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The Lives of Stone Tools: Crafting the status, skill, and identity of flintknappers. The University of Arizona Press, Tuscon, 2017.

*The Lives of Stone Tools* is a rich ethnoarchaeological study of leatherworking and stone use that considers issues around life status, gender and ontology. Based on over 20 years research, Kathryn Weedman Arthur, an associate professor at The University of South Florida, offers an authoritative account of chipped stone tool use in the Southern Ethiopian Highlands. Focused on the lives and conditions facing male leatherworkers among the Gamo, it examines the wider changes experienced by these craft practitioners. Shifting personal and regional allegiances with local farmers, the national socio-politics of regime change and ultimately globalization are all challenges to maintaining craft-working traditions and livelihoods.

A valuable and original contribution to African ethnography and craft specialization, the key readership of the volume will undoubtedly be the global lithic studies community. It offers a fascinating account of hide and lithic craft practices underpinned by strong empirical research. Most importantly it bears witness to one of the few genuine stone-using communities left in the world.

Adopting a theoretical approach that draws directly on indigenous ontologies and beliefs, the *Etta Woga* of the Boreda Gamo, Weedman Arthur advocates against the tautology of western scholarship, seeking alternative ways of both knowing and articulating indigenous understandings of being. *Etta Woga* recognizes lithic raw materials as living gendered beings as male with life-cycles equivalent to their human users. Stone is birthed through procurement and quarrying, circumcised when knapped, married when hafted and adult in use, resting in seclusion while inactive in storage. Dead and buried when deposited in the household garden. This life-cycle is the structuring principle and focus of the entire volume offering a strong interpretative framework. Seen in the organization of individual chapters like the Introduction that critically reviews ethnohistoric evidence, colonial contexts and academic approaches to indigenous knapping knowledge among diverse global communities. It charts the origins of modern understandings of stone as an inert substance, devoid of agency and personhood through to later sections on the life-cycle of the house.

Divided into six chapters, each one begins with a more personal vignette that conveys well the realities of ethnographic fieldwork and the changing context and enculturation of the researcher and her life course access to traditional knowledge. This is deep and slow research practice and the work exemplifies the transformative value of longitudinal studies and the benefits of relational approaches.

The first chapter offers an account of leatherworking in Ethiopia and reviews archaeological, linguistic and oral histories that chart a six-thousand-year regional backstory to this craft work and introduces the different scraper hafting types and traditions between groups. Hide-working knowledge is ever diminishing with the decline in local markets related to shifts in industrial leather processing, coupled with the social stigma and low-income generation for knapping leatherworkers and their traditional low status lineage-based communities of practice. Chapter 2 offers a discussion of the Boreda ontology of technology in the parallel treatment of the becomings of a lithic practitioner and that of lithic beings and leather goods. Divided into five life-cycle stages, the entanglements of human, hide and stone are outlined and examined in more detail in subsequent chapters. Starting with *yella* and the dangerous and transgressive male birthing of stone in ancestral quarries which require appeasement and propitiation. Knowledge of quarry locations is guarded, access mediated by elders and each leatherworking community has its own colour preferences for specific lithic raw materials. Two wooden hafting types are used for hidescrapers: open *tutuma* hafts that mostly now employ glass than stone and *zucano* closed mastic hafts which employ more formal

forms of scrapers. The blanks for the latter are fashioned at quarry locations and then finished at home. These tools also require access to lowland wood species through marriage alliances. The sacred landscapes of toolstone procurement and quarrying is then reviewed in a cross-cultural analysis that critiques academic understandings of australasian and american stone-working traditions and offers wider evidence for indigenous knowledge of stone as both a gendered being and powerful entity.

For the Gamo, knapping stone and the acquisition of leatherworking skills is a life-long process mirroring the life-cycle stages of the practitioner. Chapter 4 offers a detailed examination of lithic apprenticeship from the selection of raw materials to the technological attributes of skilled performances. It presents the frequency of resharpening and scraper breakage among different communities. Skill is intimately linked to social status and age with instruction notable around adult rites of passage. Elders work closely with novices and less-experienced knappers which has implications for the visibility of skill signatures in their assemblages which also reflects their respect and active nurturing of the life of the stone being. The penultimate chapter explores rest and death which contrasts different leather workers and their domestic contexts of scraper use and its consequences for discard practices of southern and central Gamo knappers. It considers the life of the house and practices around lithic storage and disposal related to different *tutuma* and *zucano* using households and the lithic biographies linked to technological reproduction. This moves out to a wider discussion of the spatial and ontological organization of lithic technology among ethnographically known knappers that challenges long-standing western archaeological tropes around the identification of women with domestic contexts of production. It ends with a call for alternative narratives that reinstate indigenous knowledge and experience and approaches that reconcile human and nonhuman lifeways.

A key challenge for archaeological lithic studies is how to embrace the correctives of this nuanced study to productively address longstanding and entrenched interpretative biases around lithic technology. This thought-provoking volume offers much to reflect on and complements other key works by the author on gender and female knapping leatherworkers. Overall the volume is well realized; reference notes, bibliography and index are excellent. It is illustrated with diverse figures: maps, photographs, graphs, diagrams and tables. My only real gripe is the absence of colour images especially around the diversity of lithic raw materials. The *Lives of Stone Tools* deserves a wide international readership undoubtedly enhanced by the Ebook edition. The author has made a vital contribution to ethnoarchaeological and lithic studies that explores in depth the mutual becomings and co-creation of stoneworker and stone.