Forschung und darüber hinaus für das Verstehen von Gesellschaft insgesamt. In den Strategien der Publikation unterschied sich Mauss, der sich als Schüler und Nachfolger von Durkheim verstand, denkbar deutlich von letzterem. Während Durkheim durch eine große Zahl an zum Teil umfangreichen Werken den Anspruch der Grundlegung eines Faches auch ganz formal zum Ausdruck brachte, ist das Werk von Mauss sehr viel weniger umfangreich, besteht es doch aus zahllosen Buchrezensionen und teilweise mit Kollegen gemeinsam verfaßten Aufsätzen, von denen kaum einer den Anspruch vertreten kann, eine wissenschaftliche Disziplin (neu) zu begründen.

Eine der wenigen Ausnahmen in Mauss' Œuvre ist der ursprünglich als Beitrag in der „Année Sociologique“ erschienene „Essai sur le Don“. Das Verdienst des hier zu besprechenden Einführungsbandes von Iris Därmann liegt darin, diesen Text, der lange unterschätzt worden war, oder von späteren Autoren, wie Därmann schreibt, „einer allzu selektiven Lektüre“ unterzogen wurde (12), diesen Text also als den eigentlichen Ausgangspunkt einer kulturwissenschaftlichen Debatte herauszustellen. Diese Debatte zieht sich über nunmehr bald einhundert Jahre hin; sie hat mehrfach Fächergrenzen überschritten und ist damit letztlich das beste Indiz für den grundlegenden Anspruch des „Essai sur le Don“, nämlich eine Theorie zu den Bedingungen der Gesellschaft insgesamt

Daniel Grana-Behrens

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