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Bruce Grant, Lale Yalçin-Heckmann, eds. *Caucasus Paradigms: Anthropologies, Histories, and the Making of the World Area.* Münster: Lit, 2008. xii + 314 pp. ISBN 978-3-8258-9906-6.

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Compassing the Complexity of the Caucasus

The complicated topography of the Caucasus extends beyond its physical geography to its cultural, political, and historical landscapes. Multiple analytical paradigms are necessary to resolve a unique world area from the fractal array of complex affinities, contradictions, and conflicts that layer the Caucasus. Wielding paradigms that enable areal coherence while preserving plurality, this volume at once remakes the area as a scholarly field, and contests historical and contemporary tendencies to see a region in which Caucasians are bound into closed, and inevitably conflicting, territorial groups. Making good on its title's promise of multiple anthropologies, histories, and paradigms, the volume's thirteen chapters embrace a wide scope of empirical foci set in different ethnographic and historical contexts. The careful assembly of the chapters into three parts–archeology of knowledge, the remaking of a world area, and mobilities and borders–provides a framework for locating the case studies on common conceptual foundations. Perhaps most important, the volume's commitment to reflexive scholarship enables the successful negotiation of plurality to derive regional coherences that do not succumb to the closures of identity. The result is a collection that figures the Caucasus as a site with much to contribute to the concerns of ethnography and cultural history as a whole.

The editors' introduction seeks to situate the Caucasus as a site of study emerging from the idiosyncrasies of Soviet scholarship. They argue that, by encouraging ethnic groups to study themselves, Soviet scholarship tended to reify divisions and deepen divides of knowledge between groups. Soviet particularism discouraged views of Caucasians as belonging to a common civilization and interpreted the history of the Caucasus through a dominant paradigm of closure. Despite its long history as a geographic zone of transit, invasion, and competition between great powers, paradigms of closure persist to the present. With the loss of Soviet institutional support for research, paradigms of closure continue to inform the shift from transitology to conflictology in the research agendas of extra-regional funding organizations. In outlining the contributions of the chapters within the volume's tripartite framework, the editors examine how each contests the paradigm of closure by revealing the significance of other paradigms that foreground connectivity across the plurality of the Caucasus.

Part 1 of the volume consists of three chapters that cut into different regional icons and archetypes, seeking to excavate the layers of knowledge and practice that these signify. Paul Manning's chapter focuses on the high mountain village of Shatili, which, as a setting for films and romantic poetry, came to symbolize the romance of mountain life, figured in equal measures of extreme beauty and savagery. The clash between tradition and modernity that Shatili represents is played out in the dilemmas of the Khevsur ethnographers, Alexi Ochiauri and Natela Baliauri, who are set to study their own culture. By hiding the autobiographical nature of the ethnography, these ethnographers take on the voice of the ethnic intelligentsia as separate from that of the folk. Yet, their role as community intelligentsia positions them as a subaltern class relative to the metropolitan producers of knowledge.

In a similar vein, Bruce Grant's chapter examines mountain traditions, and the myths and realities spawned by traditions governing such practices as kidnapping and vengeance, giving, and thieving. He argues that the elaborate codes governing such practices maintained boundaries between communities via carefully regulated contact. In the pervasive folkloric and literary figure of the "detachable male," Grant finds a liminal figure cast between two worlds–the *abrek*. Party to blood feuds, exiles, hostages, loners, revolutionaries, and brigands, such persons became mobile between commu-

nities. They could be transferred, reidentified, sold into slavery, or remade as kin. As such, they are an idiom of social leveling and boundary crossings, a facet of the different modes of exchange binding mountain communities together in a careful balance between enmity and keeping peace.

With greater historical sweep yet maintaining focus on high mountain communities, Giorgi Derlugian's chapter shifts paradigms to examine the Caucasus as a barbarian periphery of agrarian world empires before the consolidation of Russian control. A source of exotic white slaves, the Caucasus was the domain of Circassian knights and warlord elites as well as a cottage industry of gun manufacturing fueling frequent peasant rebellions. Derlugian sets the fast spread of Islam in the eighteenth century in the context of peasant struggles against exploitation by the local aristocracy. The resurgence of jihad after the Soviet collapse constitutes a reawaking of this older jihad of class struggle; the Soviet period is thus incorporated into a longer history of grievance.

Part 2 of the volume focuses on struggles over history and identity amid the effort to remake the Caucasus in the post-Soviet period. Shahin Mustafayev's essay discusses the Soviet effort to shift the "golden age" from the past to a future communism, and the fraught search for Azerbaijani authenticity that followed the debasement of Soviet ideology. Murtazali Gadjiev, Philip Kohl, and Rabadan Magomedov's chapter examines the politicized interpretations of the remote past, which they see as an epidemic in the Caucasus. They critically examine types of popular ethno-nationalist mythmaking, such as autochthonous development in primordial homelands, and famous ancestors from which groups are supposedly descended, such as the Sumerians. While she focuses on much the same phenomenon, Rebecca Gould's contribution acquaints us with one of Manning's subaltern local intelligentsia, a member of the yet unrecognized Melkh nation. Her ethnographic work provides the local context of practices of creatively narrating authentic origin and ethnic identity, and gives us insight into the modes of circulation of such narratives. Levon Abrahamian's chapter closes the volume's second part with an examination of the dance around Mount Aragats that took place on Armenia's 2005 Independence Day, and the heavy contestation of national symbolism and identity that this event precipitated.

The four chapters that make up the third part of the volume each examine different types of mobility and practices of boundary crossing. In one of the most theoretically sophisticated contributions to the volume, Seteney Shami examines Circassian identity in motion between Circassia and the Ottoman Empire in the slave trade, and its reconfiguration in the return movement from Turkey to the North Caucasus at the end of the twentieth century. Her work with the writings of Walter Benjamin serves to illuminate the periodizing functions of prehistory in configuring the past in terms of colonial dispossession, while return to the Caucasus marks a future of national self-determination. Anton Popov's chapter turns to the situation of the Caucasus's Greek population and the migration of their sense of identity in the post-Soviet period amid new patterns of circulation enabled by the opening of Soviet borders. This group's fluid cultural boundaries are marked by their ambivalence toward membership in a Greek diaspora, and affirmation of Caucasian homelands. Erin Koch's essay examines the flow of Western medical knowledge and practice into post-Soviet Georgia in the effort to control tuberculosis. She reveals how the conjunction of Western development aid and Soviet medical practice is impeded by lack of mutual understanding among practitioners, and difficulties in integrating different systems of disease control subject to alternative rationalities. Lale Yalçin-Heckman's contribution focuses on cross border trade, and how citizenship regimes have changed with not only the imposition of new borders but also the search for new markets. The new forms of circulation created under the new border and market regimes make plain that paradigms of closure are inadequate for understanding the remaking of the Caucausus.

Far from a singular identity or a mosaic of mutually exclusive groups, the Caucasus that emerges from this volume is a world area that, with its complexity of human, material, and ideological circulations, cannot be comprehended except through multiple paradigms. The fine scholarship that the editors have assembled offers auspicious avenues for bringing the Caucasus to the wider world.

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