And chapter 14 discusses the well-known Rastafari. The "Conclusion" to the book is a mere two pages, a brief afterthought. There follow 56 pages of "Notes" to all the numbered chapters – required reading, not only for the incredibly numerous bibliographic citations and annotations to many of them, but for much substantive material. Murrell uses this section for a lot of his rationale and interpretation and criticism of earlier ideas. There is a much needed "Glossary" of ten pages. The "Selected Bibliography" is organized by the "Parts" of the book (a problem; see below); an essential and fairly complete "Index" ends the work.

It is a vast and mostly successful undertaking, truly a monumental work, and it must be on the shelf of anyone interested in cultures of the Caribbean, from any disciplinary perspective. But, in such a vast project there are bound to be problems; and a thorough review must acknowledge them. First, it seems to me that Professor Murrell does not fully realize the breadth of his own accomplishment, the fruits of his nine laborious years, that it can and should stand alone, *sui generis.* He overjustifies its raison d'être. In several places he claims that recognition of African influences and the uniqueness of Caribbean systems have been slow to develop in academia. He begins on p. 1 with reference to "academic skeptics who have questioned the ability to prove for certain that African religions survived oppressive conditions of colonialism …" There may have been such "academic skeptics," but they were few and of little influence. He alleges that a "persistent white view had been that Africa had little particular culture to begin with, and that the slaves had lost touch with that as well." Yes, this was the pervading, old, racist colonial view, found among a very few conservative historians as well; but it certainly has *not* characterized academia. And he refers to "the provocative Frazier-Herskovits debate, *which has raged since the early 1940s*, about how much of African religion and culture survived …" [my italics]. This is E. Franklin Frazier, pioneering black sociologist, who did indeed differ with (white) anthropologist Melville Herskovits on the nature of cultural influences on American black institutions; but the "debate" was an understandable product of the sociology and race relations of the time, and it was pretty quiet, and short-lived. And there are many, too many more references to racist, biased, narrow views which have long denied the validity of what Murrell is trying to do. Author Murrell was born, bred, and educated in the Caribbean, and these may well represent lingering pervasive attitudes which bombarded and moulded him, and that is indeed unfortunate; let me assure him, and the reader, that they are *not* widely shared among serious American and European Afro-Caribbean Studies of the past half-century!

As an anthropologist, I'd like to see more specifics of African cultural influences in the Caribbean. Art is important, but virtually ignored here; the *veve* and many other visual representations of Haitian Vodou, for example contain many African symbolic elements. Murrell enlisted a talented artist for the work, who produced mostly unexplained decorative drawings. Murrell focuses on sensational aspects of the Haitian zombie (which is not "a flesh-eating vampire," p. 82), but the belief is of important ethnological significance, and the word shows direct trans-Atlantic connection, from Kongo *nzombi*, the root for *jumbie* or *jumbee* elsewhere; "legend" and "myth" are used interchangeably; "magic," sorcery," and "witchcraft, absolutely central to African and Caribbean belief systems," are carelessly discussed.

Murrell acknowledges the help of several persons, including one who "read, edited, and corrected all sixteen chapters in a mere four days." For this task he and his publishers ought to have employed a stable of experts who ought to have taken some weeks. The book is, very sadly, replete with errors, omissions, and incomplete and inadequate definitions. Some errors are simply careless ("Bahians transformed the Orisha Ogun [sic; Oshun is meant], the 'Yoruba orixa of the river,' into the goddess of the sea," p. 9); some statements are flat wrong ("Women almost always provide the music and dance at African ceremonies", p. 44.) There is no bibliography for the "Introduction"; one has to search through the other sections. Some bibliographic references are wrong; a great many of the "Glossary" entries are too vague to be helpful; some central terms (e.g., Lucumi, the Yoruba in Cuba) are not glossed nor included in the "Index." Some important scholars are misidentified; art historian Marla Berns (p. 29) and geographer Robert Voeks (161) are identified as anthropologists. There are too many such errors and weaknesses, and they do detract from Murrell's huge accomplishment; we can hope that a second edition will fix things and this book will be regarded as *the* definitive compendium on Afro-Caribbean religions.

Phillips Stevens, Jr

Nadjmabadi, Shahnaz R. (ed.): Conceptualizing Iranian Anthropology. Past and Present Perspectives. New York: Berghahn Books, 2009. 278 pp. ISBN 978-1-84545-626-9. Price: £ 53.00

In 2004 the editor, an Iranian-born anthropologist at the University of Tübingen, Germany, convened a meeting for several Iranian and Western anthropologists in Frankfurt, the first and only one of its kind since the Revolution of 1979. For this reason alone the resulting compilation of four articles by scholars from Iran, three by Iranians from diaspora, and six by Western scholars, is of great value, the more so as the articles cover salient aspects of anthropological research in Iran and, in doing so, implicitly illustrate the gap between Iranian and Western academics' methodological, theoretical, and practical concerns. This gap had motivated the editor to arrange the meeting with the goal of finding ways and means of future cooperation through an exchange of positions and ideas, and to envision that such cooperation would improve the academic standing of Iranian anthropology. The most recent political developments in Iran, with their threat of further curtailment of most social sciences, turned this goal into a slim hope for the present. The articles explicitly and – by unevenness in scope, candidness, style, and scholarly depth – implicitly, illustrate the difficult status of anthropological research in and on Iran.

The volume's four parts are weighed toward a historical perspective, with inevitable overlap in contributors' texts as they highlight different aspects in this development.

S. Nadjmabadi's "Introduction" intends to situate the book in the wide-open sphere of cultural anthropology in general and of Iran in particular, and to be optimistic about the probability of melding East and West without compromising scholarly ambitions and sensitivity to the local.

Three articles trace anthropology of/in Iran from orientalist "Iranology" to "Iranian Studies" and the beginnings of an indigenous anthropology in Iran. A. A. Bulookbashi ("The Contribution of Foreign Anthropologists to Iranology") takes the reader from 17th century European travelers' accounts and the effects on local social research of British/French struggles for dominance in Iran, to the proliferation of ethnographic studies after 1950 mostly by foreign cultural anthropologists. He credits these with introducing ethnographic theories and skills in Iran through, e.g., the Centre for Iranian Anthropology's program of matching Iranian scholars with Western visiting ones. He describes obstacles for scholarly cooperation in Iran such as poor academic training, long-standing suspicions of government agents toward the social sciences and foreigners traveling in Iran, and lack of coordination between academic and governmental agencies concerned with cultural-heritage issues.

M. E. Hegland ("Iranian Anthropology – Crossing Boundaries. Influences of Modernization, Social Transformation and Globalization") provides a thorough, systematic, and encyclopedic account of anthropological work by foreigners and Iranians (mostly trained abroad) since the 1950s. She summarizes the work of many scholars, highlights the growing number of young Iranian scholars in the diaspora doing research in Iran, and describes consequences of obstacles foreign and Iranian social scientists face in conducting their research.

N. Fazeli ("Anthropology in Postrevolutionary Iran") locates the beginning of the discipline in the Constitutional Revolution (1908–11) with the rise of folklore studies that dominated the field until the 1960s, and gives a cogent, critical, cautiously optimistic analysis of the postrevolutionary Iranian government's ambivalent attitudes toward the social sciences, nationalism and ethnic groups, secularism, and Iran's cultural heritage. He addresses the rise in popularity of ethnography in Iran in the 1990s, and the universities' function as a "modernization machine" (83) despite manifold severe institutional and political constraints in Academia.

U. Marzolph ("Storytelling as a Constituent of Popular Culture. Folk Narrative Research in Contemporary Iran") provides a detailed historical overview of folklore research in Iran and a discussion of the main themes and the – by modern academic standards inadequate – methodologies in narrative folklore research. Folklore-studies preceded anthropology in Iran and are popular and prolific to this day. (Fakouhi shows that by 2005 folklore-books exceeded books in cultural anthropology: p. 107, Table 5.19). Most Iranian scholars still count folklore as part of anthropology and suffer under restrictions on field research. (According to my own experience, though, narrative folklore is the only part of the discipline that does not arouse deep suspicions of subversion in Iranian officials today.) As folklore is underappreciated and underutilized by Western-trained social scientists, this article is most timely.

In "Iranian Anthropologists Are Women," S. Shahshahani, a prominent, prolific anthropologist and torchbearer for women scientists in Iran, vividly sketches the difficult environment for academic women and anthropologists with high professional expectations. She describes the deleterious effects of her society's paternalist and androcentric traditions, and the impact of the male-dominated academic environment on the discipline. She is also openly critical of many of her male colleagues in power positions who, because of the lack of adequate training or lack of courage, cannot rise to the demands of the institutions they lead. These circumstances are especially negative for women anthropologists.

N. Fakouhi ("Making and Remaking an Academic Tradition. Towards an Indigenous Anthropology in Iran"), after briefly comparing anthropology to other social sciences in Iran and describing the Anthropological Society of Iran, supports the discussion on the disciplines' development and its current (as of around 2004) condition with a set of statistical data. These range from tables on academic faculty members (20 male, 4 female) and masters' theses to numbers of books published in anthropology/folklore. The numbers give a picture of anthropology's precarious situation in the intellectual life of Iran. Most tellingly, in his own list of "most important" foreign anthropologists in Iran before the Revolution, he names only one woman, unintentionally illustrating Shahshahani's point about her male colleagues' prejudices.

J.-P. Digard, in his short article "Applied Anthropology in Iran?" accidentally almost deconstructs applied anthropology at least for Iran, where, however, it was never much in evidence anyway. By contrast, M. Shahbazi ("Past Experiences and Future Perspectives of an Indigenous Anthropologist on Anthropological Work in Iran") actively seeks cooperation between Iranian health workers and Western scholars and describes the practical problems of bridging the divide between the two worlds that is necessary to make such cooperation projects successful.

Z. Mir-Hosseini ("Being from There. Dilemmas of a 'Native Anthropologist'") and R. Tapper ("Personal Reflections on Anthropology of and in Iran") show that they are at home with postmodernism, confronting on the personal level their practical and ethical problems with being anthropologists and doing fieldwork, all in an entertaining, narrative way. This lightens and deepens the positivist tenor of the book, lets the reader into the maze of day-to-day challenges that stem from operating in a difficult intellectual, moral, and practical space, and makes for a good reading. (By the way, Tapper's anecdote about R. Loeffler's and my entry into a restricted tribal area is funny but not true; the event as we lived it was much more adventurous and dramatic.)

L. Beck's ("Anthropological Research in Iran") and F. Adelkhah's ("Islamophobia and Malaise in Anthropology") are critical of anthropologists' assumptions, preferences, and conduct. They hold a mirror up to our collective professional sins and encourage us to improve. After many personal disclaimers, Beck suggests that we ought to learn from local ethnographies rather than belittle them; to share insights with colleagues from other disciplines so as to make our and their knowledge more nuanced; to pursue problem-oriented topics that transcend the local; to engage in comparison; and to write, occasionally at least, for a readership other than fellow scholars. This is good advice. F. Adelkhah is more abstract. Impatient with social scientists' unexamined, dysfunctional categories for analysis and assumptions about Islam, she demands that we question our perception of social dynamics in the Islamic Republic that led us – most of us anyway – to equalize critique of the state with critique of Islam. Yet after all the intellectual and moral rebel-rousing, she ends with a docile functionalistic analysis of "veiling," a truly dysfunctional category by now.

Ch. Bromberger ("Usual Topics: Taboo Themes and New Objects in Iranian Anthropology") points to Iranian anthropology's inability to make theoretical contributions to anthropology in general, and to anthropologists' near-neglect of issues of daily life in the many new social contexts in Iran. As this neglect, however, is a function of the inhospitable climate for social sciences and field research in Iran, I suggest that we cannot hope for a change soon. In order for such research to be possible, however, he suggests that we focus on modern life in different social spaces and on diachronic as well as inter- and intracultural comparisons of traditional social categories such as "village" and "tribe" are dissolving. In doing so, Bromberger realizes that anthropology is moving ever closer to (journalistic) cultural studies and sociology – a rather deplorable development in my view.

In all, these useful and informative articles assess the status of anthropology of/in Iran realistically, even candidly, although the repetitive historical recapitulations are somewhat irritating. The articles reflect the cautiously optimistic attitude at the time of the conference, a hopefulness that meanwhile has withered. They suggest that – as an academic discipline – anthropology in Iran suffers from lack of appreciation, lack of well-trained academics and good students, lack of infrastructure, and lack of a collegiate, cooperative spirit. They further reflect ambivalent attitudes in Iran on all levels important for anthropological research, such as assurances of highest regard for knowledge and for scholarship followed by suspicion of those who pursue and disseminate it. And the articles illustrate the difficulties of transplanting a young social science based on humanism and curiosity (rather than pragmatism) to a society that is distrustful of intellectual pursuits deemed as potentially dangerous to an authoritarian state.

Erika Friedl

Niessen, Sandra: Legacy in Cloth. Batak Textiles of Indonesia. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009. 568 pp., photos. ISBN 978-90-6718-351-2. Price: € 54.90

This publication is truly monumental both in size and scope. Sandra Niessen's goal is a comprehensive survey of the textiles produced by the Batak of Northern Sumatra, both historically and into the present. Her academic training is in anthropology, which she studied at Leiden University, and her field research goes back to 1979, when she first came to Indonesia to study Toba Batak weaving in its wider social context. Subsequent visits have kept her engaged in Batak culture and its changes over the years. This book is the culmination of decades of research, both among the Batak and in European museums and archives. The focus is on what is here called the "Lake Toba Tradition," the weaving produced by the Toba, Karo, and Simalungun Batak, as well as a small section of the Dairi. These groups all live adjacent to Lake Toba. The Alas, Mandailing, and Angkola Batak, who share certain cultural and linguistic features with their neighbours (Aceh and the Minangkabau), are not included in this survey.

Following the introductory chapter, the book is divided into four parts. The study begins in Part I with a concise analysis of certain design features that are shared by all Batak weavers. Niessen identifies these as tripartition, where two similar sides flank a patterned centre; biaxial symmetry, where the textile is symmetrical along a weft and warp axis; and concentric dualism, where a centre is surrounded by equivalent sides, which she argues is a kind of asymmetric dualism, with an opposition between centre and periphery. These underlying principles are familiar from other Indonesian textile traditions, especially from Eastern Indonesia: they resonate with the design structures of some, if not all, textiles from Flores, the Lamaholot, Timor, and the Southern Moluccas. But rarely have these characteristic features been analysed so succinctly, and its introduction at this early stage is especially welcome. As a result, the reader appreciates from the outset the sense of order apparent in these textiles. The basic colour triad of blue, white, and red also is introduced here; again, this is a feature common to many Indonesian textiles, although with shifting meanings given to each. The early history of Batak design is juxtaposed with the development of new designs in the later 20th century. The nomenclature of motifs and finished textiles is linked to both appearance and techniques, but also to the cloth's role in a particular ritual.

Part II further elaborates on these themes, as it identifies six distinct regions of Batak textile weaving. These regional styles are Samosir, based on Samosir Island (according to Toba belief the origin of their culture), Simalungun, Karo, Si Tolu Huta, Holbung/Uluan, and Silindung. These stylistic regions are richly illustrated throughout with historical and contemporary photographs, which vividly document the development of textile types, but also of attitudes to dress over the last century, as European-style garments become common and are merged with indigenous Batak wear, or even replace it altogether except for ceremonial dress. Weaving dramatically declined in some of them during the 20th century, especially among