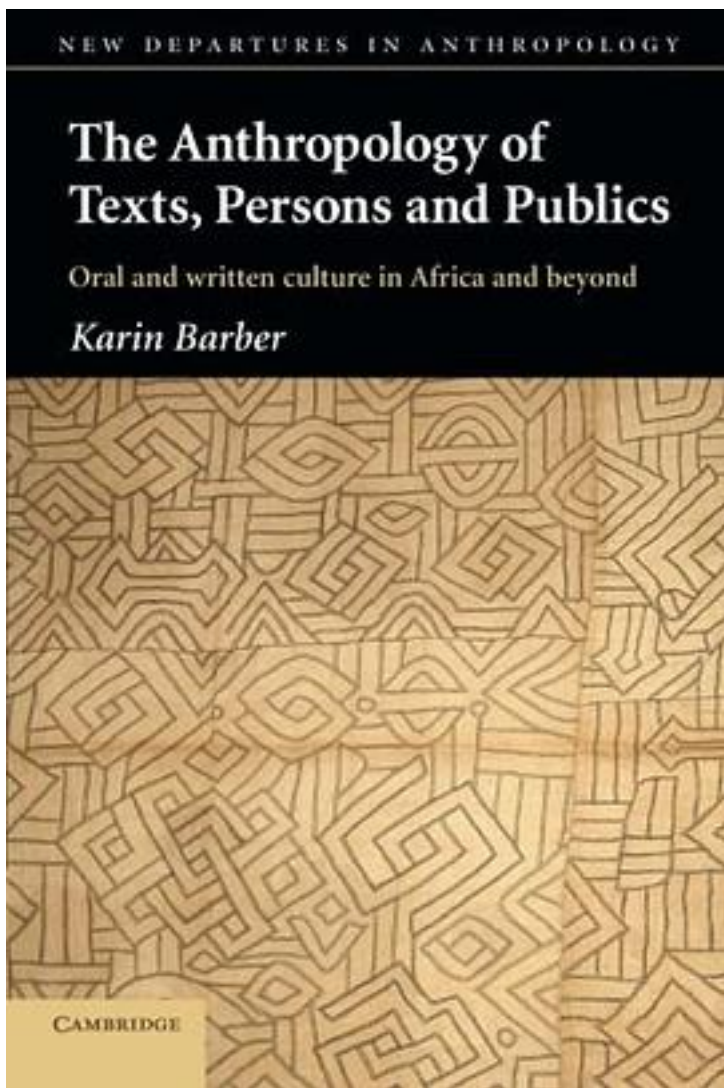


The Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics



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What can texts - both written and oral - tell us about the societies that produce them? How are texts constituted in different cultures, and how do they shape societies and individuals? How can we understand the people who compose them? Drawing on examples from Africa and other countries, this original study sets out to answer these questions, by exploring textuality from a variety of angles. Topics covered include the importance of genre, the ways in which oral genres transcend the here-and-now, and the complex relationship between texts and the material world. Barber considers the ways in which personhood is evoked, both in oral poetry and in written diaries and letters, discusses the audience's role in creating the meaning of texts, and shows textual creativity to be a universal human capacity expressed in myriad forms. Engaging and thought-provoking, this book will be welcomed by anyone interested in anthropology, literature and cultural studies.

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