

The second chapter describes the aims, structure and projects of the Slow Food movement in their surprising breadth: taste fairs; a catalogue of rare and unique food products from around the world that are under threat by the homogenising effects of a globalised food industry; aid projects for the benefit of small producers to guarantee a viable future for traditional foods; programmes centring on 'sensory literacy' for the education of taste; and the establishment of a University for Gastronomic Sciences in Italy, for instance.

The chapter 'Time and Speed' shows how the valorisation of speed has spilled over from work-culture into other domains of life. However, the unevenness of 'fastness', according to the authors, makes 'slowness' possible. Parkins and Craig illustrate how 'slow living' involves the negotiation of different temporalities, deriving from a commitment to occupy time more attentively. They argue that 'slowness can become a deliberate subversion and form a basis from which alternative practices of work, leisure, family and relationships may be generated' (p. 39).

The following chapter, 'Space and Place', demonstrates how 'slow living' is not necessarily limited to particular places, but some places are more conducive to it than others. The authors discuss the pressures increasingly weighing down on, and changing the boundaries of home and work, and argue that the local is the most fertile site for slow practices, giving the examples of *Città Slow* (Slow Cities) and the (French) notion of *terroir* (a term combining the natural and human features which give a specific agricultural locality its unique character).

A further chapter on 'Food and Pleasure' explores the concept of authenticity, which, it is argued, is a core value in the role of food in 'slow living', and which, should be regarded as situated, rather than essential, and as grounded in the historicity of sensory experience and material culture in everyday life. Related to this, the chapter also considers notions of 'taste' and the 'shared table', addressing some of the more contested aspects of Slow Food, most notably questions of class and gender. As '[e]ating is not only "an act laden with affect"... [but also] implicated with relations of power and distinction' (p. 87), the attention of 'slow living' subjects to food must be both reflexive and inclusive.

The final chapter, 'The Politics of Slow Living', contains a discussion of what kind of politics global social movements allow. Here the authors stress the centrality of strategies of 'publicness and visibility for promoting the philosophy and agenda of Slow Food' (p. 119). They argue that Slow Food's use of the notion of 'eco-gastronomy has been used with relative success to reframe and play a part in global issues and that this kind of movement has the potential to generate a public debate about matters of personal practice, public values and social organisation, and potentially, to change everyday life practices. Revisiting the idea of life politics, in which the practices of everyday life are reflexively interrogated in order to 'remoralise and repoliticise politics' (p. 119), the authors consider the possibilities of achieving 'slow living' in the 'global everyday'.

The book's argument, for the anthropological reader, would be more compelling if it displayed a wider range of examples within social context, showing how the academic-abstracted issues of authenticity, for example, are negotiated in practice by different people involved in the Slow Food movement, and making the voices of producers, staff, and ordinary members less muffled, less reduced to short 'bites'. The authors are keenly aware

of the lines of criticism usually levelled at 'new social movements', which are especially vulnerable if they are as broad in their aims as the Slow Food movement, which defies easy categorisation. Because of its focus on normative everyday practices and a certain core content to everyday gestures, behaviours, and moralities, defined as a prerequisite for larger social change (but also turned towards the 'good life' of the subject herself), the book remains continuously contiguous with the contested meanings of community, authenticity, agency, pleasure, and the possibility for political change. The authors' bold treatment of these issues exposes the elements of cynicism and defeatism inherent in charges of elitism and lack of political efficacy supposedly inherent in the movement, but is unable to eliminate them altogether. With the combination of 'taste' and 'education' in the context of projects intended for the sharpening of children's taste buds, in particular, the contradictions immanent in the so-called new social movements become very apparent. Concerns whether the issues addressed by Slow Food are only relevant to a middle class may be valid, but it is equally true that this middle class has a greater interest in social change and has generally been more involved in political projects. The book remains silent on the geographical distribution of Slow Food membership, and, being on fieldwork in Eastern Europe at the time of writing the review, I cannot help but noting the lack of consonance of the book's contents and social issues in relation to the region I am working in. The question remains: who can afford to be a 'slow subject'? Whether the Slow Food movement does succeed in its aims to situate food in authentic, enriched, convivial and ethical contexts 'remains a continuing challenge for the movement and one which may determine much of its future success and relevance.' (p. 27).

Reviewed by KATY FOX

University of Aberdeen, Scotland, UK

Pelkmans, Mathijs. 2006. *Defending the Border: Identity, Religion, and Modernity in the Republic of Georgia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. xvi + 240 pp. Pb: \$22.95. ISBN: 978-0-8014-7330-2.

Defending the Border is a rich and vivid ethnography of ethnic and religious identity in the Ajarian region of Georgia, based on fieldwork between 1997 and 2001. The ethnographic narrative moves between a village dissected by the iron curtain on the Georgian-Turkish border; inland mountain villages of upper Ajaria, where the boundary between Islam and Christianity is being vigorously re-negotiated in the wake of the Soviet collapse, and the ambiguities of 'modernisation' in the region's bustling port city of Batumi. The tri-partite structure of the book reflects this narrative and spatial movement, with each of the three sections drawing upon detailed ethnographic narratives and evocative recorded interviews to illuminate broader themes: the closure and reopening of a 'sealed' cold-war border; the dynamics of religious identification and conversion, and the ambivalent reception of foreign, primarily Turkish, commodities after socialism.

The 'border' of the book's title, which also gives a loose thematic unity to these three quite diverse sections, is the physical divide between Turkey and the republic of

Georgia: a border, not just between formerly socialist and capitalist worlds, but also between Muslim-majority and Christian-majority states, both of which are ambiguously positioned *vis-à-vis* each other and a variously-constructed 'West'. Pelkmans' underlying argument is that assumptions that the opening of the international border would lead to the rediscovery of commonalities amongst long-divided relatives are misplaced. Instead, the legacy of Soviet national narratives, coupled with the disappearance of the economic certainties that the Soviet state once represented, has led to a reification of ethnic and cultural differences between populations on either side of the border. 'Suspicious' commodities, 'backward' religious practices and 'inhospitable' relations are invoked in various ways to re-articulate a boundary between 'Turks' and 'Georgians', with the younger population of Ajaria expressly identifying with the latter group. Pelkmans' conclusions at the close of the work are bold and rather categorical. In the last decade, he argues, the former cold war border 'became more 'truly' a divide between Islam and Christianity, Georgians and Turks, and Asia and Europe' (p. 224).

Such claims make for an accessible and condensable argument and, together with the volume's lucid prose and solid structure, will make it an accessible read for undergraduate audiences. Yet like the volume's title, 'defending the border', it is a claim perhaps more forceful than the subtle and nuanced ethnography itself suggests. For what the ethnography reveals is precisely the ambiguity and contestation over *where* these borders are that should be defended; what or whom 'we' should be defended from; and whether openness or closure represents the greatest cultural threat. We see Hojas defending Islam against contemporary threats as well as eager conversions to Christianity; we see cross-border trade simultaneously embraced and feared; we see empty buildings invested with competing cultural referents. Indeed, some of the most striking moments in the text, including the opening scene, in which a corpse is multiply re-embedded in Muslim, Christian and atheist contexts, speak precisely to the social negotiation, contestation and ultimate accommodation, of diverse cultural appropriations. This is a place, after all, of enormous religious and political complexity, where 'the' border multiples on closer inspection, and where even the hulks of never-quite-completed buildings seem to speak of an absence of closure. The narrative takes place in an autonomous republic that is ambiguously positioned *vis-à-vis* the Georgian nation-state as much as its Turkish neighbour; where boundaries between 'state' and 'mafia' blur so as to become indistinct; where the domains of 'licit' and 'illicit' are constantly contested in cross-border trade and in the work of the customs services, where 'proper' relations between nationhood and religion are the subject of popular discourse, and where the spatial correlates of 'Europe' itself are being questioned. The ethnography gives us a vivid flavour of this complexity, but the theoretical potential of these ethnographic insights (not least, to problematise how the anthropology of Europe has constructed its geographical object) remain largely implicit; subsumed, one suspects, by the emphasis placed upon a dominant closing argument about cultural reification following the Soviet collapse. It is striking in this regard that the title of the doctoral dissertation from which this book derives, *Uncertain Divides*, seems to acknowledge this empirical complexity (and its theoretical potentials) more fully than the current, more categorical, version.

This tension notwithstanding, the volume makes several important contributions to the anthropology of Europe and of post-socialist change. Firstly, it provides a detailed and compelling account of religious conversion, grounded in rich ethnographic materials, as well as nuanced portraits of the dilemmas of being 'caught in the middle' between an acquired Islamic heritage and a 'deep past' of Christianity. This will no doubt be of value to students and teachers of religion, and a significant contribution to debates about the complex antecedents of religious conversion.

Secondly, Pelkmans makes innovative use of late Soviet regional newspapers and interview materials to draw out the continuities in national narrative since the late Soviet period (1960s and 70s) and the implications of this continuity for contemporary processes of identification. In so doing, he adds substantial ethnographic weight to the argument, primarily articulated by historians of the early Soviet period, of the dangers of assuming that the Soviet Union simply 'froze' earlier, pre-Soviet forms of national identification.

Thirdly, Pelkmans successfully combines traditional narrative history with family genealogies and oral testimony to demonstrate the legacies of border closures, deportations and family separations in a compelling and extremely poignant way. His 'border biography' in Chapter 1 will no doubt be of interest to historians of the Caucasus as much as it will be to ethnographers.

Finally, the last ethnographic chapter, on the 'social life of empty buildings', is a fine example of how stories about cultural artefacts can be used to unpack local understandings around the 'state' and its leaders, around 'corruption' and its specification, and around utopian understandings of a transition that is still (just) out of reach. The curious reader will no doubt wish for more than a passing footnote to know how, if at all, the story of Batumi's empty buildings has shifted since Georgia's Rose Revolution and the uncertain departure of Ajaria's strong-man president in 2004 (a full two years before the book was published). In the tension between deferral and closure, which the book so vividly captures, this particular tension is left perhaps deliberately unresolved.

Reviewed by MADELEINE REEVES
University of Manchester

Sant Cassia, Paul. 2005. *Bodies of Evidence. Burial, Memory and the Recovery of Missing Persons in Cyprus*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books. x + 246 pp. Pb.: £15.00. ISBN: 1-57181-646-1.

Paul Sant Cassia's book *Bodies of Evidence* is a study of the official interpretation(s), and guiding explanatory values, of the disappearance of some 2,000 people in Cyprus and the trauma subsequently suffered by their relatives. The missing disappeared in the course of hostilities between Greek and Turkish Cypriots between 1963 and 1974, during a mainland-Greece-backed coup in 1974, and the subsequent Turkish invasion. Only a handful of the bodies of these individuals have been recovered, and Sant-Cassia predicts that most are likely to remain disinterred. This is not therefore a study of the practices of recovery of missing persons. Rather, the book finds its main