Inside African Anthropology offers an incisive biography of the life and work of South Africa's foremost social anthropologist, Monica Hunter Wilson. By exploring her main fieldwork and intellectual projects in southern Africa between the 1920s and 1960s through a massive personal archive, the book offers insights into the personal and intellectual life of a leading African anthropologist. Beginning with her origins in the remote Eastern Cape, the authors follow Wilson to Cambridge University and back into the field among the Pondo of South Africa, where her studies resulted in her 1936 book *Reaction to Conquest*. Her fieldwork focus then shifted to Tanzania, where she teamed up with her husband, Godfrey Wilson. She later returned to South Africa to begin her teaching career at Fort Hare University and record her Tanzanian research. In the 1960s, Wilson embarked on a new urban ethnography with a young South African anthropologist, Archie Mafeje, one of the many black scholars she trained. This study also provides a meticulously researched exploration of the indispensable contributions of African research assistants and co-researchers to the production of this famous woman scholar's cultural knowledge about mid-twentieth-century Africa.

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Praise for *Inside African Anthropology*

“In this provocative engagement with the legacy of Monica Wilson, one of anthropology’s most innovative pioneers, the contributors make a strong case for the enduring relevance of her scholarly vision – her insistence on the discipline’s relation to history, its unique understanding of ritual and symbolism, its potential for intimate collaborations across the lines of race, culture, status. In reflecting on why it is that subsequent generations have not fully appreciated Wilson’s genius, whether in Africa or beyond, the authors provide sharp insight into what her story tells us about how anthropology evaluates its own past, about how it often fails to recognise the many “unofficial” contributors – be they anthropologists or their various “assistants” – who have enriched its intellectual bounty.”

– Jean Comaroff, Harvard University

“This book is highly informative on Monica Hunter Wilson, one of the most significant figures in African anthropology, who at great personal and intellectual costs opted to work from within as apartheid unfolded in South Africa and as some of her contemporaries relocated to universities in the UK and the United States. The book makes a compelling case for Monica Wilson’s achievements and stature as a distinguished and highly regarded ethnographer of social change in Africa; one who recognised and invested significantly in ethnography as co-production and co-implication through the close creative relationships she forged and maintained with her fellow African assistants in the course of her career as researcher and teacher. It is a major and welcome contribution to African anthropology increasingly in need of new approaches to its intellectual history, ones that show sensitivity towards processes of inter-dependence, intersubjectivity and reflexivity in knowledge production.”

– Francis B. Nyamnjoh, University of Cape Town

“This book is among the best written volumes I have read. It uncovers an “unofficial” history of anthropology from South Africa. Each of the authors shows how anthropology emerges not just as an expression of theory or the genealogy of its leading figures, but through the unfolding of diverse lives. The most important relationships are between Monica and Godfrey Wilson and the black South Africans, Zambians, and Tanganyikans who engaged with them as informants, interpreters and clerks, but also as culture brokers, patrons and intellectuals. Monica’s liberalism and the context of segregation were always powerful influences, but as a study of lived relationships, *Inside African Anthropology* reveals the heterogeneity and negotiation in intellectual work.”

– Nancy Jacobs, Brown University

“Combining critical intellectual history with biography, the chapters that make up this fascinating book remind us again that social anthropological scholarship has always been a “co-production”, no more so than in South Africa during the period of apartheid. Unusually, among her peers, Monica Wilson always acknowledged this fact – it was intrinsic to her life’s work as a scholar and dedicated teacher.”

– Megan Vaughan, Cambridge University
Inside African Anthropology

Monica Wilson and Her Interpreters

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Andrew Bank and Leslie J. Bank
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