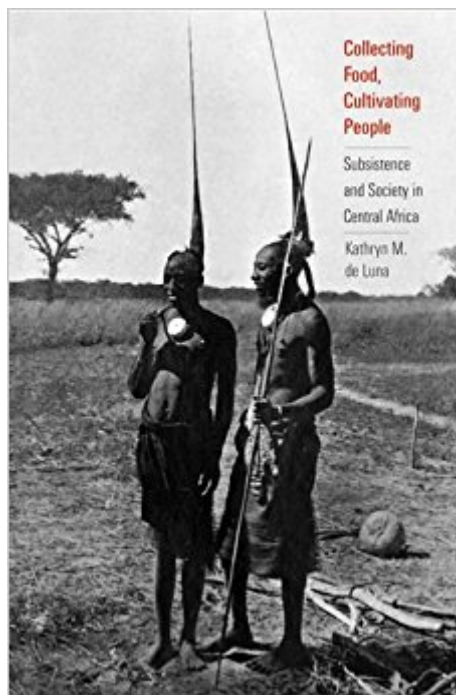


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# Collecting Food, Cultivating People: Subsistence And Society In Central Africa (Yale Agrarian Studies Series)



## Synopsis

A rich analysis of the complex dynamic between food collection and food production in the farming societies of precolonial south central Africa. Engaging new linguistic evidence and reinterpreting published archaeological evidence, this sweeping study explores the place of bushcraft and agriculture in the precolonial history of south central Africa across nearly three millennia. Contrary to popular conceptions that place farming at the heart of political and social change, political innovation in precolonial African farming societies was actually contingent on developments in hunting, fishing, and foraging, as de Luna reveals.

## Book Information

Series: Yale Agrarian Studies Series

Hardcover: 352 pages

Publisher: Yale University Press; 1 edition (September 27, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0300218532

ISBN-13: 978-0300218534

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 1 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.5 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Best Sellers Rank: #591,404 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #125 in [Books > History > Africa > Central Africa](#) #293 in [Books > History > Historical Study & Educational Resources > Historical Geography](#) #1192 in [Books > Science & Math > Agricultural Sciences > Food Science](#)

## Customer Reviews

By drawing on archeology, linguistics, ethnography and history, all in sophisticated and related ways, de Luna offers an unusually rich account of the complex, long term process of creative social and technical innovation for an African people once grouped with others as 'stateless societies' and/or 'hunter-gatherers,' who have often been treated as if unchanging over time. The emergence of different styles of leadership, in contexts of shifting ecology and intergroup relationships, has never been empirically supported in such detail and with such close attention to a range of sources. — Jane I. Guyer, Johns Hopkins University (Jane I. Guyer)

Meticulously researched, imaginatively conceived, theoretically significant, and gracefully written, *Collecting Food, Cultivating People* is nothing less than a history of the most fundamental phenomena in human history—agriculture and pastoralism, trade, metallurgy, and political

centralization.ââThomas Spear, University of Wisconsin-Madison (Thomas Spear)âThrough innovative parsing ofâ vocabulary, de Luna does more than reconstruct ancient practices of foraging andâ cultivation; she discloses the very human meanings of an African subsistence economy.ââNancy J. Jacobs, author of *Birders of Africa: History of a Network* (Nancy J. Jacobs)âDe Lunaâs book brilliantly reminds usâif we had forgottenâof the fundamental value of the insights of the use ofâ language, material culture, technology, and historical landscapes in Africaâs history. And of all history.ââJames C. McCann, author of *Green Land, Brown Land, Black Land: An Environmental History of Africa, 1800-1990* (James C. McCann)âDe Lunaâs unique arguments regarding the development of hunting, fishing, and food-collecting activities, âbushcraft,â along with their social and cultural implications, makes this a distinctive and original work. Her book distinguishes itself by its eloquence and lucidity.ââDavid M. Gordon, Bowdoin College (David M. Gordon)âThis is a fascinating story which connects food, bushcraft, and the words through which they are given meaning, to a wider account of precolonial political repertoires in Africa, giving a far richer history to decentralized forms of association than Enlightenment theorists permitted.ââCarl Death, author of *The Green State in Africa* (Carl Death)âIn contrast to the facile way that current historical accounts treat âbushcraftâ in relation to farming, de Luna offers an interesting and meticulous examination of the geography of place and its shaping of Botatwe societies.ââEleanor Sterling, American Museum of Natural History (Eleanor Sterling)âA magnificent piece of scholarship. Based on a remarkable range and combination of sources, *Collecting Food, Cultivating People* is destined to become a classic in the field of early African history.ââNeil Kodesh, author of *Beyond the Royal Gaze: Clanship and Public Healing in Buganda* (Neil Kodesh)âA stunningly accessible and provocative study of subsistence activities in south-central Africa across nearly three millennia.ââChoice (Choice) Won the 2017 Henry A. Wallace Award sponsored by the Agricultural History Society. (Henry A. Wallace Award Agricultural History Society 2017-06-12)

Kathryn M. de Luna is assistant professor of history at Georgetown University, where she specializes in the history of precolonial Africa. She lives in Braddock Heights, MD.

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