

del museo de Berlín pueda echar alguna luz sobre ellos. (Ante esta posibilidad, solicité en el año 2001 al Museo Etnográfico de Berlín el permiso de ver su correspondencia de Schmidt. La lapidaria respuesta fue que el cargo de archivero se hallaba vacante y nadie podía atenderme.)

Permaneció solo dos años en Cuyabá, Brasil, antes de mudarse a Asunción, Paraguay, donde vivió hasta su muerte, en 1950. Allí fue director y *alma mater* del museo de etnografía creado por Andrés Barbero, y profesor universitario. Hizo algunas expediciones breves, en las cuales, además de visitar algunos grupos indígenas, relevó petroglifos y coleccionó numerosos objetos etnográficos que formaron la base de las colecciones del museo. Vivía prácticamente en y para esta institución. Métraux recuerda el paseo de ambos por su jardín, en su visita en 1939, donde Schmidt tenía dos ñandúes mansos (Métraux 1978: 102 s.).

Debido a los acontecimientos políticos en Europa y a circunstancias personales, el destino de Max Schmidt fue muy duro: debido a la Segunda Guerra Mundial se vio privado durante años de su jubilación, lo cual lo condujo paulatinamente a la pobreza. Cuando por fin recibió el monto de sus pensiones acumuladas, la inflación las había mermado considerablemente. Peor aún, había enfermado de lepra, enfermedad de la que aparentemente murió. El antropólogo brasileño Paulo de Carvalho Neto, quien lo visitó tres veces en 1950, el año de su muerte, dejó, en un breve artículo, poco conocido, una vívida descripción de la terrible calidad de vida de Schmidt, en la cual se daban la mano la miseria económica y las visibles máculas de su enfermedad (Carvalho Neto: Max Schmidt. Sus últimos días. [Suplemento dominical del periódico *abc*. Asunción, 27. Diciembre 1974: 3.] Originalmente publicado en “Comunicaciones Antropológicas” del Centro de Estudios Antropológicos del Paraguay [CEAP]. Documento 10, 14. Marzo 1951).

Como otros científicos que abandonaron su país, y dejaron por lo tanto de actuar en su círculo habitual, Max Schmidt fue largo tiempo olvidado. Pero él mismo no publicó, en las últimas décadas de su vida – ni intentó publicar, aparentemente – en su lengua materna, el alemán, sino en portugués y sobre todo en castellano. Desde hace unos pocos años ha renacido el interés en su obra, sin que sus resultados hayan sido publicados, de modo que la monografía de Villar y Bossert, publicada en forma bilingüe español-inglés, es un primer paso importante en un movimiento de rescate de su obra, cuyos resultados se verán posiblemente en el futuro. (Por ej. se han recogido recientemente desde Berlín copia de sus cuadernos de campo, depositados en el Museo de Etnografía de Asunción. Villar y Bossert reproducen varias páginas de sus diarios de viaje, escritas en *Sütterlin*, letra utilizada en Alemania entre 1915 y 1945, lo que dificulta la lectura, aun para hablantes nativos del alemán.)

Los autores ubican a Schmidt en el panorama de la etnología alemana de su época, lo cual es un gran acierto dado que este es relativamente poco conocido en la literatura científica publicada en castellano y en inglés. Acertadamente, Bossert y Villar señalan que su metodología de trabajo de campo, ya que viajaba acompañado sola-

mente por un guía, resultaba extraordinaria en una época en la que se priorizaba la exploración geográfica con numerosos participantes (16) y lo destacan como precursor del tipo de etnógrafo que iba a imponerse décadas más tarde (48). (Esto se refleja asimismo en su “Lehrbuch für Völkerkunde”, publicado en 1924, en el cual se refirió brevemente a la metodología del trabajo de campo etnográfico en términos que, en mi opinión, significaban una vanguardia en esa época (M. S. Cipolletti: Schmidt, Max. En: Historische Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Hrsg.): *Neue Deutsche Biographie*. Tomo 23. Berlin 2007: 207–208). Debido en parte a su convicción, pero también a los escasos recursos de los que disponía, Schmidt viajaba solamente acompañado por un guía, que lo hacía presa más fácil de eventuales malas intenciones. Sus viajes estuvieron signados por numerosos contratiempos, desde el robo total de sus pertenencias hasta repetidos ataques de malaria. Pero en sus obras rescata también vivencias queridas, como el encanto de los bakairí ante el sonido de su violín, instrumento del cual aparentemente Schmidt nunca prescindía en sus viajes.

Los autores señalan brevemente las contribuciones de Schmidt a la etnografía: su crítica creciente a reconstrucciones conjeturales de la escuela difusionista y énfasis analítico puesto en las dimensiones económicas de la vida de los individuos (26), así como su hincapié en análisis puntuales o comparativos en lengua, cultura material o tecnologías indígenas. Quien busque profundizaciones en la vida religiosa indígena o en aspectos simbólicos se verá defraudado.

Siguen al texto 78 fotografías de los guató, paressí, wichí, nivaclé y chorote, procedentes de su legado depositado en el Museo Etnográfico Andrés Barbero de Asunción. Se trata de negativos con soporte de vidrio, originalmente preparados por Schmidt, y que se reproducen en esta obra en excelente calidad. Bossert y Villar no las comentan, de modo que las fotos aparecen más bien solo como ilustración al texto. A simple vista, además de ser una documentación de la realidad de las sociedades indígenas en las que estuvo, las fotografías tienen algo en común: se trata por lo general de retratos, evidentemente hechos con la aquiescencia de los fotografiados: muchos sonríen ante la cámara, en escenas de la vida cotidiana. Ninguna imagen muestra que Max Schmidt se hubiera inmiscuido para obtener una toma más íntima.

En suma, el libro de Bossert y Villar significa un avance importante en el conocimiento del trabajo de los etnógrafos sudamericanistas; en este caso, de un etnólogo con el que aún la posteridad se halla en deuda en cuanto a un juicio de sus aportes y falencias.

María Susana Cipolletti

**Buyandelger, Manduhai:** *Tragic Spirits. Shamanism, Memory, and Gender in Contemporary Mongolia*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013. 314 pp. ISBN 978-0-226-08656-9. Price: \$ 32.50

To the surprise of a Western audience, shamanism in Siberia and Inner Asia – which was thought to be extinct after centuries of colonial and socialist persecution – re-

emerged after the collapse of socialist rule during the 1990s. Fascinated by the “beauty of the primitive,” tourists, new agers, and scholars invaded the areas which for long had been closed to Western visitors. Among them, a few doctoral students of anthropology set out to study the novel phenomenon of shamans staging their performance on urban stages (e.g., Charles Stépanoff in Tyva’s capital Kyzyl or Laetitia Merli in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia). Others traveled to the rural margins and studied the proliferating shamanic practices among the Buryat in eastern Mongolia as did Manduhai Buyandelger and Ipei Shimamura, or among the Darhad in the northwestern province Hövsgöl, were Morton Pedersen and I did our PhD research.

These ethnographies take, in distinct ways, shamanism as a lens to make sense of the upheavals and disorders of postsocialist changes. “Tragic Spirits” by the Harvard-trained Buryat-Mongolian scholar Manduhai Buyandelger is based on the author’s immersion into the social and spiritual relations in the rural district of Bayan-Uul in eastern Mongolia between 1996 and 2000. Her ethnography reflects the author’s unique ability to successfully merge her insiders’ familiarity with postsocialist ruptures with estrangement by anthropological analysis. Her representation provides a complex account intertwining fieldwork experiences with historical narratives and theoretical concepts. By relating her discussion to theories not only on shamanism and magic but also on neoliberal capitalism, gender, and postsocialism, the author creates a dense, multilayered analysis with inspiring new insights.

In the early 1990s, IMF, World Bank, and Asian Development Bank imposed a series of economic experiments, the so-called “shock therapy,” on the Mongolian population. Subsequently, the miserable living conditions gave rise to manifold social and health problems, which built the context of proliferating shamanic practices. Buyandelger’s account of people struggling for survival and seeking shamans’ support bears testimony to the shock, without a therapy in sight. Her descriptions are exceptional in achieving a vivid impression of the daily struggles and the atmosphere in rural areas during the postsocialist decade. In particular, she points to the largely neglected distinction between state and collective farms and its consequences for the living conditions in postsocialist years. She shows how the standards of living of ordinary people – which in the state farms were relatively high compared to those of herders in neighboring collective farms – dropped deeper when the collective economy fell apart. The superior status of a state farm in the socialist development trajectory turned out to be a disadvantage, as the disintegrating state farm had hardly any livestock to distribute to its starving population.

Buyandelger’s analysis goes beyond the explanation of the shamanic revival as a response to the postsocialist economic crisis. She creates deepness of interpretation by situating the shamanic practices among the Buryat within a long history of repression. By reading local legends and chants of shamanic ancestor spirits in the light of historical accounts on colonial and socialist purges with their policies of continuous displacement of the Buryat, she interprets local shamanic legends as the mobile, silenced

other of official history. Furthermore, Buyandelger tries to make sense of the confounding discovery that despite the murder of a considerable part of the male Buryat population in Mongolia mainly during the 1930s, people kept a good memory of the socialist past. She identifies socialist techniques of forgetting in the repeated cycles of purges and rehabilitation, by which those of the former purges were redeemed as victims while others were accused as culprits. Such governmental techniques, she argues, blurred the boundaries between offenders and victims (73 f.). Buyandelger refers to socialist persecutions of shamans and renders people’s memory of their parents practicing in secret only and hiding their spiritual practices even from their children. As a consequence, knowledge of shamanic practices and of the genealogies of spirits has been scarce and always fragmentary despite the rising interest in the spiritual tradition in postsocialist years. Based on this condition, the author produces a completely new and compelling argument: Instead of shamans offering relief by calming down troubling spirits, curing illness, and endowing economic success, their consultation does not end satisfactorily and thus requires further cure. Shamanic séances confront clients with unidentified ancestor spirits from their forgotten past who demand their identification in further shamanic séances, which again introduce new disturbing spirits who have to be appeased. Buyandelger convincingly shows that it is not belief in but the skepticism of shamans’ magical capabilities, which fuels the need for expensive shamanic consultations and the proliferation of shamanic practices. The title “Tragic Spirits” thus refers plurivalently to the victims of historical repression, to their contemporary faith in unidentifiable ancestor spirits, lost memories, as well as to the contemporary tragedies.

As a further analytical layer, the book uncovers the gendered politics of reputation of rivaling shamans. In principle, shamanism is gender neutral, as both men and women can become shamans, providing possibilities to challenge male dominance in a traditionally patrilineal and patrilocal social organization. Gender neutrality is supported by the puzzling fact that shamanic spiritual genealogies include women who had been shamans in their former worldly life. By contrasting herder-shamans of good standing in the countryside with marginalized women practitioners in the district center, Buyandelger discloses the reproduction of gendered power imbalances. Discussing the biography of a woman who was capable of accumulating clients and economic resources until her divorce initiated the decline of her reputation, the author exemplifies the restrained social power of women shamans.

Within the overall convincibility of the book, I have a few points to criticize: The account of Buryat history focuses on repression only and omits contradictory circumstances, such as an acknowledgement of hierarchies in Buryat social organization or the role of the Buryat intellectuals in Outer Mongolia in the early 20th century. In view of her eclectic use of theories, it is remarkable that the author hardly discusses other accounts of shamanism in Inner Asia, neither historical nor contemporary, neither from an emic nor an etic perspective. In particular, it

would have been insightful to analyze socialist “evocative transcripts” on shamanism and contemporary Mongolian representations. By presenting her fieldwork as unique account, the author, whose main intent is to remember the history of the Buryat and their shamanism, neglects the disciplinary history of her study subject. One last remark: in a period when new media enable unexpected global connections and when the rural district of Bayan-Uul, portrayed in the book as a symbol of the marginalized, presents itself in a series of YouTube-videos, we have to rethink our modes of representing and anonymizing persons. Buyandelger mentions in the introduction that she changed the names of the persons to protect their identities. She does not discuss her reasoning, I can, however, imagine her dilemma between a Mongolian scholarly tradition of naming shamans and the anthropological tradition of anonymizing informants (although we all know that if anthropological accounts travel back, it is easy for locals to identify them). Shamans live off their public reputation which is authoritatively supported by scholarly books. Maybe she feared exactly this possible advertising effect on a curious international public. However, by keeping their names secret, she obscures shamans’ identities and thus contributes to the production of tragic spirits.

Judith Hangartner

**Chapman, William:** *A Heritage of Ruins. The Ancient Sites of Southeast Asia and Their Conservation.* Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2013. 340 pp. ISBN 978-0-8248-3631-3. Price: \$ 59.00

In my recent research on heritage and tourism in Southeast Asia, I have been arguing for the importance of comparative studies of heritage, and in particular UNESCO World Heritage Sites across the region. William Chapman’s lavishly illustrated book is one of the rare excursions into this important field of studies and he demonstrates the value of taking a broad comparative view of the history and material culture of this diverse and complex region south of China and east of India. Overall, he manages successfully to sustain this exercise in regional narrative and analysis in that it is extraordinarily difficult to command such a substantial theoretical, ethnographic, and technical literature; there are a few lapses.

Chapman certainly has the experience and expertise to undertake this monumental task. He has had the great good fortune to have visited a large number of heritage sites from his first introduction to the Angkor Archaeological Park in Cambodia in 1994, to his subsequent visits to the “ruined sites” of Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, and Burma, and then to have the opportunity to teach over several years at the SEAMEO (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization) Center for Archaeology and Fine Arts in Bangkok and through his sojourns in Thailand as a Fulbright Senior Lecturer, in Thailand and Cambodia as a Fulbright Specialist, and then with Silpakorn University. His encounters over some twenty years with sites, students, and specialists in the field of heritage and conservation studies have provided a sound scholarly and practical basis for this ambitious venture in examining the

history, character, and transformation of “ancient sites” in Southeast Asia and the policy and technical dimensions of their management, presentation, and conservation.

Writing this book and undertaking additional field research to widen its scope and increase its scholarly depth have occupied him during the past decade or so. Chapman tells us that he was engaged by the Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles in 2002 “to write a survey of monumental sites in Southeast Asia as background for a proposed training program” (xii). It enabled him to visit several more sites, and he managed to complete a first draft of the book at that time. He then secured further funding from a range of sponsors, including UNESCO, and undertook visits and revisits to sites in Burma, Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia. He records his particular thanks to his home University of Hawai’i in providing support and especially research leave in Southeast Asia whilst he was engaged in this extended and wide-ranging project.

How does one organise one’s material in such a large undertaking which covers “ancient sites” across seven countries and embraces two millennia of historical development and cultural transformation? Chapman provides two general chapters which introduce the Southeast Asian region, and its history and heritage in which, among other things, he covers such matters as “imagining” and “constructing” ruins and the ways in which colonialism shaped the definition, representation, interpretation, and understanding of built heritage (and, therefore, the approach to its protection and conservation), as well as the processes and consequences of what was referred to by earlier European scholars as “Indianisation.”

Chapman then chooses to arrange his material by country and to some degree by colonial influence and legacy in that different European powers had different approaches to their “ancient sites.” There are separate chapters on Indonesia, specifically the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Prambanan and Borobudur; Cambodia and the UNESCO site of Angkor; Vietnam and Laos are then combined (intriguingly placed “at the periphery of Cambodia” [98], because “Cham and Khmer powers had many points of connection”, they were both brought under French colonial administration, and since independence continue to have “political and economic connections” [99]); his focus in this chapter is on the UNESCO sites of My Son in central Vietnam and Vat Phu in southern Laos; then there is a chapter on Thailand which concentrates on the two UNESCO sites of Sukhothai and Ayutthaya, in addition to the temples of the Khorat Plateau; and finally Burma (Myanmar) and Malaysia, perhaps rather unusually, are brought together in a consolidated chapter not because of “their ancient history” but because of “their common absorption into the British Empire during the nineteenth century” (162) and the fact that, as Chapman argues, “British attitudes to the past differed substantially from those of the French” in that they were “[l]ess inspired by the presence of ancient sites than their French and even Dutch counterparts” (163). He elaborates that “[n]either Burma nor Malaysia witnessed the burst of aesthetic and historical enthusiasm that characterized the French presence in Indochina – or even that of the Dutch