The Anthropology of Displaced Communities
Edited by Robert Layton
Price: £65.00. Offer Price: £45.00

This collection highlights the work of the Royal Anthropological Institute's Urgent Anthropology Fellowships fund, which supports research into communities whose culture and social life are under immediate threat. Created by George Appell in response to the distress he experienced working with a traumatized community of swidden cultivators in Borneo, who were struggling to survive after relocation in what Appell describes as a 'cultural concentration camp', the fund was established to identify ways of supporting and strengthening such communities through ethnographic work.

Since 1995, Urgent Anthropology Fellows have worked with many displaced communities, whether found in refugee camps, resettled in kindred communities across national borders or in environments hostile to their traditional way of life; or whether suffering from the aftermath of civil war or the intrusion of foreigners in search of minerals. Despite the diversity of circumstances in these case studies, this book shows some of the common strategies that emerge in helping displaced communities regain some control over their own destinies. These include membership of social networks, access to natural resources, land ownership and self-sufficiency, autonomy in local judicial procedures and economic activities as well as the celebration of traditional rituals, all of which lessen the potential powerlessness of displaced communities. Any anthropologist or NGO worker, and indeed anyone who works with, or cares about, vulnerable communities and the rights of indigenous peoples, will gain much from the accumulation of experience and insights offered herein.

This book is a testimony to George Appell's vision, generosity and legacy. A forceful representative of a tradition that cherishes ethnographic description as a potent stimulus for the appreciation of diversity and the best corrective to biased speculation. The Urgent Anthropology Fellowship Programme has created a wealth of work that illuminates the contemporary contexts of indigenous struggles worldwide, while encouraging the mutuality of thinking, a most precious gift.

Laura Rival, Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of Oxford

Going well beyond ‘survival anthropology’, the authors reveal the complexities of such situations and their effects on the well-being (or otherwise) of those obliged to uproot themselves and move elsewhere.

Pat Caplan, Emeritus Professor of Anthropology, Goldsmiths, University of London
Anthropology Inside Out
Fieldworkers Taking Notes
Edited by A.O. Andersen, A.L. Dalsgård, M.L. Kusk, M. Nielsen, C. Rubow and M. Ryutter
Open Access: DOI 10.26581/B.ANDE01
Fieldworkers’ notebooks are full of sensations and observations in which the subjectivity of the ethnographer seeps through. Yet in classical anthropology they are invisible to the reader. In this book the focus is reversed, turning Anthropology Inside Out to explore the vibrant backstage life of field notes. What happens when we put them centre stage?

Aimed at both curious novice and experienced practitioner, the chapters read as a catalogue of experimental practices: intuitively observational drawings; notes pervaded with paranoia; collective note-taking; crisis-ridden personal confessions; layers of notes in photographs and archives; old flip-flops that trigger memories in mind and body.

This exploration concludes with a constellation of shimmering notes from Michael Taussig, a metacommentary on anthropologists’ fetishistic relationship with the most personal of professional tools.
Dunbar’s Number
Edited by David Shankland
Occ. Paper 45 of the RAI
Hbk, isbn 978-1-912385-03-4, £50

Dunbar’s Number, as the limit on the size of both social groups and personal social networks, has achieved something close to iconic status and is one of the most influential concepts to have emerged out of anthropology in the last quarter century. It is widely cited throughout the social sciences, archaeology, psychology and network science, and its reverberations have been felt as far afield as the worlds of business organization and social-networking sites, whose design it has been felt to have emerged out of anthropology.

Copyright Africa
How Intellectual Property, Media & Markets Transform Immaterial Cultural Goods
Ed. Ute Röschenthaler & Mamadou Diawara
NEW Pbk, isbn 978-1-912385-04-1, £30

Africa is known for its multi-faceted immaterial culture, its highly original music, oral texts, artistic performances and sport. These cultural expressions have become increasingly regulated by intellectual property (IP) rights, as orally transmitted stories are written down, traditional songs broadcast and sporting activities once part of village life become national media events. This volume brings together legal experts, anthropologists and literary scholars to explore, from a local African point of view, what happens to intangible cultural goods when they are confronted with large-scale commodification and distribution through media technologies, and defined by globalized and divergent judicial systems, institutions and cultural norms.

‘This pioneering book shows how local actors use IP rather than the other way around. A must-read for anyone interested in IP.’
Isabel Hofmeyr, University of the Witwatersrand

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Ed. Diana Young
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Pre-Textual Ethnographies
Challenging the Phenomenological Level of Anthropological Knowledge-making
Ed. Tomasz Rakowski & Helena Patzer
Hbk, isbn 978-1-907774-47-8, £60

Fieldwork experiences that are not explicitly analysed in writing, nevertheless contribute to and shape ethnographic understandings. This volume uncovers these layers of anthropological knowledge-making.

The contributors reconstruct the ways they entered the worlds of their research subjects, focusing on pre-textual and deeply phenomenological processes of perceiving, noting, listening and sensing. This book commences the project of developing a new language for anthropological works, one stemming from recurring acts of participation, and rooted primarily in the pre-textual worlds of the tacit and intense experiences that exceed the limitations of conventional textual accounts.

‘… encourage us to see how participatory method, social attentiveness, and new forms of ethnographic writing can enhance our understanding of the affective, intersubjective, and conceptual complexities of life as lived.’
Michael Jackson, Distinguished Professor of World Religions, Harvard University

Of Hairy Kings and Saintly Slaves
An Ethiopian Travelogue
Manuel João Ramos
Col. Hbk, isbn 978-1-907774-39-3, £60

Manuel João Ramos’s rapidly caught impressions convey the rough edges of the intensely lived experiences that are fundamental to the desire to travel. For the travel sketch is more than a record or register of attendance (‘been there, seen that’); it holds invisibly within itself the remnant of a look, the hint of a memory and a trace of an osmosis of feelings between the sketcher and the person or objects sketched. Less intrusive than using a camera, drawing comprises a less imperialist, more benign way of researching: the sketchbook becomes a means of communication.

What do anthropologists do? They sketch? This, at least, is what Manuel João Ramos does in this captivating collection of traveller’s tales and indigenous legends, drawn from his excursions in Ethiopia. Sketchbook in hand, he draws as much as writes, not representing the people and the things he meets, but bringing them irresistibly to life. They explode like crackers from the pages of this book, erupting in a shower of evanescent memories. Why, Ramos asks us, has an anthropology obsessed with visual images forgotten how to draw? And how can drawing and writing be brought together again?

Tim Ingold, University of Aberdeen

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