

## CSSH NOTES

Amira Mittermaier, *Dreams that Matter: Egyptian Landscapes of the Imagination*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011, 308 pp.

doi:10.1017/S0010417514000334

There is widespread interest in Egypt in dreams and their interpretation: books on dream symbolism are found at most bookstalls, professional and semi-professional dream interpreters flourish, and television shows feature experts who interpret dreams. Yet there is hostility toward dream interpretation, from two different quarters: modernizing Egyptians see it as superstitious and not in keeping with scientific, rationalist worldviews to which they ascribe or aspire, while more mainstream Islamic traditions condemn the practice, usually associated with Sufism, as heterodox.

After a theoretical and methodological introduction, Amira Mittermaier devotes a chapter to the politics of dream interpretation, focusing on the case of the television show *Ru'a*, in which a shaykh, with a Sufi and a psychologist, interpreted the dreams of callers-in. The show was yanked off the air after it was rumored that one caller reported a dream in which the moon was breast-feeding a boy and the shaykh said the dream presaged the birth of the *mahdi*. The shaykh vehemently denied having done this, but the show was stopped nonetheless under pressure from a number of groups, including the (pre-Arab Spring) government, official religious spokesmen, and Western-trained and liberal journalists and intellectuals. The reformist Islamist faction the Brotherhood and the Salafis also objected, declaring that true revelation has not been available since the time of the Prophet and that dreams have no religious value.

Amira Mittermaier, daughter of a German father and an Egyptian mother, does not devote her book's primary attentions to dreams, or even to the diverse Egyptian systems and techniques of dream interpretation. Instead she highlights the current politics and sociology of not only ordinary nocturnal dreams but also waking visions, dreams sent by the devil, and experiences in which dreamers encounter the Prophet or one of his close companions. She focuses on the personalities of four important shaykhs who are all somehow connected with the Sufi tradition, and their adherents and clients. Her interest is clearly drawn to the question of whether dreams and visions must be reduced, as in Western thought, to the wishes of dreamers' unconscious minds, or whether there is instead, as most dream interpreters and their followers

believe, some realm of the imagination in which guidance, predictions of the future, or religious experiences may legitimately occur.

Her final substantive chapter deals with the fate of psychoanalytic dream theory in Egypt, which has not been particularly successful. But her greater interest is in the personalities of the people involved, and the realms of the *barzakh* and *al-ghayb*. The *barzakh* is the in-between, where the dead dwell until Judgment Day, but in Sufi thought it is also the place where one encounters the Prophet. *Al-ghayb* is the unseen and unknowable divine mystery that may be glimpsed in either dreams or waking visions. Mittermaier, the good anthropologist, does not judge, but rather seeks to convey, and she is attentive to the realities and evocative details of the ethnographic encounter. She samples the many, conflicting ways in which contemporary Cairenes use and understand non-ordinary experiences and their meanings.

———Robert A. Paul, Institute of Liberal Arts, Emory University

Jeremy Ravi Mumford, *Vertical Empire: The General Resettlement of Indians in the Colonial Andes*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012.

doi:10.1017/S0010417514000346

Don Francisco de Toledo is one of the most famous viceroys in the history of the Spanish Empire in the Americas, and his 1569 decision to resettle the indigenous peoples of the Andes remains his most striking endeavor. *Vertical Empire* takes on the general resettlement of the Indians, which has been often mentioned but rarely studied, to show “how and why it happened as it did” (p. 2).

Mumford uses orders and instructions for the resettlement, chroniclers’ and inspectors’ reports, financial accounts, and lawsuits to reconstruct the debates and ideas that preceded Toledo’s measures, as well as those triggered by the implementation of his grand plan. Mumford’s protagonists are the colonial officials involved in the campaign and their views and observations, and his focus is on the main administrative centers of Audiencias of Lima and Charcas. The book is divided into three parts. Part I sets the stage, with chapters on the elements of the Spanish ethnographic vision of the Andes, as the author calls cities, mountains, grids, and indigenous lords. This part compares Spanish and Inca concepts of municipality, and analyzes early colonizers’ ideas about verticality, the first resettlement campaigns, and deals made between the Spanish king and the indigenous lords. The overarching argument is that both sides carried out ethnographies of each other, for similar reasons. Mumford thus adds substance to his otherwise generic idea of ethnography, mentioned in the Introduction in the “literal sense” of “writing about peoples” (3).