

While this book does not pretend to be exhaustive in scope, and deliberately offers highly selective case studies and thematic angles on fashion design, scholars of gender will regret that the gendered politics of fashion, both in production, discourse, and use, is not further problematized. It is specifically female bodies that are showcased in various states of dress and undress throughout the book's rich visual material, and although Rovine, in her analysis of French fashion, offers an excellent discussion of how the female body works as a site of colonial desire and sexualized "otherness," gender drops out of the book's broader analytical framework. Similarly, the book's focus on production and discourse elides further discussion of the critical role of consumption, the driving force behind production. Who wears these exclusive designs? How do the styles of "classical" and "conceptual" designers such as Xuly Bet, Ndiaga Diaw, Ben Nonterah, or MaXhosa cycle down into popular street fashion, and how does street style cycle up into "conceptual" design? Nevertheless, this richly illustrated and well-written book is a wonderful and important addition to the study of African fashion scholarship, and it will appeal to a wide audience.

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**Jan Bender Shetler, ed. *Gendering Ethnicity in African Women's Lives*.** Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015. ix + 348 pp. Bibliography. Index. \$55.00. Paper. ISBN: 978-0299303945.

This groundbreaking collection of essays is organized around the core question of how women's gendered practices contribute to the construction or subversion of ethnicity. By analyzing gender and ethnicity as mutually constitutive social practices that develop in tension and dialogue with each other, this volume provides incontrovertible evidence that everyday struggles between women and men over household production, ritual expression, and political and economic authority, for example, are not tangential to, but at the heart of, the process of formation and articulation of ethnic identity.

The eleven richly nuanced chapters that make up this volume focus variously on case studies of women who affirmed a particular form of gendered ethnicity (Poppy Fry, Jill Kelly, Wendy Urban-Mead, Ndubueze Mbah) or subverted or marginalized ethnicity as the central component of their own identities (Jan Bender Shetler, Meghan Healy-Clancy, Ethan R. Sanders, Heike Schmidt). At times, ethnicity was utilized as social capital to be drawn on to promote certain agendas (Heidi Gengenbach); at other times, it was eschewed as irrelevant to the goals women sought to accomplish (Sanders). Women appear in these pages as boundary crossers and alliance makers

(Shetler, Mbah, Ousseina D. Alidou), as rulers and politicians (Mbah, Schmidt, Alidou), and as survivors of genocide and civil war (Jennie Burnet, Gengenbach, Kelly).

By insisting that gender is central to our understanding of ethnicity, and interrogating the past with a focus on gendered ethnicity, this collection makes an important contribution to the field of African studies. Let me mention just four chapters in this regard. Ndubueze Mbah's superbly detailed study (chapter 3) illustrates how during the nineteenth century, women's ritual practices were central to the construction and definition of Ohafia ethnicity. Jan Bender Shetler (chapter 1) demonstrates the ways in which foregrounding women's knowledge and roles as historical actors dramatically alters our understanding of the history of Tanzania's Mara Region, from a region constituted by the particular experiences of discrete clan-based ethnic communities to one characterized by interethnic ties, connections, and expanding or contracting networks of alliances and social relationships created and sustained by women. Poppy Fry (chapter 3) provides a similar rereading of the South African past, taking as her subject the 1835 migration of the Fingo into the Cape Colony. Positing that it was women's actions that largely drove this migration, and thus the creation of the Fingo as a distinct people, Fry investigates a specific historical moment of possibility and ultimately unfulfilled promise in which women imagined and asserted a new way of being Fingo, one that gave prominence to women's agency and economic and political power.

While efforts by women themselves to redefine or move beyond ethnic identity led to the creation of wider social networks and ties of belonging, interventions by other actors produced dramatically different outcomes. Jennie Burnet (chapter 8) focuses on attempts by the postgenocide Rwandan government not merely to marginalize ethnicity, but to eliminate it as a marker of identity. But perhaps unintentionally, the government's policies of national unity and reconciliation actually perpetuated the designations of Tutsi and Hutu under the pseudonyms "survivor" and "perpetrator." The consequences for unmarried women who had been raped and became pregnant, Tutsi wives of Hutu prisoners, and Hutu genocide widows—women whose experiences of genocide put them outside the boundaries of the deeply gendered normative social classifications for females—were devastating, as they no longer possessed or else were excluded from those kinship ties essential for their economic and social well-being.

Both gender and ethnicity, as languages and practices of inclusion and exclusion constructed in part around claims to and the denial of the exercise of power and authority, are produced continually in conversation with each other, and they are given meaning through lived experience. Both are fluid but also rooted in particular historical moments and spaces; both are also sites of contestation. The theoretical and methodological questions asked by the authors here may be used fruitfully by other researchers to investigate how and why particular conceptions of gendered ethnic identity become dominant at a particular point in time, or how men and women use

the temporal spaces that open during periods of rapid social transformation or at particularly contested historical moments of transition to construct and/or make claims to particular forms of gendered ethnicity. Thus the insights contained in this book are of significance to scholars not only of Africa, but of other regions of the world as well.

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## **ANTHROPOLOGY AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

**Peter Mitchell and Paul Lane, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of African Archaeology*.** Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. xxiv + 1052 pp. List of Figures. List of Tables. List of Contributors. Index. \$195.00. Cloth. ISBN 978-0-19-956988-5.

African archaeology is blossoming. Its perspectives and practices are varied, grounded, and savvy. Recent and on-going projects exhibit impressive breadth and depth. In certain African countries, African institutions and scholars now play key roles in the discipline and in (re)making African history. Contemporary archaeologists are more aware of the need for public engagement in archaeological studies and the social and political contexts of knowledge production. Despite the continent's size, its remarkable diversity, and its lengthy material record, the relatively small contingent of Africanist archaeologists is better addressing the future of the continent's past. Their work inspires scholars and generalists alike in their quest to understand the contributions made by Africans to the human condition and story.

This growth in African archaeology spans the discipline's practices, its ideas, and the substance of its work. Interdisciplinary in nature, African archaeology has the ability to address the continent's diverse communities and pasts in fundamental ways. This is as true for periods that have left behind other historical evidence (e.g., documents or oral traditions) as it is for eras that have not. Archaeology continues to grow in its relevance to Africans as public interest in cultural heritage peaks. Oddly, in this stimulating climate, the work of Africanist practitioners faces continued peripheralization by fellow archaeologists who work in both the Old World and New World. Updates about archaeology in Africa, including recent approaches and evidentiary findings, are essential given archaeology's evolving practices and copious new findings. The material "turn" in the social sciences and humanities makes a synthetic review and reappraisal of African archaeology all the more crucial for generalists, specialists, and the next generation of students of Africa.

In *The Oxford Handbook of African Archaeology* the editors, Peter Mitchell and Paul Lane, have compiled seventy chapters by seventy-four expert