Whitehouse calls 'the stranger's code', that is 'an unwritten set of rules governing the behavior of immigrants in Congo' (p. 117). In the course of the tale, we are introduced to West African men and women whose stories enliven different facets of the Sahelian immigrant story in Brazzaville, Congo.

In his analysis and representation of transnationalism, Whitehouse broadens the concept and endows it with greater flexibility. He illustrates contexts beyond migration alone by mapping out connections between Sahelians in Brazzaville and their home areas and by showing how these ties are activated. One common way is through the fostering of children, a time-honored tradition throughout West Africa about which Esther Goody wrote more than four decades ago. Another is through the *jatigi*, who is an established West African host who can accommodate a new immigrant with housing, connections, and so on, very much along the lines of the patron role (*mai gida*, Hausa) so integral to immigration in much of Muslim West Africa. In neither case does Whitehouse link the practices to familiar West African institutions. To what extent do these practices in Congo hail from West Africa?

Early research on urban and mining societies in Central Africa explored the question of situational identity – seeing how identity in town as opposed to in the village played out. Identity then could be seen as a function of a situation and how the actor performed particular roles. In his discussion of strangerhood and hostility towards West Africans, Whitehouse includes individuals who choose to assimilate, to be more Congolese than the Congolese. One craves more understanding of the 'situation'. Does it matter for those who are children of mixed parentage – Congolese and Sahelian – which parent is which? If the father is Congolese and the mother Sahelian, do the offspring have an easier time assimilating? And what happens when they return to West Africa?

As much as I enjoyed reading this ethnography, I missed an anchoring to ethnographic writing of the past. There is a larger context that is missing. And as a multi-sited study that began in Togotala, I was hoping the author would follow several of the Sahelians back to Togotala, or at least to West Africa, to experience their re-entry. We know that place attachment matters. How does it play out?

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INVIGORATING LANDSCAPES

Power and Landscape in Atlantic West Africa: Archaeological Perspectives.
Edited by J. Cameron Monroe and Akinwumi Ogundiran.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xx-390. $99, hardback (ISBN 978-1-107-00939-4).
doi:10.1017/S0021853713000479

Key Words: Western Africa, archaeology, historical geography, states.

Most edited volumes rapidly disappear from view after publication and it is rare for such books to be more than the sum of their parts. *Power and Landscape in Atlantic West*

Africa is not one such volume. Its editors have crafted a remarkably coherent work that has not a single weak or tangential chapter. The substantive foreword by Merrick Posnansky, to whom the book is dedicated, sets the tone, situating the volume within the history of West African archaeology and noting 'how meaningless old time ascriptions' (p. xii), such as the distinction between prehistory and history, appear in light of newer work.

The introductory chapter by the editors is the longest in the book, kicking off with the proposition that, 'the commercial revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries dramatically reshaped the regional contours of political organization across West Africa' (p. 2). It is this 'regional' or, as the editors prefer, 'landscape' approach that characterizes this volume. J. Cameron Monroe and Akinwumi Ogundiran provide a good introduction to landscape archaeology and explain how landscapes are produced by social and cultural practices and how their study can inform us about past political economies. The focus on landscapes frees archaeological research from its prior obsession with 'documentary "hot-spots"' (p. 12), generally the trading towns and cities that were frequently visited by Europeans. The editors argue that the key theme of the volume is 'variability' which is engaged at three levels: (1) study of the impact of the intensity of contact on West African societies; (2) study of societies of varying sociopolitical scale, not just the large states that have been the focus of most research; and (3) exploration of current archaeological debates on the nature of political centralization in African societies (pp. 20–1). To this end, the ten case studies that comprise the core of the volume and range geographically from western Senegal to the plains south of Lake Chad are organized into three categories that the editors believe 'capture the essence of the variation' under study: these are 'fragmented landscapes, state-generated landscapes, and internal frontier landscapes' (p. 21).

Four chapters, by Ibrahima Thiaw (Upper Senegal), François Richard (Siin Kingdom), Samuel Spiers (Eguafo), and Neil Norman (Hueda), explore fragmented landscapes where attempts at political centralization were undone by factional or heterarchical forces. All of them focus on the countryside and do an excellent job of integrating documentary and oral historical sources with plenty of archaeological data. These chapters do more than simply place the historical narratives within a broader regional context; they show how historical processes shaped landscapes through changing settlement patterns and 'cycling between control and autonomy' (Richard, p. 98) in the governance of polities. In so doing, the agency of rural populations in adapting to the buffeting winds of the Atlantic era becomes manifest and indeed is sometimes given poignancy by the materiality of the settlements studied by the archaeologists.

State-generated landscapes are explored by Kevin MacDonald and Seydou Camara (Segou in Mali), Monroe (Dahomey), and Ogundiran (Oyo). Although united by their theme and by their high quality, these three contributions are very different from each other. The first, while aiming to understand 'what the "slave mode of production" might look like in the archaeological record' (p. 171) is more notable for presenting a substantive historical alternative to Roderick McIntosh's formulation of non-coercive, heterarchical states on the Middle Niger. While Monroe provides an account of the dynamic political economy of Dahomey, Ogundiran focuses upon an Oyo imperial colony, thereby advancing not only our understanding of the Oyo empire and theories of colonization, but also the archaeological methods for investigating this process.

Two of the three chapters on internal frontier landscapes, by Philip de Barros on the Bassar chiefdom and Christopher DeCorse on fortified towns in northern Sierra Leone, consider their evidence in the light of Igor Kopytoff's model of the Internal African Frontier, while that by Scott MacEachern on the Mandara political landscape ignores Kopytoff's work entirely, reflecting instead on the history of interpretation in this region and reaching the perhaps unsurprising conclusion that more archaeological research leads to more complicated historical reconstructions. Finally, to round out the volume, Ray Kea offers some historiographical reflections. Much of this chapter discusses 'conceptual tools' (p. 355), reframing the archaeology within the language of what we might be caricatured as 'highfalutin' theory, for example, 'socio-natural regimes' and 'social ideologies of property'. More satisfying is his argument for the centrality of West Africa in world history and his recognition that archaeology 'can serve as a point of reference for revisionist thinking among West African historians' (p. 368).

In summary this is a praiseworthy volume of much more than parochial interest. It is also handsomely produced. Kudos to all! Let's hope a cheaper paperback edition will soon follow.

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ENDURANCE AND VULNERABILITY

Mother is Gold, Father is Glass: Gender and Colonialism in a Yoruba Town.
By Lorelle D. Semley.
Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012. Pp. xvii+235. $70, hardback (ISBN 978-0-253-35545-4); $24.95, paperback (ISBN 978-0-253-22253-4).
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Key Words: Benin, diaspora, gender, precolonial, states.

The past twenty years have witnessed a real coming of age of gender and women's history in Africa, though the methodological and temporal parameters of that development has been fairly fixed, with social history the dominant approach and the colonial period the chronological focus of the vast majority of inquiries. Lorelle Semley's *Mother Is Gold, Father Is Glass* builds upon this foundational scholarship, while also turning a lens to ritual and symbol, as it focuses on the shifting meanings of mother/father in the West African Kingdom of Kétu, from the precolonial period to the present. Semley's title is inspired by the popular Yoruba saying, 'Mother is gold, father is glass', which, she argues, captures the historical tensions between gendered power and vulnerability in Yoruba society. That mothers are gold points to value and durability; that fathers are glass suggests an illusory, or even fragile, presence that seems to defy notions of entrenched patriarchal power.

While the symbolism of gold and glass appears, at first glance, to constitute a rather straightforward binary, Semley deploys it across time and space to excavate the shifting content and meanings of women's power as 'public mothers' and of women's vulnerability