Khuzestan, especially pertaining to the causes of the massive decrease in settlement seen during this phase. Yet the old idea that major portions of the population became less sedentary has to remain a hypothesis.

J. R. Alden contributes a brief but important essay on a period (Susa III) that has been utterly neglected, arguing cogently for an upgrading in its historic evaluation in spite of the paucity of material available.

R. M. Schacht undertakes to summarize the evidence from the "Early Historic Cultures," that is, from the 3rd and 2nd millennia B.C., in southwestern Iran, as does R. C. Henrickson for central western Iran. Both present new archeological material on periods previously studied mainly from written evidence.

L. D. Levine competently summarizes earlier studies of his and his colleagues, both from archeological and from written sources, on the Iron Age in western Iran, the later part of which is still poorly understood in spite of its eminent role in the times of the Medians and the Achaemenids.

R. J. Wenke, finally, covers the last periods before the Islamic conquest of Iran. Again, it is fascinating to see emerging from dirt-archeology a picture that in most cases is an important complement, sometimes even a corrective, to studies based on the written heritage.

More basic material has been published since these papers were written and more is to come. Yet the main lines of this account will remain valid for a long time, since no fieldwork has been possible in Iran since 1979. Though not in any way meant to be a handbook this volume doubtless will be used as such. It is a magnificent summary of our present knowledge of the archeology of western Iran.

HANS J. NISSEN
Institute of Archaeology,
Free University of Berlin,
1 Berlin 33,
Federal Republic of Germany

Social Formations in Africa

The African Frontier. The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies. IGOR KOPYTOFF, Ed. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, 1987. viii, 288 pp. $35.

The African Frontier consists of nine case studies written by anthropologists or historians and a long introductory essay by the editor, an anthropologist who has carried out field research in West Africa and Zaire. Though the majority of the case studies are excellent accounts of the emergence of particular communities illustrating the strategies of incorporation discussed in the introduction, it is the introduction that will engage Africanists, for Kopytoff is here developing a theory explaining the dynamics of African history. He argues for a fluidity of ethnic and political boundaries encouraged by the frequent emergence of new polities formed in frontier zones where immigrants "had to face the problem of forging a new social order in the midst of an effective institutional vacuum" (p. 7). The new polities interacted with, sought recognition from, contended with, and sometimes conquered older regimes.

Kopytoff builds on the view current among Africanists that African societies are historical formations incorporating people of heterogeneous origins rather than descent groups writ large. For several decades research interests have been directed at how political identities are constructed and social boundaries manipulated by actors who use the rhetoric of descent, marriage alliances, priority of settlement, and ritual office as strategies for defining relative status. The originality of Kopytoff's thesis lies in his use of the frontier as a recurrent factor affecting the way polities developed and were organized.

He draws on Frederick Jackson Turner's old theory of the formative power of the frontier, well aware that it needs drastic emendation if it is to be applied to Africa. Contrary to Turner, the frontier neither encourages innovation and cultural transformation nor necessarily works in favor of egalitarianism. Rather, it gives immigrants the freedom to reinstate and so reinvigorate familiar organizational models brought with them from their homelands. The frontier therefore encourages continuity and conservatism. Nor was the frontier a short-lived phenomenon in Africa: the original outpouring of Neolithic peoples from the "Saharan-Sahel cultural ecumene" created dispersed communities, with plenty of sparsely occupied space in interstitial zones to continue to serve as frontiers.

Kopytoff has to amend Turner's thesis, since, if the frontier has been as pervasive an influence as he contends and frontier conditions encourage innovation, then Africa should display a great diversity of political and social forms. Yet anyone familiar with the ethnography of sub-Saharan Africa is struck with how much is held in common. This Kopytoff sees as a phenomenon explicable neither by diffusion nor by the rapidity of the spread of the early Neolithic farmers or the later migrating Bantu-speakers. The interplay between the dynamics of settled communities and the frontier provides the answer.

Social factors within "traditional" African societies led to the periodic ejection of individuals and groups. Some joined existing communities. Many moved to areas where they could claim the prestige associated with first settlement and found new polities on existing models of legitimate social order. Adherents and dependents were given a stake in the new community by being defined as kin, but unequal kin, since generation and seniority within generation ensured hierarchy of status and control of privilege. If the unit grew and became more complex, further distinctions were drawn between rulers and subjects. New theories of legitimacy were required, backed by oral histories that associated rulership with priority of arrival or explained why newcomers had transformed an old order through superior gifts. In the latter case, former leaders were co-opted, usually by being given ritual office. This both implied their acquiescence and underlined the different basis of their own claims to preeminence. Offices were generally treated as the patrimonial inheritance of descent groups, emphasizing their unique origin. Conflicting claims led to challenge. Defeated dissidents might be pushed out to form new frontier societies, or the policy might disintegrate into rival factions vulnerable to invasion by other regional powers, who again arrived as strangers. That the old African states displayed many-layered ethnic groupings is no accident.

This is a brief sketch of a complex argument that demonstrate Kopytoff's control of anthropological and historical sources. It has considerable explanatory power, though undoubtedly it will be revised. The definition of "frontier" needs to be less fuzzy: it is difficult to agree that a frontier is a frontier because thinking makes it so, although Kopytoff claims that wherever people see themselves faced with "an institutional vacuum" that allows them to produce their own model of "a desirable social order" the frontier is at work. The use of "metropole" for any community of origin is idiosyncratic and frequently confusing. Little is said about technological factors that inhibited communication with and administration of border areas, which easily become power vacuums. Technological factors are taken as givens, as part of the dynamic that led to dispersal and restatement.

Space is lacking for discussion of the case studies. The paper by Murphy and Bledsoe on Kpelle manipulation of the rhetoric of kinship to define political relationships is of major importance for the skill with which the authors analyze the interplay between the politics of a Kpelle chieftainship and the

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Liberian state. Lancaster's paper on the Goba is marred by a map that shows much of southern Zambia as Goba territory and by privileging Goba accounts of their relationships with the neighboring Tonga of the Zambezi Valley and the Zambian Plateau. As one would expect, there are many oral histories, and the linguistic patterns of the region are a corrective to the Goba bias. The other studies deal with the Ekie and Bashu of Zaire, the western Rwandan frontier, a 19th-century Mallam state in the Ningi Mountains of northern Nigeria, several communities formed along the Juba River and elsewhere in Somalia in the late 19th century by Bantu-speaking escaped slaves, a 20th-century town in central Tanzania, and a suburb of Lagos whose population mushroomed after 1940.

The African Frontier is provocative and stimulating. Africanists will be arguing with it, amending it, and using it as a guide to further research and to reinterpretation of regional histories.

ELIZABETH COLSON
Department of Anthropology,
University of California,
Berkeley, CA 94720

Books Received

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Conifers. Keith D. Rushforth. Facts on File, New York, 1987. 232 pp., illus., + plates. $24.95.

Cross-Bedding, Bedforms, and Paleocurrents. David M. Rubin. Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists, Tulsa, OK, 1987. viii, 187 pp., illus. Paper, $20; to SEPM members, $16. Concepts in Sedimentology and Paleontology, vol. 1.

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Digital Filter Design. T. W. Parks and C. S. Burrus. Wiley-Interscience, New York, 1987. xviii, 342 pp., illus. $32.95. Topics in Digital Signal Processing.

Directions in Engineering Research. An Assessment of Opportunities and Needs. Engineering Research Board, National Research Council. National Academy Press, Washington, DC, 1987. xxxii, 331 pp., illus. Paper, $24.95.

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Homosexuality and American Psychiatry. The Politics of Diagnosis. Ronald Bayer. 2nd ed. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1987. viii, 242 pp. Paper, $9.95.

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