UNESCO International Scientific Committee for the New Volumes of the General History of Africa

GENERAL HISTORY OF AFRICA · IX

General History of Africa Revisited

EDITOR AUGUSTIN F. C. HOLL



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GENERAL HISTORY OF AFRICA • IX

General History of Africa Revisited

UNESCO General History of Africa

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UNESCO International Committee for the New Volumes of the General History of Africa

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EDITOR AUGUSTIN F. C. HOLL



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FOREWORD

by Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO

In 1964, UNESCO launched a groundbreaking and ambitious project with a simple premise: to tell the history of Africa, from the perspective of Africans. Over the course of the following three decades, UNESCO brought together some of the greatest minds from Africa and around the world to produce eight volumes of the *General History of Africa*.

This pioneering corpus, complete with richly illustrated maps, explanatory charts and revelatory photographs, was published in 12 languages. It replaced colonial distortions with an African perspective, rectifying widespread ignorance and discriminatory prejudices through a pluralistic, interdisciplinary approach to historiography.

This new volume, *General History of Africa Revisited*, comes more than 30 years after the publication of Volume VIII. In line with the principles of the original project, rejecting a static, unchanging view of history, Volume IX revisits the earlier works with new perspectives, taking into account shifts in academic consensus along with major archaeological discoveries and scientific advancements. This work was undertaken in collaboration with 60 distinguished scholars from 28 countries across every continent.

Faithful to the decolonial spirit of the first eight volumes, this volume challenges Eurocentric biases and brings to the fore a range of African sources: oral, material, artistic and written. It gives readers a coherent and condensed analysis of each

of the previous volumes and provides a framework to evaluate those to come. In particular, it reconceptualizes the notion of 'prehistory' and replaces it with 'initial history', emphasizing Africa's continuous historical presence.

This volume delves into hominid lifeways, stone technologies, food production and the invention of pottery, characterizing the emergence and early days of humankind, which are widely accepted to have taken place in Africa. It also depicts ancient hunting and gathering societies, integrating environmental, paleo-anthropological, genomic, linguistic and archaeological perspectives throughout the initial history of the continent.

From these fascinating origins, *General History of Africa Revisited* goes on to address the demographic, cultural and dynamic processes that shaped the ancient and modern history of Africa – from the expansion of monotheism to the formation of merchant diasporas and the development of enslavement and resistance.

Building on the advances made in the first eight volumes, this book builds a scientific and decolonized reconstruction of the continent's past, integrating the richness of new data, methodologies and perspectives.

Revisiting this anthology decades later is not only a scientific pursuit, but also a pathway for addressing contemporary issues. Given that racism and discrimination around the world today have long histories with strong roots in colonization and enslavement, combating racial stereotypes and addressing inequalities require a comprehensive understanding of Africa's history.

It is my hope that this new volume of the *General History of Africa* will be widely read and shared. UNESCO will use the knowledge within these pages to promote a better understanding of Africa's past and the ways in which Africa and its diaspora have helped build modern societies. With a particular focus on young people, the Organization will continue its popularization efforts through the development of documentaries, comic books, educational video games and theatre scripts.

Recognizing that history is a living discipline, UNESCO will also continue to foster the development of knowledge on the history of Africa and its diasporas, particularly by promoting the establishment of networks of universities, research centres and institutions.

Finally, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to all members of the International Scientific Committee, its Chair and Vice-Chairs, the editor and authors of this volume, and everyone who contributed to the achievement of this collective work. My sincere thanks also go to the donors and partners, both public and private, whose generosity has made this work possible.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Reconceptualizing the History of Africa and its Diasporas

Augustin F. C. Holl

Introduction

The UNESCO *General History of Africa* (GHA) project consists of a three-stage process. The first stage, 'the *General History of Africa*' *stricto-sensu*, was launched in the early 1960s, the second, 'the Pedagogical Use of the *General History of Africa*', in 2009, and the third and last, 'Volume IX of the *General History of Africa*', in 2013.

The Volume IX of the GHA project was initially shaped at the Expert Meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the auspices of the African Union, from 20 to 22 May 2013. Some 50 experts from different parts of world were invited to share ideas and make recommendations on the best ways to proceed. The initiative was spearheaded and initially funded by the Federal Government of Brazil. The International Scientific Committee for the Preparation and Publication of Volume IX of the General History of Africa, composed of 16 members appointed by the UNESCO Director-General, met later in the year in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, to craft the project agenda and set it in motion. From 2013 to 2017, the Committee met successively in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil (November 2013), Paris, France (June 2014), São Carlos, Brazil (October 2015), Luanda, Angola (February 2016), Havana, Cuba (January 2017) and finally, in Xiamen, China (December 2017). The Committee crafted the initial structure of Volume IX in three tomes, organized the editorial teams

and selected some 250-300 authors worldwide. During the last meeting in Xiamen, it was decided to produce three volumes (IX, X and XI) instead of one Volume IX comprising three tomes. When the last stage of the process is complete, the GHA will be an impressive eleven-volume series.

The launch of the *General History of Africa*

The middle of the twentieth century was the crest of a wave of independence of African countries. The legacy of World War II, which pitted the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Warsaw Pact military alliances against each other, was the key variable of international geopolitics. The Cold War, spreading its frozen wings over all international affairs, was at its peak. The raw ideological and geopolitical tensions manifested themselves on all continents. In Africa, Patrice Emery Lumumba, the Prime Minister of the newly independent State of Congo-Leopoldville, was deposed and assassinated on 17 January 1961. In Europe, the construction of the Berlin Wall, a palpable symbol of the Iron Curtain, started on 13 August 1961. In the Americas, the Cuban Missile Crisis, which lasted from 16 to 28 October 1962, brought the world to the brink of a nuclear conflagration. And finally, in Asia, following the implementation of the 'containment' doctrine, the United States Air Force attacked North Vietnam in 1964, triggering a sustained escalation in a war that lasted up until 1975.

The World War II alliance to defeat fascism and German-Japanese militarism was shattered in the immediate post-war years. The Chinese Communist Party and the People's Liberation Army defeated the Kuomintang and the Chinese Nationalist Party, and proclaimed the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949. The Berlin Blockade, implemented from 24 June 1948 to 12 May 1949, signalled the onset of a new era of ideological rivalry, political confrontations and an arms race. Newly independent countries, pressured to choose sides, were faced with difficult and unpalatable choices. They attempted to create a space between the antagonistic blocks with the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement during the decade 1950-1960. The Bandung Conference, which took place from 18-24 April 1955 in Indonesia, was an epoch-marking event. It brought together Asian and African leaders and called for a rapid end to colonial domination. The movement toward independence of former colonies – predominantly in Africa – kicked off and the outcome was inevitable. The *General History of Africa* (GHA) project was born in that tense context. The

move was motivated by the strong will of newly independent African countries to take their destiny into their own hands, improve their present, shape their future and reflect on their history from their own perspective.

The history curriculum taught in colonized Africa was inadequate in many aspects. Schoolchildren in French colonies were taught to sing 'Our Ancestors the Gauls'. The European self-assigned 'civilizing mission' was predicated on the erasure of African historical agency. A new approach to Africa's past was an absolute necessity. The process of writing the GHA was consequently launched by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1964. Its main goal was to write the history of Africa from an African perspective. The monumental task undertaken then took some 20 years, at the end of which, in the early 1980s, the first volumes were produced. Eight volumes, numbered I-VIII, initially in French, English and Arabic, and translated later into 10 other languages, were published between 1981 and 1999. Some 350 historians and scientists, two thirds of them Africans, were involved. Their work was coordinated by the International Scientific Committee for the drafting of a General History of Africa, comprising 39 experts. They had to challenge the colonial library and rebuild an African historiography free of colonialist imprints and stereotypes. The history of Africa was not confined to enslavement, poverty, famines and civil unrest. The rich and diverse tapestry of Africa's past had to be rendered as thoroughly and precisely as possible through sound and rigorous scholarship. The GHA project pioneered an alternative way of writing history (Schmidt and Patterson, 1993). It brought to the fore marginalized and silenced people's voices and promoted a 'de-nationalized' historical narrative, featuring hidden space and time connections between different countries and regions of the world.

Starting with the GHA, UNESCO launched a series of general and regional histories, including the *History of Humanity*, a *History of the Civilizations of Central Asia*, a *General History of Latin America*, a *General History of the Caribbean*, and the *Different Aspects of Islamic Culture*. The process was triggered by the liberation of different parts of the world from colonial rule. It showcased new knowledge allowing for the build-up of a new universalism, a universalism that takes into consideration different historical legacies and worldviews. The pluralist and multidisciplinary approaches relied on for the writing of these histories shifted the narrative from the chronicles of kings, princes and dominant elites to the histories of political, social and cultural transformations, as well as scientific and artistic developments in different geocultural areas.

The *General History of Africa* as an alternative

The GHA was crafted as an alternative to the Eurocentric views of world history. The search for an alternative to the situation of alienation, domination and dependency has been part of the activities of some individuals or organized groups as early as the nineteenth century, with activists like Marcus Garvey, intellectuals like E. W. Blyden, W. E. B. Du Bois, and more recently Cheikh Anta Diop, to name but a few towering figures. Surfing the waves of political independence of African countries in the middle of the twentieth century, UNESCO's GHA project was launched to decolonize African history. The product that emerged from that initiative ended up as an important collection of eight volumes, published between 1981 and 1999. They are arranged along a chronological sequence, with some unavoidable overlap, each volume coordinated by one or two editors. In his preface, A. M. M'Bow, then Director-General of UNESCO, summarized what was at stake in the writing of the eight-volume *General History of Africa*. His presentation focused on a number of key issues, including 'the denial' of history, the false assumption of a 'balkanized' continent, and the conception of Africans and Afrodescendants as 'the wretched of the Earth'. He explained the genesis of the project and its scientific ambitions, and asserted the imperative for a widespread circulation and the need for pedagogical use of the published works.

Centuries of enslavement, followed by destructive conquest and colonial domination have generated peculiar conceptions of Africans, their past and their position in the world, as well as their future. Despite important contributions of a small number of scholars – Leo Frobenius, Maurice Delafosse and Arturo Labriola – mentioned in his text, M'Bow points to a common theme that emerged during the nineteenth century and spread during the colonial period. According to that theme, derived from the Hegelian conception of world history, African communities were societies unlikely to have a history. The core of the issue was that of the nature of the sources needed to write history. The lack of written sources in most ancient African societies was erroneously equated with the absence of history. Oral sources were paradoxically disparaged. Most of African history was still written from an outsider's perspective, based on external sources and relying on a European template as a model. African history was filtered through a series of preconceptions. It thus appears crucial for the historians to reshuffle their methodological tools and abandon the misleading preconceptions.

The dominant perception of Africa was that of a continent with juxtaposed subsets. North Africa, known as 'white' and sub-Saharan Africa, known as 'black' were thought to have lived separately on account of an insurmountable obstacle, namely the Saharan desert. Ancient Egypt and Nubia were also thought to have evolved independently from the rest of the continent. Consequently, Africa was not considered to be a historical entity. While each of the regions of Africa possesses its own originality, those regions have maintained uninterrupted exchanges between each other. North Africa, for example, was a bridgehead between the Mediterranean world and sub-Saharan Africa, and as for the margins of the Sahara, they have always been fluctuating. Egypt and Nubia have an interwoven history and share many cultural characteristics with the rest of Africa.

Racial stereotypes linked to the slave trade and colonial domination have distorted the very basis of African historiography. The use of discriminatory categories, for example, establishing white superiority and the '*essentialisation du nègre*' have distorted this historiography. In fact, Africa had to fight against twofold enslavement, economic and psychological. The hierarchy established among races as featured in colonial historiography served to justify colonial domination and the 'civilizing mission'. Changes that occurred after World War II, particularly the entry of African States onto the international scene, contributed to the evolution of the situation.

In this particular context, the Africans themselves felt the profound need to re-establish the historicity of their societies on solid foundations. This was one of the main stakes involved in the GHA project. The methodological innovation required gave great importance to African sources, particularly oral traditions (which require a systematic critical approach for satisfactory exploitation).

GHA volumes I to VIII

UNESCO's GHA includes the following eight volumes:

Volume I – *Methodology and African Prehistory*, edited by J. Ki-Zerbo (1981), has 28 chapters and three themes: methodology; archaeology and its techniques; and environmental change and regional sequences.

Volume II – *Ancient Civilizations of Africa*, edited by G. Mokhtar (1981), has 29 chapters and four themes. It deals with the evolution and emergence of the continent's early States up to 500 CE, with Egypt and Nubia having the lion's share.

Volume III – *Africa from the Seventh to the Eleventh Century*, edited by M. Elfasi and I. Hrbek (1988), comprises 28 chapters and five themes. It focuses on the expansion of Islam and its consequences on peoples and cultures of the African continent.

Volume IV – *Africa from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century*, edited by D. T. Niane (1984), partly overlaps chronologically with the previous volume. It comprises 27 chapters and four themes, dealing with the diversity of Africa's political, social and economic organizations as well as the 'Africanization' of Islam.

Volume V – *Africa from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, edited by B. A. Ogot (1992), focuses on Ottoman expansion in North Africa, the development of the Atlantic slave trade, and their consequences on African societies. It has 29 chapters organized into thematic subsets: global processes on the one hand, and regional and local syntheses on the other hand.

Volume VI – *Africa in the Nineteenth Century until the 1880s*, edited by J. F. Ade Ajayi (1989), consists of 29 chapters and four themes, dealing with European settlements in northern and southern Africa, the formation of new States, Islam revivalist movements in West Africa, and the general state of the continent on the eve of European colonization.

Volume VII – *Africa under Colonial Domination 1880-1935*, edited by A. Adu Boahen (1985), has 30 chapters on the comparative analysis of European colonial systems and the multifaceted response of African societies, including the emergence and development of nationalist movements.

Volume VIII – *Africa since 1935*, edited by Ali A. Mazrui and C. Wondji (1999), has 30 chapters and seven themes. It explores the effects of major world crises and their impacts on the emergence and development of African nationalisms, pan-Africanism, the struggle for liberation and the place of independent African countries on the world scene.

Unfortunately, the impressive achievement of the GHA project was not widely disseminated in African bookstores, libraries or research institutions. Its impact on history curricula was virtually non-existent in most, if not all, African countries. A new initiative was necessary. The opportunity for launching that new initiative was found on 9 September 1999, with the Sirte Declaration, the founding act of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which changed its name to the African Union (AU) in 2002.

The pedagogical use of the *General History of Africa*

The Pedagogical Use of the *General History of Africa* project is but the second phase of the GHA long-term objectives. It is geared to shift the momentum back into the hands of Africans and people of African descent. Building on the political dynamics triggered by the Sirte Declaration and the establishment of the Organization of African Unity on 9 September 1999 in Sirte, Libya, the Libyan Government provided funds for an ambitious project geared to support the movement toward the integration and construction of a united continent. Following a request from the African Union, UNESCO launched the Pedagogical Use of the *General History of Africa* project, first through an extensive review of the published volumes and an international meeting in Tripoli from 10-17 June 2010. Once the programme was launched, expert meetings were organized successively in Harare, Zimbabwe, in Accra, Ghana, and in Khartoum, Sudan. The foundational idea was to generate a common frame of mind, and shape a manifest destiny based on a common history and shared future that would further the construction of a peaceful, united and prosperous continent.

The dense and rich material assembled in the eight volumes of the GHA had to be analysed and included in the history curriculum of all the continent's school systems, from elementary schools to higher education institutions. Africans and Afrodescendants have to learn a history written from their own perspective, away from narrow national histories inherited from the colonial library. Despite significant transformations and sustained curricula changes in almost all African countries, the legacy of the colonial period is still present and resilient. The use of African languages at all levels of the education institutions will be critical for the future success of this project. The destruction in Libya left the project without funding. Alternative funding sources are being explored, with the project moving forward, but at a slower pace.

The post-colonial imperative and new epistemology

Some 60 years after the wave of independence of African countries, it was possible to pause and think. The Bretton Woods institutions – the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and, more recently, the World Trade Organization – set the rules and imposed liberal capitalism as the economic norm. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the ensuing collapse of

the Soviet empire, some authors wrote about the 'end of history' (Fukuyama, 1989, 1992) and 'clash of civilizations' (Huntington, 1993, 1996). By way of an introduction to his 1992 book, Fukuyama wrote:

> In it, I argued that a remarkable consensus concerning the legitimacy of liberal democracy as a system of government had emerged throughout the world over the past few years, as it conquered rival ideologies like hereditary monarchy, fascism, and most recently communism. More than that, however, I argued that liberal democracy may constitute the "end point of mankind's ideological evolution" and the "final form of human government," and as such constituted the "end of history" (https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/us/fukuyama.htm).

Imposed structural adjustments, deregulation, privatization and laissez-faire have proven to be double-edged swords. The consequences were disastrous for most, if not all, African countries. What is the place of former colonies, caught in the neo-colonial net of their former colonizers – the CFA franc being an emblematic case of neo-colonial domination – in such an international system?

Without having to cut ties with former colonial powers, it is time to explore new spaces and times as well as distant and present connections with South America and Asia. Despite its current political crisis, Brazil, with the largest population of people of African descent outside Africa, will be a crucial partner in the years to come. In most American and Caribbean countries, people of African descent are fighting for their human and civil rights. The history of the African diaspora in the Indian Ocean, Asia and the South Pacific has to complement and dilute the dominant focus on the Atlantic world. China, already the first economic partner of Africa and the second largest economy in the world, has had multi-secular relationships with Africa (Li Anshan, 2005).

Past Chinese presence in Africa

It is not known precisely when Chinese goods reached Africa for the first time. Archaeological research provides a number of clues. An Austrian expedition excavating in Thebes, at Deir el-Madina, found the remains of silk in the hair of a 30-50 year-old female mummy discovered in the burial ground of the kings' workers. The burial is dated to the Hyksos period, belonging to the Twenty-First Dynasty, i.e. 1075-945 BCE (Li Anshan, 2005; Lubec et al., 1993). The silk industry certainly originated in China, where archaeologists have found textiles in a mysterious tomb dating back nearly 2,500 years in eastern Jiangxi Province, the oldest to be discovered in China's history. The silk industry,

trade and consequently the Silk Road, are thus much older than thought, and probably reached Egypt through Persia. Trade and cultural exchange between China and Egypt were well established during the Han dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE) (Sun Tang, 1979 in Li Anshan, 2005). According to Li Anshan (2005, p. 60), Du Huan, a Chinese soldier of the Tang dynasty (618-907 CE) and war captive in Baghdad, where he spent several years, visited Africa in the eighth century, sometime around 762. His book, *Jingxingji* [经行记, *Record of My Travels*], was lost and is now known only through quotes in other books. It is therefore not known which part of Africa he may have visited, although Egypt and Northeast Africa appear to have been the most reachable.

In the first half of the fifteenth century, the Ming dynasty decided to project Chinese naval power all over the Indian Ocean. The Yongle emperor (1403-1424) appointed Zheng He as the Chief Admiral of a large fleet – the *Treasure Fleet*. The latter organized a total of seven expeditions, from 1405 to 1433, generally known as 'Zheng He's voyages' (Deng, 2005; Dreyer, 2006; Ferrand, 1919, 1922; Filesi, 1970; Levathes, 1997; Viviano, 2005). The *Treasure Fleet* sailed to the coast of East Africa on the fourth (1413-1415), fifth (1416-1419) and sixth (1421-1422) voyages, docking in Mogadishu, present-day Somalia, as well as Malindi and Mombasa, present-day Kenya. They exchanged Chinese goods for African ones, including live animals such as zebras and giraffes. Chinese celadon pottery of the kind produced in Longquan, found in the Limpopo valley on Mapungubwe Hill in the 1930s, is now firmly dated to the late Yuan (1279-1368) and early Ming (1368-1644) dynasties (Prinsloo et al., 2005). Such evidence is distributed over a large geographic zone in Eastern Africa, including Great Zimbabwe, the Swahili city-states, the Comoros and Madagascar (Beaujard, 2007). In addition, some of the descendants of Chinese sailors from Admiral Zheng He's fleet living on the small island of Pate were interviewed by Nicholas Kristof (1999) for *The New York Times*. In summary, there is scattered but significant evidence of the presence of Chinese goods and people in Africa's past. This interaction peaked in the fifteenth century and was cut short by the succeeding dynasty's imperial ban on foreign trade and naval expeditions.

Past African presence in China

Beyond the presence of surprising animals, such as zebras and giraffes (Chau Ju-Kua, 1911; Ferrand, 1919, 1922; Filesi, 1970; Wheatley, 1961; Talib and Samir, 1988), a number of Africans, through different indirect channels, ended up living in China as early as the first quarter of the eighth century. According to the *Chronicle of the Tang Dynasty*, in 724, the King of Srinijaya, from Palembang, Sumatra, offered a Zanj [black] girl, among other things, as tribute to the Emperor (Talib and Samir, 1988, p. 732; Ferrand, 1922). This practice was repeated several times during the following centuries, in 813, 818 and 976. In 813 and 818, the rulers from Kalinga, an Indonesian kingdom, offered several Zanj boys and girls in three successive missions to the Tang Emperor Hsien-Tsung. In 976, under the Sung dynasty, the Imperial court received 'a black K'un Lun slave with deep set eyes and black body' (Chau Ju-Kua, 1911) from an Arab trader (Talib and Samir, 1988, p. 732).

Although, indirectly and through Arab and Indonesian intermediaries, the slave trade reached China, mainly through the entry port and distribution hub of Guangzhou (Canton). The enslaved Africans were 'employed on shipboard to caulk leaky seams below the water-line from the outside as they were expert swimmers who do not close their eyes under water' (Chau Ju-Kua, 1911, pp. 31-2; Talib and Samir, 1988, p. 732; Wheatley, 1961, p. 55). Others were gate guards and household servants for the wealthy families in metropolitan areas. According to Chau Ju-Kua (1911, p. 32), 'many families buy black people to make gatekeepers of; they are called *kui-nu*, or "devil-slaves" or *hei siau ssi* (black slaves or servants)'. There is clearly much more research to be done in this direction, if oral histories and family archives can be collected systematically.

The great Moroccan world traveller and explorer Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Abdullah al-Lawati al-Tanji Ibn Battuta – Ibn Battuta for short – visited China in the middle of the fourteenth century. He travelled all over the ancient world, covering some 120,000 kilometres in 29 years. Ibn Battuta arrived at Guangzhou (Canton) in China in 1345 (Ibn Battuta, 1982). He was particularly interested in local crafts, boat construction and porcelain making, and visited a number of places and towns. He travelled north to Hangzhou, which he described as the largest city he had ever seen. He could not reach Beijing and returned to Guangzhou in 1346 to sail to Sumatra.

It is also claimed that Admiral Zheng He's *Treasure Fleet* took some foreign dignitaries back to China to pay homage to the Ming emperors. It is not clear if

some Africans from the Swahili city-states of Mogadishu, Malindi or Mombasa were involved in these visits. In summary, from as early as the eighth century, Africans were present in Chinese imperial courts and in some wealthy families in southern China.

An exciting new conjuncture

A conjuncture is the convergence of independent factors that generates a new and unpredictable situation that lasts. The new and exciting conjuncture referred to here is made of four distinct developments: (1) a new institutional framework; (2) the improvement of the general economic and social outlook of Africa, despite persistent problems; (3) the expansion and acceleration of economic cooperation between Africa, Asia and South America; and (4) the development of a multipolar world.

A new institutional framework

The end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century witnessed important changes in Africa's political map. After long wars of national liberation, the former Portuguese colonies became sovereign States in the 1970s: Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde celebrated their independence on 24 September 1973; Angola followed on 11 November 1974; and finally, Mozambique on 25 June 1975. It was the turn of Namibia and South Africa to go through profound changes in the 1990s. The former gained independence from South Africa's mandate on 21 March 1990. Nelson Mandela was freed from Robben Island jail on 11 February 1990 and was elected shortly after as the first post-apartheid South African president. Two new sovereign States entered the African political scene during the same time, after long and painful wars of liberation: Eritrea gained independence from Ethiopia on 24 May 1991, and South Sudan separated from the Republic of Sudan and celebrated its independence on 9 July 2011.

The establishment of the African Union in 1999 and the initiation of the regional integration process sparked a new momentum, challenging the divisions of the continent and the identity and nation construction model inherited from the colonial period. The major changes in the areas of economic cooperation and international relations that have influenced our globalized world since the end of the 1990s have paved the way for new opportunities as well as new

challenges and threats for Africa. Indeed, the accelerated pace of urbanization, Africa's wealth in terms of natural and strategic resources and the aspirations and creativity of young people pose new challenges for the people of Africa, thus emphasizing the need to take control of their destiny.

Moreover, people of African descent in South, Central and North America, the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, the Middle East and elsewhere are attaching increasing importance to the links that tie them to Africa and African heritage. The countries in which people of African descent reside are increasingly recognizing the important contribution of these citizens to the construction of their societies. These countries are currently establishing public policies that aim to rectify historical distortions and combat racism, racial discrimination and the inequalities of the past, including positive discrimination measures. In that spirit, the initiatives taken by the Brazilian Government – in particular the adoption of a law on the mandatory teaching of the history of Africans and of Afrodescendants at all levels of education by using the GHA – set a standard in this regard. The preparation and publication of Volume IX of the GHA is a positive response to the above-mentioned trends and the requests formulated by Member States at the African Union summit held in Syrte, Libya, in 2009.

Africa's economic outlook

The economic outlook of the entire continent has shifted in the right direction during the last two decades, starting from the 2010s. There are significant variations between regions and countries, but on average, the situation has improved. Globally, major European weekly magazines, such as *Le Point* in France and *The Economist* in the United Kingdom, have praised Africa's economic performances. It is a far cry from the description of Africa as 'the hopeless continent', in the thundering headline of *The Economist* in 2000. The economic growth rate has been sustained for the last few years, averaging 5% per year, with double-digit rates in countries like Ethiopia and Ghana. The European-American financial crisis did not significantly affect Africa, partly because of its loose banks. There are still major obstacles to the freeing of all the potential creative energy, but many African entrepreneurs are more optimistic and less risk-averse. According to demographic projections, there are 500 million Africans of working age and there will be 1.1 billion in 2040, more than in China or India (*Le Point,* 9 August 2012). The potential for greener development is also higher in Africa than anywhere else in the world.

The expansion and acceleration of economic cooperation between Africa, Asia and South America

The multilateral cooperation between African countries and Asian and South American partners is on the increase. Most Asian economic powerhouses, whether large, like China, India and Japan, or smaller, like South Korea, are launching cooperation programmes with African countries in a broad range of domains. A new cooperation alliance, BRIC – including Brazil, Russia, India and China – working for an alternative to the Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization) was formed in 2009. South Africa joined the alliance later, which changed its acronym to BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. BRICS financial institutions are being created and they are expected to affect international cooperation and financial systems in the years to come. Despite its current political crisis, Brazil, with the largest Afrodescendant population out of Africa, is positioned to play an important role in the cooperation with African countries.

The development of a multipolar world

The collapse of the Soviet empire, symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989, took all political commentators by surprise. Starting with *glasnost*, the attempted reform movement launched by President Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet empire unravelled within a few months (Sebestyen, 2010). The world was left with a single dominant imperial power that tried to impose its political views on the rest of the planet. Building on the collapse of the Soviet Union, viewed by some as the triumph over the 'evil empire' (Fukuyama, 1989, 1992; Huntington, 1993, 1996; Sebestyen, 2010), a power group of ideologues termed 'neoconservatives' took control of the foreign policy of the United States of America and devised a new doctrine of 'pre-emptive strikes' against whoever challenged the world domination of the United States. The first Gulf War, triggered by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, took place in 1990-1991. The invading army was expelled by an international coalition led by the United States of America. The neoconservatives rose to full executive power with the election of G. W. Bush and Dick Cheney, respectively as President and Vice-President of the United States, in November 2000. During the chaotic rule of President Boris Yeltsin (1991-1999), the Russian Federation was totally absent from the international stage. On 11 September 2001, the attack on the World Trade

Center in New York unleashed the implementation of the new doctrine. The war in Afghanistan started on 7 October 2001 and continues today. Under the pretext of the presence of weapons of mass destruction, the Iraq War was launched on 20 March 2003 and lasted until 18 December 2011. Vladimir Putin replaced Boris Yeltsin as President of the Russian Federation on 31 December 1999, and was elected to that post a few months later in 2000. He initiated a series of reforms of Russian governing institutions and launched a ferocious war in Chechnya. A few years later, he restored the pride of the average Russian citizen and brought Russian diplomacy and military back on the world scene. The rise of China as the world's second economic powerhouse and its military build-up led to the emergence of a new multipolar world.

The new *General History of Africa*: an exponential growth

The Volume IX of the *General History of Africa* project is the third phase, launched in 2013, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The impetus came from Brazil. The Brazilian parliament passed a law on the mandatory teaching of the history of Africans and of Afrodescendants at all levels of public education in the country. The Brazilian Government offered funding for an additional volume in the GHA series, a volume that would feature the history of African diasporas worldwide. The new project, anchored on the key concept of 'Global Africa', encourages literary and artistic approaches to gain better insight into certain aspects of the experiences of Africans and people of African descent. It advocates the use of concepts or notions in African languages, allowing people to think in African terms, realizes comparative studies in relation to South America and Asia, and offers a balanced and positive history of Africa and its diasporas.

The contributors were asked to think about writing history differently and to invent another way of portraying history. They were particularly encouraged to take into account the literary and artistic productions concerning historic African experiences as essential materials in the writing of the endogenous history of Africa and Africans. The contexts and their specific implementation of the concept of race would be central to understanding how Africans and people of African descent refer to themselves. It would also involve critical observation of the dynamics of the relationship between Africa and its diasporas, African 'globality', movements back and forth and the ways in which Africa could connect to the rest of the world.

An epistemic shift: Global Africa

This project implies writing a serene history of Africans and people of African descent on a global scale. That is what is subsumed under the concept of 'Global Africa'; in other words, taking into account the many dimensions of Africanness worldwide, from the initial expansion of humans from the African continent to the successive diasporas over time, right up to the present day (Harris, 1993; Hodgson and Byfield, 2017). The concept allows us to overcome the customary dichotomies and divisions between Africa and the African diasporas, enabling a balanced understanding of the African diasporas, in the long term and in their diversity. It equally allows us to reassess approaches to the period of enslavement, to study the relationship between pan-Africanism and the diasporas, and the enhancement of pan-Africanist thinking nurtured by contributions from different diasporic experiences. In other words, it allows us to address actively and transversally the different issues linking Africa and its diasporas.

The decolonization of concepts

The decolonization of the concepts, paradigms and categorizations used in social and human sciences, particularly in history, is regarded as an epistemological necessity throughout the scientific and intellectual communities in the former colonies and beyond (Mudimbe, 1988; Said, 1979) and as yet another component of the cultural and political emancipation of peoples who, not without difficulty, have thrown off the yoke of European colonization (Mignolo, 2011). Thanks to post-colonial studies, researchers in Latin America, Asia and Africa now select topics on the structural, protean remnants of colonial relations in the post-colonial era – a sort of 'coloniality' – that perpetuates age-old images and epistemological racism, disparaging non-Western cultural output. This inextinguishably burning issue somewhat informs the endogenous African approach taken in writing the *General History of Africa*. The approach to the decolonization of knowledge on Africa, providing an opportunity to write an innovative history from within and with a different outlook on the world, makes a crucial contribution to what the poet and thinker Aimé Césaire called the 'meeting place for giving and taking', a rearranged universal, a 'pluriversal', illustrating the great variety of human nature.

The current project, initially known as Volume IX of the *General History of Africa*, is consequently different from all the previous ones. It now comprises

three volumes – IX, X and XI – each with an editorial team consisting of section coordinators, co-editors and editors, with three main goals: (1) to update the *General History of Africa* and theories on human origins and the earliest human civilizations; (2) to explore and flesh out the formation process of 'Global Africa' and its consolidation in the rest of the world through its diasporas; and (3) to look at the opportunities and new challenges of 'Global Africa' in the contemporary world.

The General History of Africa Revisited

Volume IX, *The General History of Africa Revisited*, essentially aims to update the GHA. After four decades of intensive archaeological, historical and anthropological research, most of the content of the first three GHA volumes is partially or totally outdated. This updating is particularly challenging partly because of tightly limited space. It is divided into four sections, each under the editorial responsibility of coordinators.

Section 1, coordinated by Olabiyi B. Joseph Yaï and Martial Ze Belinga and entitled 'Writing History of Africans and their Diasporas Today' explores the epistemological and theoretical conditions for the production of historical narratives in the contemporary world. The concept of 'historical sources' is 'stretchable' ad infinitum. Objects, monuments, words, songs, poems and artefacts are historical sources depending on the purpose of the investigations being conducted. The assembled contributions interrogate the meaning and contribution to historical scholarship of such concepts as 'Africa', 'history' and 'oral traditions'. What is the translation of the word 'history' in African languages, in ancient Egyptian or in Yoruba? The authors discuss and explore the intricacies of long-term versus short-term histories, the possible contribution of native African writing systems, and the use and misuse of oral traditions in the chronicle of historical experiences of Africans and Afrodescendants.

Section 2, 'Review of the General History of Africa: Volumes I-VIII', is coordinated by Doulaye Konaté. It comprises the reviews of the contents of GHA volumes I to VIII, published between 1981 and 1999, in order to determine what needs to be updated.

Section 3, entitled 'The Initial History of Africa: An Update', is coordinated by Augustin F. C. Holl. The new formulation is a substitute for the term 'prehistory' that tends to be misread by an increasing number of people. Human history is a continuum from its remote hominid beginnings to the present.

Periodization is a necessity but it does not have to be constructed on a 'before' – prehistory – and a standard, genuine 'after' – history – viewed as a civilization threshold. The scheme suggested in this section is made of successive stages, as follows: initial, ancient, modern and contemporary history.

The update of the initial history of the continent is carried out in seven topical entries, each with two to four contributions. The first, 'general topics', deals with paleoenvironmental and paleoclimatological research, paleogenomics and African language classifications. Paleoanthropological research has completely changed our understanding of human origins and evolution. The speciation events and radiation episodes that resulted in the emergence of (1) the Ardipithecines – *Sahelanthropus tchadensis, Orrorin tugenensis, Ardipithecus ramidus* and *Ardipithecus kadabba* – dated to 7-4.5 million years ago, (2) the Australopithecines dated to 4.5-1.7 million years ago, (3) *Homo* dated to 2.5 million years ago and finally, (4) *Homo sapiens sapiens* dated to around 300,000 years ago, all took place in Africa. Three contributions under the second topic feature the oldest 7 million-year-old hominid from the Djurab desert in the Republic of Chad, an informed discussion on hominid subsistence and lifeways, and the presentation of the earliest stone tool complexes. Pleistocene hunting and gathering communities are dealt with under the third topic, in two chapters; and the emergence and expansion of food production is covered under the fourth topic, in three chapters. New directions in Egyptology are featured under the fifth topic, in four chapters. The discussions are evidence-based and serene, staying away from entrenched orthodoxies. Technological inventions and innovations are dealt with under the sixth topic, in two chapters, one on pottery and the other on metallurgies. Finally, the seventh topic explores the emergence of social complexity, in four chapters.

Section 4, coordinated by Doulaye Konaté and entitled 'Ancient and Modern History of Africa: An Update', features 12 contributions organized under four themes: (1) regional processes in the inland Niger delta, the Maghreb and Madagascar; (2) histories of religious systems; (3) trade diasporas in West and East Africa and the Indian Ocean; and finally, (4) enslavement and resistances.

Africa and Its Diasporas

Volume X, *Africa and Its Diasporas*, includes three sections. Section 1, coordinated by Carole Boyce-Davies and entitled 'Redefining Global Africanity and Blackness' includes 16 contributions, organized into two parts: (1) 'Race,

Location, Diaspora and Global Blackness', containing nine contributions; and (2) 'Global Africanity and the African Diaspora: New Epistemological Considerations', comprising seven chapters. The introduction by Boyce-Davies sets the stage, explores the origins of colour systematics in different settings and scholarly traditions, and traces the genealogies of the concept of 'Global Africa'.

Section 2, 'Mapping the African Diasporas', is coordinated by Vanicléia Silva Santos. The entire section deals with different aspects of the formation and resilience of African diasporas in different parts of the world. It comprises 36 contributions organized under six topics.

The first topic, geographies of the African diasporas, comprises four chapters tracing African presence in China, Australia, India and Iran. African revolutions and resistance to oppression, under the second topic, features revolts and resistances of enslaved peoples in North America, Brazil, Colombia and Madagascar. The third topic, African diasporic religions, includes six chapters ranging from Black brotherhoods in Angola, Portugal and Brazil, to Muslim resistance in North America and religious experiences of Africans in the Middle East. The fourth topic, oral genres, under the title 'Ties that bind: wisdom tales, orature and literature' are represented by three contributions on the Caribbean, Latin America and Brazil. The transfer of skills and knowledge is dealt with under the fifth topic, African diasporic knowledge and technologies, through four contributions featuring agriculture, foodways, navigation and mining. Finally, the sixth topic, the return to Africa, in three contributions, focuses on the returnees from Brazil to West Africa and India to East Africa. Cases from Liberia and Sierra Leone, not dealt with here, are relatively well-known.

Section 3, 'Life Stories and Freedom Narratives of Global Africa' is coordinated by Paul Lovejoy. It comprises 18 contributions featuring the life trajectories of enslaved individuals who were written about or who wrote autobiographies. The selected narratives range from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century, with the largest proportion dated to the nineteenth century. As can be expected in the present state of research, there are many more narratives from the Atlantic world, including the west coast of Africa, the Caribbean and the Americas. The situations in the Indian Ocean and mainland Asia, in this case during the Ottoman Empire, are featured in two contributions. The potential for new discoveries is particularly high in these parts of the African diasporas that are still underinvestigated. The narratives of 'returnees' feature the situations in nineteenth-century Sierra Leone, the Bight of Benin and Calabar. All the situations described in the narratives attest to the individual

agency, bargaining skills and resilience of those involved. They bring a direct textured human touch to past African diasporic experiences.

Global Africa Today

The end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century witnessed the complete liberation of Africa from direct colonialism. The newly launched African Union created a sixth region for 'Africans from the diaspora'. All these developments open new opportunities and pose difficult challenges. These are the issues dealt with in Volume XI, *Global Africa Today*. It is a very difficult foray into the 'history of present times' or 'immediate history'. The distancing that allows for a serene writing of history is missing from the picture. Historians have to write history while being involved in it.

The volume is divided into three sections. The first explores the current trends in contemporary historical scholarship and the theoretical and epistemological conditions for writing the history of Global Africa today, the second deals with the specific situation of Africa in the contemporary world and the third and last focuses on challenges to Global Africa at the turn of the third millennium.

Section 1, 'Global Africa Today', coordinated by Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch comprises 26 chapters. The assembled contributions are organized under seven topics with two to six chapters each. The four chapters under the first topic address the new paradigms that shape historical research of contemporary Africa and its diasporas. The second topic, comprising six contributions, deals with emerging new approaches on previously neglected issues. What is the intellectual and cultural impact of the transatlantic slave trade in West African collective memories? How did gender relations shape the structures of African and diasporic societies? What does it mean to be poor? Is the current meaning, crafted by international organizations, applicable to African contexts? This is a sample of the issues addressed by the contributors to this topic. Religious factors are explored under the third topic through two chapters addressing the Africanization of Christianism through black churches, on the one hand, and the recent emergence of new religions, on the other. Issues of political renewal are discussed under the fourth topic. The contributors explore the rift between long-lasting African 'territorial-political' organization and the current 'national-territorial' State inherited from the colonial period. Some of the key questions addressed can be spelled out as follows: What is the relationship between nationality and nationalism? What does nationalism mean in African

multinationality States? What is the genesis of African contemporary chiefdoms and how do they fit in the contemporary State model? The fifth and sixth topics shift from continental Africa to a diasporic perspective. The fifth topic focuses on the concepts of 'Creolization', 'hybridization', and 'miscegenation' as they are relied upon in the Caribbean identity discourses, aesthetics and performing arts. The sixth topic consists of three contributions focusing on how Africa is viewed and conceptualized from the Caribbean. The exploration is carried out via the academic lenses and the development of African studies programmes, and the Caribbean revitalization movement. Lastly, the seventh topic explores present-day visions with a focus on blackness, race and representation, economics and African views on globalization.

Section 2, 'Africa in the Contemporary World', coordinated by Tayeb Chenntouf, comprises 29 contributions arranged in three rubrics. The first rubric features the permanence of the Global Africa project weaved through a broad range of topics, from political initiatives to the performing arts. The Global Africa project can be said to have started with the very deportation of Africans across the Atlantic Ocean. Music, technology, cuisine and religions were key elements of the survival kits of those who landed in the Americas and the Caribbean. The concept of pan-Africanism was coined and nurtured by intellectuals of the diaspora mostly in the nineteenth century. It expanded through a series of meetings in the early part of the twentieth century and became a mobilizing force in the movements for the liberation of the continent from colonial domination. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the African Union (AU) are, so far, the clearest political materialization of pan-Africanist ideas on the continent. The second rubric focuses on the challenges of current globalization and the new world geopolitics. What can be the role of Africa in this emerging new geopolitical world characterized by increasing connectivity through the Internet and faster air transportation? Africa, with its marginal 2% contribution to world trade, tends to witness a regression in its economic development. With very few exceptions, the continent is confined to the exportation of raw materials and unprocessed agricultural products. The influx of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has destabilizing consequences on the operation of local governments. Political and military interference from former colonial powers and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as well as peace-maintenance operations in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali preclude any pragmatic preparation of a future united, peaceful and prosperous Africa. The third rubric, exploring the role of culture and intellectuals, asks the programmatic question: 'What should be done?'.

Debates on the role of Africa in the expanding globalized world are taking shape in different cultural and intellectual contexts. With significant variations between countries, African institutions of higher education are generally underfunded and have been unable to play their rightful role as laboratories of ideas. Narrow State boundaries affect the nature and scope of the ideas explored in different forums. New positive developments are nonetheless taking place. Free movement of people and goods is now in place in West Africa. The Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area was signed recently in Kigali, Rwanda, on 21 March 2018, by 44 heads of State and government.

Section 3, 'Africa at the Turn of the 3rd Millennium: Challenges and Dynamics', coordinated by Faranirina V. Rajaonah, comprises 22 contributions organized into four rubrics. The first rubric focuses on demography and urbanization. It explores the implications of African population growth in terms of economics, public health through the lenses of epidemiology, food security and urban growth, both in average-sized towns as well as megalopolises. The second rubric deals with issues of gender and generations. The assembled contributions discuss patterns of age and generation successions in sampled countries, the integration of African college graduates in Russia, social and economic landscapes, institutionalized social promotion as well as women in education and their increased roles and visibility in public affairs, both on national and international scenes. The third rubric, on partnership, envy and integration, explores different aspects of regional integration as well as new opportunities offered by cooperation between Africa and the BRICS alliance (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). Is this really an alternative to the predatory practices of dominant multinationals and the unilateral ukases of the Bretton Woods institutions? We will have to wait and see. Envy and the rush to African lands and the ensuing 'land-grabbing' are featured, and their implications assessed, along with an African perspective on migrations and development and the emerging new African financial hubs. Finally, the fourth rubric, 'Africa in Tempo with the World', delves into worldwide cultural circulations. These circulations are manifest in the emergence of new religious practices, such as Salafism and new Christianities, as well as in the worldwide appeal of black cosmopolitan aesthetics in African popular music, African cinema, fabrics and contemporary art.

The general picture that emerges from this volume is that of Global Africans and Afrodescendant communities on the move, slowly carving their paths and shaping their futures.

Conclusion

The project that has resulted in these three volumes was extraordinarily ambitious, original and inspiring. It aimed at setting a new way of writing history, taking into account current debates in social and human sciences, with epistemological ruptures and sustained reconceptualization. Competences and skills are available to move historical scholarship in new directions, in a multipolar world, rather than a closed relationship with the west. It is a fantastic challenge spelled out in the chapters of these three volumes.

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GENERAL HISTORY OF AFRICA REVISITED: AN INTRODUCTION

Augustin F. C. Holl

Introduction

The UNESCO *General History of Africa* (GHA) was initiated in the wave of independence of African countries in the middle of the twentieth century. It comprises eight volumes published between 1981 and 1999. The adopted perspective is overtly multi-disciplinary, but the whole work can be clearly assigned to the humanities and social sciences research fields. (The research domain encompassing social sciences and humanities is very broad indeed.) The sustained and increasing move towards interdisciplinarity makes the delineation of demarcation lines even more difficult. One will thus have to rely on a minimalist operational definition. Accordingly, humanities and social sciences include all forms of scientific and philosophical research devoted to the understanding and explanation of the human condition. Some – here termed historical sciences – like palaeoanthropology, archaeology and history, deal with the time dimensions. Others, such as geography, habitat research and architecture, focus on the spatial dimension. Others, such as anthropology, linguistics, psychology, demography, sociology and political science, explore the synchronic dynamic patterns of human societies.

The creative side of the humanities (painting, sculpture, music, literature, theatre, cinema, and so on), with their theoretical and technological developments to be observed, studied and analysed – these productions of

the human mind – are of particular importance to a balanced understanding of the multiple facets of the history of Africans and people of African descent worldwide. The project of the GHA was launched as a corrective to the distortions and biases contained in the 'colonial library'.

The production of scholarly knowledge on Africa and its people (Bernal, 2006; Diop, 1999; Khaldun, 2015; Li Anshan, 2005; Mveng, 2005; Mudimbe, 1988), as well as its changes through time, goes as far back as pharaonic Egypt, Greco-Roman antiquity, and early dynastic China. At first glance, the process is initially set off by cultural alterity – striking differences – at the very foundation of encounters between minds shaped by different cognitive and perceptual practices. Perceived differences of patterns of behaviour, physical appearance, food habits, dressing codes, housing styles, and so on, could have been praised – as kindness, simplicity, friendliness, generosity – or condemned – with terms such as cannibals, savage, barbarians, etc. Travel narratives and reports from European explorers and adventurers shaped the 'others' perception of the donor societies' elites and influenced their attitudes. The combination of all these genres led to the formation of the 'colonial library'.

From the 'colonial library' to now

As far as Africa is concerned, the colonial intelligentsia carried out fundamental and applied research in almost all fields of social sciences and humanities. Most of these men and women belonged to the colonial apparatus as administrators, soldiers and military officers, medical doctors and nurses, missionary personnel, and so on. Some became renowned scholars in their respective fields and contributed to the foundation of African studies programmes in European and North American universities and research institutions. Different schools, museums, research institutions, and academic traditions emerged in Europe at Berlin, London, Paris, Rome, Vienna, and in North America at Harvard and Columbia.

Diffusionism was at its peak (Hegel, 1965; Ratzel, 1882, 1891). With some variations among authors, Africa was viewed as a continent that received all innovations from neighbouring populations – essentially from the Near East – through direct migrations and/or technological influence. The main themes of the 'colonial library' – hierarchy of races, civilizations and cultures – were contested and countered initially by intellectuals from the diaspora, in the Caribbean and North America (Antenor Firmin, W. E. B. Du Bois, Sylvester Williams) and later from Africa (Cheikh Anta Diop).

Modern higher education institutions created in Africa were initially extensions of European universities and Christian missions. Achimota College on the Gold Coast, Makerere in Uganda, Ibadan in Nigeria, were the first to be in operation in Africa during the colonial period. Algiers University, Dakar University, and the University of Cameroon – the French Foundation of Higher Education in Cameroon, an extension of the Academy of Bordeaux – created later, were all French institutions in their former colonies.

The research agendas were exactly the same. The field archaeology programme of the famous ancient Ghana site of Awdaghost – Mission Tegdaoust – led by Jean Devisse and Serge Robert from the History department of the University of Dakar was interested in tracing Arab and North African influence on the emergence of urbanization in West Africa (Holl, 2006a). Glazed ware of Mediterranean and North African origins was analysed thoroughly (Robert-Chaleix, 1985), while locally made pottery was neglected and left unexamined. The structure of European archaeological research in Africa is clearly nation-based, with recurrent sub-titles like: 'British contributions to...', '50 ans d'archéologie francaise en Afrique', 'Polish contributions to...', 'Belgian contributions to...', and 'German contribution to...' (Holl, 2006b, 2009a).

The social science and humanities research agenda on Africa and Afro-descendants was clearly shaped by Euro-American universities and research institutions. The situation is particularly illustrative in archaeological research. Native African communities have developed different ways and channels to access and revive the past. Can these different approaches to the past be synthesized to generate a broader and richer understanding of past Africans' lives?

This is precisely one of the core elements of the challenge of postcolonial perspectives on African archaeology. The development of archaeological research in Africa was the result of conflicts, tensions, and negotiations within the colonial techno-structure. At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, there was no coherent and well-articulated archaeological curriculum anywhere. Archaeological research was nonetheless conducted by daring and bright minds in Europe and Africa. Without standard methodology and precise goals, 'prehistoric' archaeology was fuelled by major controversies. The development of a more secular view of human history, the theory of 'natural selection', the emergence of European nationalisms, and the well-seated 'primitive'/civilized divide, were such driving forces.

These worldviews helped shape the minds of virtually all archaeologists working in Africa up to the Second World War. A radical shift to field data took place in the early 1950s with the creation of research institutions and the

training of a handful of professional archaeologists (Holl, 2009a). Paradoxically, and for understandable reasons, West African archaeology was not affected by the rise of African nationalisms and the movement towards independence. The situation was different in Zimbabwe, formerly known as Rhodesia. The entry of a larger number of Africans in the field had mixed results: poor communications between African scholars, a tendency to rely on former colonial powers that kept tight control of the field, and virtually no significant internal African support for archaeological research. The production and circulation of new research results is submitted to 'gatekeepers' who either ignore, silence, or disparage dissenting voices. The review of *Postcolonial Archaeologies in Africa* (Schmidt, 2009) by A. B. Stahl (2010) is an interesting illustration of the colonial legacy. The book, edited by Peter Schmidt, is the product of an intensive seminar organized at the University of Florida, Gainesville, in 2007. The goal was to bring to the fore important issues unaddressed in the practice of archaeology in Africa and the diaspora. Yet Stahl's review, as Karega-Munene and Schmidt (2010) point out:

> ironically illustrates one of the primary themes of the book – the silencing of alternative voices in African archaeology. The review does not address [our] contributions to the volume, which results in our voices being silenced. Consider that most of the review focuses almost exclusively on the introductory chapter by Schmidt (2009a), with only two small points about the chapters that make up its substance. Yet, besides the introduction, the edited volume consists of 13 chapters by different authors, including six African scholars and three women of colour (or eight African scholars and five women of colour if coauthors are considered). However, all doubt is erased when contributions are marginalised by representing them as 'meandering', 'ill-focused', and 'thick descriptions' without any attempt to explain these characterisations. The review does not highlight or engage what we collectively see as important issues shaping archaeology today, including the context of archaeopolitics in which disciplinary and historical representations continue to be forged (Karega-Munene and Schmidt, 2010, p. 325).

There are many other ways of marginalizing research which do not go along with dominant orthodoxies, ranging from 'invisibility' to outright rejection:

> Silencing of African scholars who are not in the Western mainstream is a condition that still persists during the postcolonial era. Silencing occurs when scholars proffer views that differ from those familiar to Western scholarship and when peer review becomes a disguise to denigrate these unorthodox viewpoints. Much more troubling are conscious attempts to silence those who challenge well-established paradigms that specifically took root during the colonial era and have held sway since. Beyond consigning work to the periphery by labelling it 'controversial', 'polemical', 'dated', or 'inadequate', the most potent of exclusionary dynamics is to ignore and to erase through silence and 'noncitation' (Karega-Munene and Schmidt, 2010, p. 327).

Things are unlikely to change rapidly due to the poor and very modest scientific research infrastructure, as well as the state of dependency of many African universities and research institutions.

Volume I of the GHA was published in 1981, and Volume VIII in 1999. The pace and intensity of archaeological and historical research have changed considerably during the last four decades. New techniques and methods and a larger number of well-trained researchers have profoundly changed our understanding of Africa's past. It is essentially that research update that is carried out in this volume. It is a Herculean challenge, if not an impossible task, to update eight volumes in only one. One must be selective, synthetic, and focus on recent discoveries and analyses that have significantly impacted the writing of the long-term history of the continent. The structure of the volume, consisting of four sections, is straightforward and logical. Section I opens the volume and explores the present epistemological, methodological and theoretical underpinning of writing the history of Africa and people of African descent in the twenty-first century. Section II reviews the content of the published volumes of the GHA, setting the stage for the updates that follow in sections III and IV. Section III deals with the update of the Initial History – formerly known as Prehistory – of the continent. And finally, Section IV explores new developments in historical scholarship of the last 2,000 years of continental social, economic and political developments.

Writing African and Afro-descendants' history today

The obvious entry into the research update task is to review the theoretical and epistemological tools used to write the history of Africa and Africans today. The category of 'historical sources' is an ever-expanding one, particularly in the contemporary context that emphasizes multi-disciplinary approaches. Five related themes are addressed in Section I.

The first theme revolves around crafting a decolonized history, paying particular attention to debunking the colonial lexicon. Much has been said and written about Eurocentrism, an intellectual and cultural posture derived from the recent centuries of European world domination. History written on the dominated was generally self-serving, denying native people cultural and historical agency. The reappropriation of historical agency, already underway in the nineteenth century, took different forms through art revivals, political activism, anti-colonialism, revolutions and independence. It is clear that this

is a very difficult process that will require a future shift to the use of African and Afro-descendant languages to achieve genuine disalienation potentials. Endo-history, or how people create and narrate their own history through oral or written forms, is a vivid and relevant source of information. It is a special kind of history that requires stringent critical apparatus. History as an academic discipline has its elaborate methodologies, with source criticism as the cornerstone of historical scholarship. The nature of historical sources is constantly expanding. Written sources were initially considered the *sine qua non* condition for the writing of history. Such a limited view is now totally obsolete. Material culture items, words, songs, genres, and literally all aspects of the material and cultural worlds are now considered as sources of history. African and Afro-descendant creative arts – sculpture, painting, music, dance and literature – are now important historical sources. Trans- and multidisciplinarity are now theoretical and methodological imperatives, blending natural and social sciences. Historical facts must be assessed from different, competing and complementary perspectives. Science-based historical narratives thus offer a stronger antidote to propaganda and negationism. The goal of a new decolonial history of Africa and Afro-descendants is not beyond reach (Mignolo, 2011; Schmidt, 2009). It will, however, require long-sustained epistemological reworking.

The second theme focuses on the exegesis of the concept of Africa itself. What does it mean? What are the strategic implications of the lexeme? (Mudimbe, 1988). Below are different definitions of Africa from the Collins English Dictionary:

> [Africa] the second largest of the continents, on the Mediterranean in the north, the Atlantic in the west, and the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Indian Ocean in the east. The Sahara Desert divides the continent unequally into North Africa (an early centre of civilisation, in close contact with Europe and W Asia, now inhabited chiefly by Arabs) and Africa south of the Sahara (relatively isolated from the rest of the world until the 19th century and inhabited chiefly by Negroid peoples). It was colonised mainly in the 18th and 19th centuries by Europeans and now comprises independent nations… Area: about 30,300,000 sq km (11,700,000 sq miles) (Collins English Dictionary, 2012).

The origins of the word *Africa* are explained as follows:

> Latin Africa (terra) African land, Libya, the Carthaginian territory, fem. Of Africus, from Afer 'an African'. Originally only in reference to the region around modern Tunisia, it gradually was extended to the whole continent. Derivation from Arabic afar 'dust, earth' is tempting, but the early date seems to argue against it. The Middle English word was "Affrike" (Ibid.).

The word is clearly of Latin origin, initially not intended to refer to the whole 30 million square kilometre landmass. It is however the systematic differentiation between North Africa, 'an early centre of civilization, in close contact with Europe and W. Asia, now inhabited chiefly by Arabs' (ibid.) and the rest of the continent south of the great desert presented as 'relatively isolated from the rest of the world until the nineteenth century and inhabited chiefly by Negroid peoples' that is striking. That definition of Africa is self-serving, anchored on the proximity to Europe as a cultural evolutionary criterion, and on present archaeological and paleoanthropological evidence, bluntly inaccurate. Paleoenvironmental data point to the fluctuating margins of the Saharan Desert, which has never been an obstacle to the movements of peoples and ideas. Extended to refer to the whole continent during the centuries of European expansion, the concept of Africa as a continent, conquered, plundered, and exploited by European nations, was crafted by Afro-descendant intellectuals and activists from the nineteenth century onward (Rodney, 1973). Africa became a rallying call for the liberation of the continent from colonial domination. The history of the continent transcends the artificial division between its northern portion and the rest of the landmass, and its naming is a contested issue.

The third theme explores the trajectories of the use of oral traditions as sources of African history. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, academic historians' training was exclusively articulated on methodologies geared to the use of written and material sources. Many African societies have traditions as keepers of different statuses – *elders*, *griots, jewli*. Their role generally revolved around the curation and transmission of past deeds and acts through word of mouth (McNaughton, 1987; Niane, 1965). For the orthodox Euro-American-trained historians, the absence of written sources was easily equated with the non-existence of history. The pioneer and extensive work of J. Vansina (1965, 1985, 1990) established oral tradition as a potent and reliable source of historical information, with a replicable methodology. Under different names – oral traditions, oral history, or ethno-history – these new sources of history were embraced by new generations of historians, bringing back to life the past of numerous African kingdoms and states (Person, 1968, 1970, 1975). Not all research carried out under the banner of oral traditions was crafted through sound, replicable methodologies. It is the critical evaluation of the use of oral traditions as sources of African history that is carried out in the papers presented under this third theme.

Several contributions, brought together under the theme of new sources, explore innovative ways of accessing historical information in various African contexts. Did the equivalent of the modern academic concept of history exist in African

languages? What are the lexemes, both nouns and verbs, referring to history in these languages in ancient Egyptian language, for example, and what were their contexts of use? – are some of the interesting questions addressed in this rubric. What about African writing systems? What are they? Can they generate a renewal of African history scholarship? The identification of native African writing systems is gaining momentum in cultural and historical research. The decipherment of the Tifinagh, an ancestral Berber script, is well advanced by now in North Africa and the Sahara (Biagetti et al., 2012). This significant progress brings back to life a broad range of messages on rock surfaces, associated or not with rock art, all over the Saharan Desert and parts of West and North Africa. African songs, symbolic dances, related to specific rituals and ceremonies, the language of drums, and even mundane languages, are repositories of the past that can be tapped with the right methodologies. Some ceremonies are performed with the medium of peculiar 'priestly' secret languages that are preserved and transmitted through a severe and tightly guarded apprenticeship. Religious concepts and practices, as well as secular repositories of wisdom – philosophies – open windows on different facets of the intellectual past and, as such, allow for the reconstitution of the genealogy of some African thought systems (Nietzsche, 2006).

Views and epistemological options from elsewhere offer complementary views on the production of African history. Case studies from China, Japan, South America, and the Caribbean broaden the picture and shed new light on the diversity of academic traditions.

Theoretical and methodological innovations fuel the GHA project. The goal is clearly to craft a global African history viewed from inside. The category of sources will keep expanding with the creation of new technical, intellectual and scientific tools.

Review of the contents of Volume I-VIII

Section II assesses the 'state of the art' through the critical review of the GHA volumes I to VIII published from 1981 to 1990. The volumes will not be presented in detail but simply summarized in a few lines. The goal of the exercise is to outline themes that require a varying degree of updating.

Volume I, *Methodology and African Prehistory* is edited by J. Ki-Zerbo. It deals with a range of issues including the sources of African history and the techniques of historical investigations. It presents regional sequences of long-term cultural and technological development of the continent.

Volume II, *Ancient Civilizations of Africa*, edited by G. Mokhtar, focuses on the emergence and evolution of the earliest African state formations up to the sixth century CE [Common Era]. North-East Africa, including Pharaonic Egypt, Nubia, the Ethiopian Highlands and the Horn are over-represented in the volume.

Volume III, edited by M. M. El Fasi and I. Hrbek and entitled *Africa from the Seventh to the Eleventh Century,* focuses predominantly on the expansion of Islam, and its cultural and political consequences, all over the continent, as well as the emergence of West African states and kingdoms.

Volume IV, *Africa from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century*, is edited by D. T. Niane. It covers the period from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, which witnessed the consolidation and Africanization of Islam, the routinization of long-distance exchanges, as well as development cycles of successive North, West and East Africa city-states, kingdoms and empires.

Edited by B. A. Ogot, Volume V, *Africa from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, examines two related themes: the continuing internal evolution and differentiation of African social formations and deeper and stronger connections with mercantilist world systems. Parallel systems of enslavement, in the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, resulted in population downturn and impoverishment of the continent but contributed to the emergence of the modern world.

Volume VI, edited by J. F. A. Ajayi and entitled *Africa in the Nineteenth Century until the 1880s,* covers the history of the continent up to the Berlin Conference and the kick-off of the 'scramble for Africa'. Adjustments and reactions to increasing European presence take place in the form of *Mfecane* in Southern Africa and Muslim revival and reform movements in West Africa.

Volume VII, *Africa under Colonial Domination, 1880–1935*, edited by A. A. Boahen, examines the colonial conquest and occupation of Africa by European powers and focuses on the responses of Africans and Afro-descendants to colonial domination.

Volume VIII, *Africa since 1935*, edited by A. A. Mazrui and C. Wondji, deals with the recent history of the continent from the Italian aggression of Ethiopia to the struggle for liberation, the independence of African countries and contrasting experiences in nation-building and continental unity.

Since the publication of Volume I of the GHA in 1981, archaeological and paleoenvironmental research has witnessed significant intensification. New research has been conducted on all aspects of African history, but some fields have experienced far-reaching and profound changes. It is not excessive to suggest that Volumes I and II are probably the ones requiring the most extensive update. It is not unfair to assert that Volume VIII was already dated just a few years after its publication in 1990.

Updating the initial history of Africa

Section III is devoted to the update of the initial history of Africa. Instead of splitting human history into 'prehistory' and 'history', a new terminology that emphasizes continuity is adopted in this project. The concept of 'initial history' replaces what is generally termed 'prehistory'. It is the longest segment of the 'human career' on the planet, starting with the manufacture of the first stone tools some 3.3 million years ago. The update of this long segment of human history is spelled out in six rubrics.

The understanding of long-term human evolution and cultural adaptation requires exploratory forays into paleoenvironmental, paleogenomic studies and language classification, all three pooled in the first rubric of the update. Intensive paleoenvironmental research in almost all major African river and lake catchments provides, depending on areas, coarse, detailed and/or nuanced long-term climate history of the continent. The emergence of bipedal gait is now securely dated to 7 million years ago at least, totally independent from the shift from forest to savannah as suggested by Y. Coppens' (1994) 'East Side Story' theory. Population genetics, boosted by the International Human Genome project, offers an extraordinarily penetrating history of human population dynamics. With minor variations, the geographic distribution of language, and in this case, African languages, is shown to match results from population genetics.

The second rubric focuses on recent developments in paleoanthropology and early humans' lifeways and adaptations. The earliest hominins, found in Africa in Kenya and Chad, are now securely dated to 7 and 6 million years ago. The Chad fossils series, of both *Sahelanthropus tchadensis* and *Australopithecus bahrelghazali* clades, generated a profound change in the distribution map of early hominin remains. The human phylogenetic tree is becoming increasingly bushy. Hominids' lifeways are now understood to have been much more complex and versatile than the simplified assumption of 'Man, the hunter'. Thanks to L. R. Binford's (1981) penetrating critique and C. K. Brain's (1981) ground-breaking taphonomic research in South African caves, scavenging is now accepted to have been the optimal strategy for access to meat. Gathering and possibly hunting of small game complemented the subsistence systems of hominids, who were very likely nesting in trees instead of sleeping on the ground, by lakes, and on the shores of rivers. As suggested by primatology, twigs, sticks, tree branches, and animal parts may have been elements of early hominids' toolkits prior to the knapping of the earliest stone tools. These are dated to 3.3 million years

ago at Lomekwi in West Turkana, Kenya. The earliest stone techno-complexes, from the Lomekwian to the Advanced Oldowayan A and B, are confined to East and South Africa up to 2 million years ago. Advanced Oldowayan and early Acheulean tool-complexes spread with the initial expansion of the earliest *Homo sp.* to be found in North-East, North and later West Africa in addition to East and South Africa. The Middle Stone Age, which followed, witnessed significant trends towards regional differentiations with more diversified tool repertoires. The Late Pleistocene witnessed significant technological innovations among widespread hunter-gatherer communities that were severely impacted by the shift to aridity during the Late Glacial Maximum.

The third rubric deals with Later Pleistocene-Early Holocene cultural developments and adaptations. The Holocene global warming was kicked off at the very end of the Late Pleistocene. Coastal plain lands were lost to the oceans. The Saharan and Kalahari deserts shrank significantly. The replenished aquifers and increased humidity fed Saharan lakes and rivers. Late Pleistocene hunter-gatherer populations, confined to a few refuge areas during the peak of the Late Glacial Maximum aridity (the Mediterranean littoral, Nile valley, south-west Cameroon grass fields and Côte d'Ivoire littoral), spread anew and re-peopled the continent. Interesting developments and innovations occurred during that process: the invention of pottery-making, the cultivation of wild sorghum, the rearing in captivity of wild barbary sheep (*Ammotraguslervia*), and ultimately, the shift to food production, initially with livestock husbandry and later agriculture. African livestock husbandry systems predominantly based on cattle, sheep/goat, and later dromedaries, have different but overlapping histories. There is, however, an ongoing debate on the domestication of cattle in Eastern Sahara from a local population of *Bos primigenius* (Brass, 2017; Holl, 1998a, 1998b). Sheep and goat originated from the Near East, and dromedaries from the Arabic peninsula. African agricultural systems are diverse in time and place, with new plants introduced from Oceania, Asia, and the Americas during the last millennia.

The fourth rubric presents cross-views and a new look at ancient Egypt. The history of ancient Egypt is a 'battleground' and a highly contested 'scholarly territory' (Bernal, 1987, 1991, 2006, Diop, 1999). The 'new look' feature in this volume starts with the explorations of the deeper Early Holocene roots of ancient Egyptian civilizations and their characteristic processes of social differentiation and specialization. Aspects of such intricate processes are illustrated by the Early Holocene Eastern Sahara megaliths complex of Nabta-Playa, the earliest astronomical observatory. Aspects of ancient Egypt population genetics are discussed through the lens of ancient DNA. And finally, a systematic analysis

of kinship terms in hieroglyph documents allows interesting entries into ancient Egypt's social structures. The key questions addressed in this rubric are not about the 'ownership' of ancient Egypt. It is instead about the inner dynamics of ancient Egyptian societies in their own terms. Egypt, located at the intersection of Africa and Eurasia, is African, with a fluctuating distribution of African and Eurasian populations depending on historical circumstances.

The fifth rubric discusses two major inventions: pottery-making and metallurgy. Both are different aspects of pyro-technologies, based on the controlled use of fire to alter the structure of natural raw materials, clay on the one hand and metal ores on the other hand (Holl, 2009b). The invention of pottery-making took place in different places at different times. So far, the oldest specimens are dated to 20,000 years ago at Xianrendong cave in China, showing an early production and use of pottery by Late Pleistocene hunter-gatherers in different parts of the Old World. African specimens found at Ounjougou in the Bandiagara in Mali, Tagalagal and Temet in the Air in Niger, around the Tibesti mountains range in Chad, and Nabta Playa basin in Eastern Sahara [Egypt], date from the very end of the Pleistocene to the Early Holocene. They vary in size, shape and design, ranging from small, undecorated open bowls in Eastern Sahara to relatively large globular and decorated vessels in the Air mountains. This addition to the material repertoire of Later Pleistocene-Early Holocene hunter-gatherers was probably part of an adaptive shift in settlement-subsistence systems, anchored on stable, regularly but intermittently visited key localities.

The archaeology of African metallurgies is a domain of intense debate, partly because of its strong evolutionary implications. The multiplicity of areas of invention of pottery-making is uncontested today. It was not the case a few decades ago when it was considered to have been invented in the Near East and spread later to the whole Old World. Solid archaeological data point to an independent invention of copper and iron metallurgy in different parts of Central and West Africa. The idea of multiple independent centres of origins is difficult to envisage by a decreasing number of researchers. As was the case for pottery-making, additional research on African metallurgies will certainly support the hypothesis of different independent areas of invention.

Finally, the sixth rubric updates the archaeology of emergent and sustained complexity in the continent's relatively recent past. Patterns of vertical and horizontal social differentiations operating in different parts of the continent led to the development of entrenched specialization and social ranking. Societies with specialized political and administrative apparatuses suggestive of state formations emerged following two distinct processes: primary or pristine and secondary or

derived. As indicated by the precise mapping presented in this book, pristine state development was confined to the north-eastern portion of the continent, in an extensive interaction sphere including Egypt, Nubia, the Ethiopian Highlands and the Horn of Africa. Pyramids, temples, palaces, and later, stelae are evidence of rulers and elite investment in monumental architecture. Secondary state development took place elsewhere. In North Africa, it was initiated by Phoenician colonization and the foundation of Carthage in the first half of the first millennium BCE [Before the Common Era], then Greek and Roman colonization. Urban centres emerged in West Africa in the first half of the first millennium BCE as indicated by the Dia urban complex (Holl, 2006a). The introduction of dromedaries by the Romans facilitated long-distance trade and north-south exchanges, resulting in the formation of trade emporia in the hinterland of North Africa, the Sahara, and West African Sahel and savannah. Tekrur and Ghana were the earliest West African state formations that emerged very likely during the second half of the first millennium CE. The Ghana Kingdom – sometimes called the Empire – with Kumbi-Saleh as its capital, reached regional primacy in the eleventh century CE and disaggregated in the early thirteenth century. A new cycle of peer-polity interaction, followed by conquest and consolidation, resulted in the emergence of the Mali Empire (1200-1400 CE), an extensive multi-ethnic social formation with a constitution, the Mande Charter, proclaimed at Kurukan Fuga in 1235 after the battle of Kirina, guaranteeing human rights and fair government (Cissé, 2003). The Mali empire disaggregated in the middle of the fifteenth century, paving the way for the rise and primacy of the Songhay military domination. North-Central Africa witnessed a similar evolutionary cycling of state formation (Ibn Khaldun, 2015; Holl, 2000) with successive, overlapping and competing kingdoms or empires of Kanim, Bornu, Baguirmi, Wadday and the Hawsa states. A similar process of peer-polities interaction, competition, conquest, rise and fall is documented almost everywhere else on the continent: the rise and fall of Kerma, Kush, Meroe and Christian Nubian states along the Nile valley in Sudan, Swahili city-states along the Eastern Africa Indian ocean coast (Kusimba, 1999), the Great-Lakes regions states, as well as the Zambezian states of Southern Africa with the sequence from Mapungubwe, Great Zimbabwe and its aftermath (Pikhirayi, 2001).

The combination of larger concentrations of population, urbanization, social differentiation and specialization, emerging elites, and long-distance trade networks has triggered and sustained the emergence and evolution of ancient state formations, each with its own cultural peculiarities.

Updating the ancient and modern history of Africa

Updating the ancient and modern history of the continent in such a limited space is even more challenging. There is significant overlap with the previous segment, and the chronological boundaries are unstable. The section is organized along five themes. The first one deals with regional dynamics at different time and space scales. This is first done through a focus on settlement patterns and density of occupation prior to the emergence of West Sudan ancient states in a well-delineated region; then an analysis of the emergence and expansion of a Muslim revivalist movement in the tenth and eleventh centuries CE; and finally, the formation of the Malagasy political landscape on the Great Island of Madagascar.

The second theme explores a limited number of diaspora cases, predominantly trade diasporas: Dyula in West Africa, Jews in North Africa and the Sahara, Asians in East Africa and Indian Ocean islands; and finally, a special focus on the Gujuratis, a particularly entrepreneurial ethnic group from India.

The third theme focuses on enslavement and resistance with case studies from selected regions, the Senegambia, Northern Cameroon, and the south-central portion of Africa in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

And finally, the fourth theme addresses issues of religious practices from two perspectives. One explores the interaction among African religious monotheist systems, in the cases of Judaism, Christianism and Islam. The other focuses exclusively on African religious systems themselves. In addition, African foodways and cuisine heritage are investigated partly through the relationship with belief systems.

Conclusion

Volume IX of the GHA has a very precise and specific goal. It intends to provide the main outlines of the recent development of scientific research on the long history of the continent in the light of current theoretical, methodological, and epistemological critical and reflexive expectations. The tasks are difficult, challenging but exciting. By necessity, the work had to be selective. Many interesting ongoing projects could not be mentioned, not out of ignorance but because of severe space limitations. It is hoped that the selected data successfully convey the significant jump forward in our understanding of the longest continental historical record in the whole world.

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SECTION I

WRITING HISTORY OF AFRICANS AND THEIR DIASPORAS TODAY: SOME EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Olabiyi B. J. Yai and Martial Ze Belinga

Introduction

Volumes IX to XI of the UNESCO *General History of Africa* (GHA) extend the collection beyond the first eight volumes and present new content and structure, with a section dedicated to epistemological issues in African history. This ambitious and unusual choice relative to comparable works reveals the desire for a rupture, or at the very least, the documentation of the profound inertia in the generation of intelligibility frameworks of African history, making it necessary to have a space for specific problematization. It is a call for the deepening and generalizing of reflexivity in the production chain of history – in other words, a call 'to write the history of Africans and their diasporas today' starting with an epistemological reconfiguration.

General History of Africa: expanding the pioneer breakthrough

The editorial history of this interest in an epistemology of African history could find its archives in the first eight volumes of the GHA. In fact, the extent of questions, debates and positions, and the context of decolonization with its

imported antagonisms, made it necessary to organize forums, colloquia and conferences prior to the definitive writing and publication of the aforementioned volumes. Twelve specialized publications related to the GHA, the 'studies and documents' collection, dealt with scientific and methodological questions such as the settlement of Egypt and its marked opposition, the methodology of African history, ethnonyms and toponyms, education and historiography. It is this deep process of questioning, debate and controversy relating to intellectual authority which, in its principles and protocols, should drive decisive writing about European adventures and the industry of prejudice.

A decade later, before embarking on the writing of the following volumes of the GHA with the aim of updating prior knowledge and producing a history of African diasporas around the world, a critical review of the first eight volumes was undertaken under the direction of Doulaye Konaté (2009). These developments for the GHA were unanimously recognized, and the perspective of a history of struggle – the fight against prejudice and pejorative views – pushed back against the most caricatural aspects of the narratives about old Africa. Basically, the historicity of African societies were freed from the grave in which Hegel had buried them and they found unfailing affirmation backed by innovative methodology. Internal sources, linguistics and archaeology were used to create 'an inside view' of African societies.

The perspective of an Africa as a receptacle for history produced elsewhere, passive over a long period of time, waiting for an external civilizing force, preferably Caucasian, was rejected and the chronological frameworks based on colonial experience or the four-period view of European historiography – Antiquity, Middle Ages, Modern Times, Contemporary History – were either discarded or clearly relativized, stripped of their hegemonic status.

However, reservations regarding the chronological and geographical coverage of critical episodes of resistance, and the Eurocentric narrative tendency, whether the GHA or what the debates about Africa's past have the most in common, have not completely dissipated. Certainly, the evolution of the sciences – especially archaeological digs and discoveries relating to the first humans, have made it vital for knowledge to be updated. But beyond this, there has been a clogging in the conduits of prejudice and pejorative views, and Eurocentric categories and concepts such as the Middle Ages, feudalism, slavery (uniform), polytheisms, etc., remain commonplace, if not recurrent. This is a conceptual framework that ends up restoring European history as the backdrop for African narratives.

Global Africa: an epistemic shift, a new perspective

This 'sticking point' of coloniality, which historical narratives cannot shake off, takes on an almost genetic aspect, like the expression of a power of the very constituents of thought mobilized to tell the story of the peoples of the world and Africans and Afro-descendants in particular. However, questioning, in the absence of a radical challenge to the parameters of understanding the African past, has rarely gone so far as to prioritize a field reserved for the orientation of discourse, categories of thought, languages, written records and inscriptions. It is as if the refutations and criticisms of the Eurocentric paradigm took as a given the conceptual framework of the hierarchy of knowledge, the intention of taking on board 'normal science', that of a Western school. The proof, the occurrence of the term 'epistemology', a reflection on knowledge, appears only three times in the first volume of the GHA devoted to methodology. In the 'studies and documents' collection only one issue out of twelve explicitly mentions epistemology. Of course, despite these absences, it does not mean that this work is devoid of reflection.

The relative absence of epistemological questioning in the sense of a consecrated and constituted field, rather common in historical monographs in general, is only weakly compatible with the narrative of a global Africa, resistant to the spatial and temporal framework of colonial-centred stories. The change of approach in narrative orientation, focused on the circulation of Africans to areas of reception and the re-rooting of their diasporas in North America, South America, the Caribbean, Asia and Europe undermines narratives that end in a myriad of stories and itineraries coming out of Africa and flowing into the oceans.

Global Africa as dispersions, the scattering of Africans, swarming waves of their cultures across the world over time, going at least as far back as the cultural radiance of ancient Egypt beyond its African oecumene, summon geographies and plural temporalities that the prejudicial and Eurocentric narratives forbid. Whether it be history in full rediscovery of Sino-African relations going back to well before the fifteenth century, or contemporary diffusion of African material culture in the world (braids, printed textiles, music), or the history of the ideas of the Renaissance or pan-Africanism, the tools of an improved history of 'colonial science' cannot fulfil the promise of intelligible interconnections.

The perspective of a global Africa, this historical and cultural hydrography, makes categorizations and narrations fuelled and operated by European epistemological colonialism obsolete, and drives investment in an area offering

to decompartmentalize the toolbox used to write the history of Africans in the world. The comings and goings from Africa to the diasporas, actual repatriations and imaginary mobilities, intra-Caribbean and American migrations, resettlement experiences in Africa and their economic, sociological, political and territorial consequences, and Black rulers in Asia are all manifestations of global Africa that require a turnaround in thought patterns.

Although prejudice, myths and pejorative views have attracted the attention of African and Africanist historians in the world (Davidson, 1959), the necessary adjustments in lexical and semantic fields would only serve to soften or embellish the process of writing to teleological and diffusionist tropisms. Adjustments aside, the implicit and underlying theme is that Europe remains the only real subject of history. In other words, epistemology should reformulate the issue not of the factual history of Africa but the conditions of possibilities for expressing this historicization.

The prevailing beliefs in the inequality of races fought by Firmin (1885), Du Bois (1915), the 'falsification of history' by Cheikh Anta Diop (1954), the 'barrier of myths' by Ki-Zerbo (1972), the categories for localization and circulation modelled on the European model, categories of life, linguistic categories and exogenous writing systems, all cast doubt on the ability to reunite the African with his or her history.

The aim of this section, in addition to an 'agoratic' aspect, is to try to bring some reflective elements to the conditions of possibility for a narrative of African history from within. Starting with the findings of the coloniality of modern knowledge about humans and their dependence on the European experience, it will be necessary to suggest going past:

- a decolonial turn,
- a linguistic turn,
- the pre-eminence of the vectors of endogeneity (endogenous knowledge, African written records, imaginative writings, etc.).

There is no doubt that other entries could have been considered, a strong discussion about universalism in the humanities and in the writing of African history, a clash of arguments regarding positivism in history, axiological neutrality, the scientific evolution and history, the profession of historian, and so on. By opting for a decolonial approach and by listening to inner voices, it is the current of 'ancestrality', of the Ancients, of predecessors, of the eight initial volumes of the GHA that have been continued and prolonged; all of these factors demonstrate the extent to which the history written by Africans

has asserted itself from the outset against omnipresent opinion and topical discourse. The continent and its inhabitants seem frozen, waiting forever for a power from the outside to save them. And it was from the layer exposed by the early steps of Delany, Blyden, Casely Hayford, among others, that a pre-epistemological territory naturally came into being based on refuting Hegelian claims of a historicity. The consequential demonstration of the historicity of African societies, the control of the scientificity of imperial statements, the arguments and axiomatic reversals to produce points and get them across, were a natural incline for the interrogation of classifications, categories and concepts. The diffusionist perspective of narratives, essentialisms and teleologies relating to the discourse on Africa had been the object of an identification and condemnation by the oldest and most famous Black thinkers under European domination.

The section has explored the meaning of its roots, taking care to welcome, without exclusion, the prolific input of the decolonial and indigenist turn, created essentially by the unfortunates of Eurocentrism in South America, Asia (India) and Africa. The outcome of this initiative and innovation results in a section with various recommendations from the disciplines involved – history, philosophy, linguistics, epistemology, archaeology and anthropology – but also pretty close to a common core of indiscipline with respect to the Eurocentric foundations of their basic knowledge. The section is written as a series of decentring initiatives and of questions that combine concepts and empirical illustrations, multiplying the photographs of illicit crimes of improper importations, of historiographic bias, drifting topics, categories of thought and of the unthinkable. A principled reflexivity innervates the work, and for this price, a set of disciplinary revisions and twists with reassuring axioms, prehistory, writing, orality, for example, confuses and destabilizes established conceptual yokes. These indocilities are brought back into line in the very open and personal presentation of ways of overcoming impasses and epistemological obstacles (Bachelard, 1934) long denied to falsifiability.

Other disciplines, approaches, and sensitivities could have been associated with this unnamed epistemological forum. However, the initial constraint was not that of a blank page but of the lack of a page, and questions often found in preliminary summaries, cautionary statements, footnotes, or in question marks, due to lack of 'space'. The challenge will therefore be to try to create a first page, an outline that can function as a bridge to further reflection, starting with a sample of morphemes, signs, topics and mobilized disciplines and historical or historiographical episodes that are representative of an epistemological change

in the work or committed volition. Speech was given quotation marks, italics were introduced to straighten out and interpret their curves, footnotes took over the body of the text reversing the order of the narrative and observation.

The section can be understood as four interlinked waves, touching each other, occasionally overlapping, all focused on describing a decolonial, conceptual and decentred turnaround on the debate about Africa's past, a linguistic switch when opening encyclopedias represented by languages to dig out the potential historical claims, an evaluative appraisal of the hopes raised by the rediscovery of oral sources, and finally, a set of illustrative texts about the vectors of endogeneity in the restitution of the African past (religions, endogenous written records, and so on). A summary will recommend reading scientific advances made regarding the interaction of new techniques and knowledge made available to history.

A decolonial turn: from coloniality to endogeneity

When it comes to the decolonial turn, the section opens with five very different contributions. Martial Ze Belinga tackles the epistemological barriers integral to coloniality of the debate; history-advocate Yoporeka Somet reexamines the foundations of racial prejudice behind the image of the 'Negro' with a powerful denunciation by Haitian anthropologist Anténor Firmin; and Salim Abdelmadjid puts forward a philosophical concept of Africa in relation to African history. Anshan Li and Katsuhiko Kitagawa widen the section by including a discussion on Asian historiography in Africa, the status of highly active research initiatives in China and the work of Japanese researchers.

The section could have prolonged the coloniality factor of the debate by going deeper into redundant concepts such as Anibal Quino's coloniality of power, Maldonado-Torres's coloniality of being, Maria Lugones's coloniality of gender, or Ndlovu-Gatsheni's African decolonial approach, among others. The 'favourable conditions' for the theology of liberation (African, Afro-American and South-American) and the first decolonial actions in Enrique Dussel's philosophy of liberation could also have been marshalled in a more explicit way. Similarly, the importance of endogenous knowledge, finally officially recognized by global institutions, would merit rigorous epistemological articulation. Highlighting epistemicides and linguicides, incommensurable mutilations at the heart of the colonial process, would arguably give African history new initiatives and societies the *raison d'être* for 'epistemic justice' as coined by the Indian Shiv Visvanathan. The introduction of endogenous African signifiers,

source signs and debates about Africa, within the context of an exhumation of written records in Africa, indigenous writings and inscriptions, would also have been beneficial for an affirmation of alternative thoughts, imaginative thoughts, via the Ajami, Nsidibi, Vaï, Mende and Ge'ez writings, Bambara ideograms, creature and other parietal inscriptions.

The second set of texts affected by the linguistic turn tries to define the outline of a reflection about history starting with a way of expressing the past that is specific to African languages. Yoruba for Olabiyi Yaï, and ancient Egyptian for Alain Anselin, are two ideal types used for exploration rather than sealing a generalization shut. Idiomatic issues, intraductibility and designation with the name of Africa as an example, investigated by Charles Binam Bikoï, indicate the perilous complexity and richness of linguistical capital in the debate on history.

Although an endeavour of openness and non-paralysing caution shed light on the linguistic turn issue, gains made by other linguistic families would certainly have animated the vision that emerges from the linguistic issue when it comes to history. Berber, the family of Khoisan languages, different from Bantu languages, would be natural extensions of the work undertaken so far. By relying on words to tell the story, African linguists could, in the process, help to reappraise exogenous classifications by starting with units of meaning and meaning coming from within.

We should definitely take a closer look at meanings invested by Africans in the diaspora in the rare cases of self-designation – Aruanda, Guinin, Ilé Ayé, Ilu Ayé – that sprang up in *quilombos* (settlements), *palenques* (Creole languages) and other *candomblés* (religions) as these initial attempts at pan-Africanism and African unity are under-researched and have not yet revealed themselves in full.

The third set of texts dedicated to 'oraliture' and literature provide an evaluative summary of the status of 'oral traditions' as sources of African history via the philosophical approach of Mve Ondo Bonaventure in dialogue with the more history-orientated perspective of Gayibor Théodore Nicoué Lodjou, a socio-political perspective on the Tantaras of Madagascar by Manassé Esoavelomandroso, while Cheikh Moctar Ba raises the interest of cosmogonies in this conversation. Kofi Anyidoho expands the internal sources of history from oralitures to artistic performances that convey rhetoric about history as well as the ethical, moral and spiritual organization of their societies. Luis Kandjimbo, for his part, paints a picture of the decolonization of African literature. Given the investment that has been made in the preservation and exploitation of oral sources over a long period of time, we can no longer consider it to be a question of broaching the subject using a summary-evaluation process and a problem

about the place of different texts in Western and Islamic written records. The difficulty lies in another use (other than complementary and suppletive) of the diversity of oral texts, and in a sense the scripto-centric paradigm seems to have made a mark with experts and defenders of 'oral traditions'. A whole territory concealing scripturalist ideology remains unexplored: the possibility of thinking about orality as not being a 'source' or provender for a story necessarily written down but as a discursive practice *sui generis* from and in the general history of Africa. It is likely that the maturation of this questioning leads to a more fruitful pluralism of sources without pre-established hierarchies. Tackled themes and their orientations may call for a prioritization of hypotheses and facts originating from one or other of these texts and sources.

The fourth and final group of texts gathers artefacts, mentifacts and institutions through which the endogeneity, agency of societies and their imaginaries can be considered as being in favour of a factual history beyond prejudice and assignment, and especially advantageous for a more efficient interpretative approach to the past. The concepts of religion are exhumed by Sanya Osha in the footsteps of Kwasi Wiredu, drawing on the spirituality of the Orisha in West Africa and the diaspora. Félix Ayoh'Omidire follows Sanya Osha's analysis by suggesting a reading in terms of a cultural continuum between afro-Brazilian candomblé culture in the 'axexê' funeral rite and its Yoruba African referent, 'orò òkú'. This concrete application of the concept of a global Africa works by translating and adapting African identities in diasporas based on specific social, religious or spiritual connections. The range of African signs from writings problematized by Condro Mlaili to epigraphies expounded by Paulo Fernando de Moraes Farias reinterprets chapters of history revealed with often unexpected results, such as the role of women in West African societies. This quest for the vectors of endogeneity, tools that add elements that reflect the subjectivity of Africans more than the historian's ordinary sources, can also find an expression in heritage (tangible and intangible). Kiriama Hermann studies this heritage issue and its relevance in the objectification of sociologies of the past, starting with representative situations in Southern Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Nigeria, etc. By looking at the importance of Africa in Afro-American arts, Yolanda Wood also tackles forms of continuity, adaptation and differentiation in original material culture or inspired by Africa.

The section closes with a chapter by Augustin Holl who develops a new overview of 'Bantu migration'. The result is a need for a multidisciplinary approach to give history the scientific character that ancient and damaging judgments had taken away from it and that refutationist postures were unable to restore. This

position at the end of the section also testifies to an interest, precisely because of the decentrations, provincializations and necessary innovations, in maintaining a rigorous approach within a perspective of sanitation, decolonization under the primacy of an insider's perspective. A challenge with a still undetermined outcome a priori, and which invites a proper exploitation of scientific advances more than ever before.

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CHAPTER 1

DECOLONIZING HISTORY

Epistemology of a Creative Destruction

Martial Ze Belinga

'Perhaps we should note the contradiction of a history of Africa that looks to be "African" while, at the same time, remaining subject to a historiographic model that divides temporal reality according to chronological landmarks that, in fact, correspond to the main axes of the general history of the West. Indeed, in the African history textbooks one finds categories such as "Antiquity", "the Middle Ages" and "Modern Times".'

Jean-Marc Ela (1936-2008), *La plume et la pioche*

Introduction

As early as 1965, when the first generation of African historians trained by the Western school was hard at work, the Algerian historian Mohamed Sahli (1965) was writing an overtly radical publication with the unequivocal title *Decolonizing History*. He intended to profoundly question the desperate image of the Algerian past that, according to him, was 'woven with absurdities' and 'the eternal resumption of unintelligible events'. Mohamed Sahli observed the way in which historical reason had been converted into hagiographic meta-discourses of European domination. He saw a lesson to be drawn from this, moving towards a complete overhaul of the epistemological scope: 'To break free of this impasse,

a new Copernican revolution is needed. Revising intellectual tools, enriching, expanding or renewing postulates, notions, definitions, theories and values, in order to express the whole of humanity in all its diversity with equally "sympathetic" treatment for everyone. In particular, this revision requires the *decolonization of history* and sociology' (Sahli, 1965, p. 35).

The revision called upon by the Algerian historian was not unprecedented. To an extent, this 'prehistory'[1] was already age-old and polymorphous. Kwame Nkrumah, writing just before him in 1964 (Nkrumah, p. 80), recalled the importance of an African history of Africans: 'We must write our history as the history of our society, not as the story of European adventurers'; a history where contact with Europeans was to be regarded 'from the perspective of Africans' experience...'.

An illustration of this 'prehistory' of the decolonization of history is the powerful revolt of the prophetess Kongo Kimpa Vita Nsimba (1684-1706) against missionary and colonial Catholicism (Mboukou, 2010). The young Christianized 'nganga marinda' initiate, endowed with the gift of mediumship in Kongo spirituality, demanded the restoration of the kingdom, preaching a Catholicism incarnated by Kongo black saints and a liturgy based on traditional or recomposed rites. The popular success of her movement saw her sentenced to death by the Europeans and the King of Kongo, Pedro IV, under Portuguese influence. Although Kimpa Vita Nsimba's political/identity-based resistance has been sufficiently studied, the same cannot be said of her cognitive decoloniality, since she intended to modify the Catholic beliefs taught in Kongo. There are grounds for identifying in the ideology of this uprising one of the initial branches of an African Christian theology of liberation.

Based on the above, it is possible to put forward the hypothesis that the process of revising European cognitive content emerged from the interaction of Black people with masters, commanders, representatives of God and other colonial figures. The lineaments of a decolonization of history thus logically emerged among the first 'Europeanized', Christianized, freed Black figures.

In the nineteenth century, Edward Blyden (1872, 1887), a Liberian born in Saint Thomas in the Caribbean and an eminent pioneer of ideas on African renaissance or 'regeneration', dedicated his life to the re-evaluation and rewriting of history and the 'decolonization' of African minds. To varying degrees, Africanus Horton (1868), Martin Delany (1879), Anténor Firmin

1 We use the term 'prehistory' to refer to an initial phase during which the refutation of European images of Africa and Africans anticipated (without foreseeing, with the exception of Blyden, etc.) what would later be called the 'decolonization of history'.

(1885), Casely Hayford (1911) and Du Bois, among others, represent the roots of a tradition of historians rejecting the discourses of racial inequality. They formed the vanguard of an antagonistic argumentative line countering racist allegations. African Egypt, the influence of Ethiopia, the Haitian revolution and great Black figures in history were 'evidence' set against the tide of unequal theorizations. These factual rectifications also ran through some of the accounts of African freedmen living in the diaspora (Olauda, Baquaqua, Sa'id, etc.).

The first intuitions suggested by the term 'decolonization of history' associated discourses of Africa's past with the colonial experience, navigating an improbable proximity between knowledge as sympathy and colonization as violence. These representations were informed by demands that were foreign to the requirements of knowledge production in a corrupt process that justified their repression outside the territory of the African past.

Decolonizing history was an attempt to extinguish the discursive structures employed in discourse on the past by the constraining power of a mindset focused on colonial domination. It was thus a critical component in the liberation of African thought. There is no need to point out the monumentality of such an enterprise, regarded as impossible by certain individuals, including African researchers such as the Gabonese sociologist Tonda (2012).

Before marking out the cognitive space of this Africa of stereotypes, it is useful to outline the plural temporality that made its falsification possible. Discourses on 'Negroes', on Others, were elaborated in the dialectic of contacts generated in the global process of colonialism. European narratives preceding the 1884 Berlin Conference (Mungo Park, René Caillé, etc.), along with the definitive arguments of figures such as Kant and Hume, to mention but a few, testify to the precedence of European representations over the territorial conquest of the continent itself. The decolonization of history thus concerns the contemporary writing of African history, covering the whole of the African past, particularly distorted by the contexts of asymmetrical external interactions, in particular with Europe and its most influential representatives.

The invocation of African writings and oral traditions opposed to the literatures of racial essentialism and the duty of colonization cannot, however, smooth over all the malaise provoked by the writing of an African history by and within the ubiquitous European cultural mindset. It is easy to perceive the extent to which the false, albeit widespread, idea of racial superiority did not exhaust the inevitability of a decolonization of history.

Indeed, it is difficult to imagine what a history of Greece would be like if interpreted through ancient Egyptian cultural codes and written exclusively

in hieroglyphics, or the history of France seen under the exclusive prism of Cameroon's Bamoun culture and written in Shümom.[2] Reciprocally, we might wonder to what extent European historians, scientists or conquerors could, from their idiomatic cosmovisions, reconstruct African societies' motives for action and historical processes. In the light of this serious objection, Todorov Tzvetan (1991) warns that the disadvantages of exotopia – spatial or cultural exteriority – may be overcome at the price of the narrator's alienation from his original culture. Discovering the conceptual possibilities of 'a common sense' thus depends on this capacity for exile, as do the probabilities of the necessarily relative or asymptotic success of a decolonization of history.

The decolonization of history can be understood as the repudiation of an external vision of Africa's past, but also as the search for terminologies, conceptual tools and categories of thought able to establish the history of Africa within its own dynamics, based on the logic of African subjects' actions within the multiple scales and temporalities of their praxis. It is ultimately a critical re-examination of the intentions, unconscious drivers, categories and overall issues brought to the fore by this decolonization, ensuring that all its statements have been scientifically sanitized.

Taken as a symbol of territorial expropriation, colonization analogically operates within the knowledge arena to dismiss all the forms of hegemonic intrusion imposed by the force of events. Pejorative or inappropriate non-European representations of Africa constructed in the context of the Eastern slave trade, for example, should be revised in the same way as the others (the absorbing Westernization of mindsets all around the world nevertheless orientates premises of the decolonization of history towards European content)[3]. The arbitrary but necessary choice made for this text will be to stick to European representations, unless required to do otherwise. This said, we are not unaware of the complexity of the way prejudices form and the reciprocal influences between East and West in the circulation of ideas.

The essential focus for this introductory reflection will be solely on the epistemological dimension, notwithstanding the fact that knowledge production and dissemination (research, school curricula, etc.) relates to a global

2 Shümom is a language invented by the ruler of the Bamoun people, King Ndjoya, at the end of the nineteenth century and banned under French colonization.

3 For example, the following sentence is attributed to the Arab thinker Ibn Khaldoun: 'The only people who accept slavery are the Negroes, owing to their low degree of humanity and proximity to the animal stage'. Cf. Ibn Khadoun, Al-Muqaddima, 1377. Stereotypes from Muslim cultures is a serious issue. Just as the European slave trade and slavery generated prejudices, servitude in Muslim countries long before, and for longer, built up stereotypes of inferiority that naturalized the status of African Blacks.

politico-institutional dimension. We will attempt to assess the conditions of validity for the main categories and paradigms in which African history is written, and to propose a radical reflexivity allowing us to move towards a decolonial and endogenous approach inspired from within.

To do this, we will proceed in three stages, set out in the three parts of our text. The first two will attempt to characterize the coloniality of history by breaking down and then reordering the prevailing perception of 'prejudice' and bias so often evoked by African and Black African historians and thinkers. This perception, and its heterogeneous content, will lead us on to a matrix of representative categories and key problematic concepts that will need to be modelled in the second part. Finally, the third part will propose a 'creative destruction' approach, intended to suggest a subversion of perspectives and a duty of invention on a thematic, categorical, perceptual and conceptual level.

Decolonization, Frantz Fanon (1961) said, was very simply 'the replacement of one "species" of man by another'. By analogy, we could describe the decolonization of history as the replacement of one 'species' of history by another.

Prejudices, colonialism and Eurocentric dynamics of history

The desire to produce a history 'out of alien days', to paraphrase Aimé Césaire, should not be exonerated from the demands of a rigorous methodology, along with a doubt made greater in the light of a ubiquitous subject – Europe in contemporary African knowledge – with more of a grip on African historians than vice versa. In *L'odeur du père*, Mudimbe (1982), known for his famous 'colonial library', warns:

> For Africa, really escaping the West requires an appreciation of exactly what it costs to detach oneself from it; … This implies a knowledge of that which, in allowing us to think against the West, remains Western; an appreciation of the extent to which our recourse against it is still perhaps a ruse through which it opposes us and, at the end of which, it awaits us, immobile and otherworldly.

This precaution leads us to prejudice, the key word when it comes to the oldest African recriminations against a European historical view of Africa. The challenge lies in characterizing the arena within which the word on Africa circulates, tapping into it to reach beyond the problematic exotopies and 'epistemological obstacles' related to coloniality.

African history: occupied territory, prejudiced past, prejudicatory history

The challenge of writing an African history – quickly becoming a real enterprise in hostile territory – runs through the very soul of UNESCO's *General History of Africa* project. Joseph Ki-Zerbo (1972) uses the expression 'barrage of myths' to illustrate the idea that external opinions and pejorations represent barriers to knowledge. It must be said that what we call 'prejudice' or 'race prejudice' approximate to myths and pejorations and mobilized the greatest works of reflection by Africans and Afrodescendants for at least two centuries. When re-reading Anténor Firmin (1885), we are struck by the discovery of a fine epistemologist hidden behind the anthropologist of racial equality, something he uses to demonstrate the pseudoscientific character of the proponents of polygenism and the thesis of racial inequality. This is not unlike Blyden, very much an incarnation of this 'refutationist' epistemology.

At the very heart of this process of pitting rationality against prejudice, the cult work *Discourse on Colonialism* by the Martinican poet Aimé Césaire (1955) surprisingly resurfaces. Maldonado-Torres (2006) makes this a centrepiece for the decolonial turn at the origin of the disenchantment of European modernity. With hindsight, we see this *Discourse* as a piece of this 'refutationist' epistemology, largely dedicated to the contradiction brought before the colony's thinkers: Joseph de Maistre, Lapouge, Renan, Mannoni, etc. Césaire points out the 'false objectivity', the passion 'of denying' Non-Whites any merits (Césaire, 1955, pp. 32-34). In the light of the prejudice issue, this rapprochement of Blyden and Césaire, separated by more than half a century, shows the rooting of a will to genuinely get a grasp on a history free of colonial scoria.

An archaeology of pejorations[4] reveals that, although reducible to a matrix of characteristic features, prejudice is anything but linear over time, composite and dispersed. There are numerous representations by ancient writers that, though often racialist, did not give in to racism – we can cite Homer, Herodotus and Strabo, among others. Even after the genocidal conquest of the 'New World', Montaigne (2016) was moving away from dehumanizing modes of classifying otherness. There were, of course, the Hegels, Voltaires, Hugos and Montesquieus, testimony to a racism in France that was particularly well protected, 'inherited from a long, carefully hidden tradition', according to Odile Tobner (2007). Yet even in the dark times of the slave trade and slavery, the names of the

4 Inspired by Michel Foucault's archaeology of knowledge. Cf. Foucault, Michel (1969), *Archéologie du savoir*. Paris, Gallimard.

Tertullians, Cyprians, Saint Augustines, early Christian theologians of North Africa and Terence the Carthaginian poet, were still known and lauded throughout cultivated Europe (Yoporeka, 2007). The abolitionists, like Victor Schoelcher (1948) who forced through the decision to abolish slavery in France in 1848, reversed the burden of prejudice, arguing that slavery was the cause of the black populations' diminished status. Here it is worth mentioning Maurice Delafosse (1927), a colonial administrator passionate about African societies and very attentive to oral presentations, who constantly maintained that African civilizations were the work of Africans. Champollion Le Jeune, who decoded the hieroglyphs in 1822, had no hesitation in making the link between the ancient Egyptians and the Black Africans, going against the paradigm of a European or Eastern Egypt.

This non-linearity of prejudice nevertheless presents a trend absorbed, to a great extent, by the tropisms of legitimation and justification inseparable from a certain pejorative view of the native Black element. For the most part, African and diasporic reflections include the prevalence of prejudices based on the needs of slavery, the slave trade and colonial causes. Eric Williams (1968), followed by Walter Rodney (1972), cited the abundant demand for cheap servile labour as the explanation for the slave trade. Later on, a superstructure of racist opportunistic rationalizations would be grafted to this infrastructure. During this phase of economic accumulation, capitalism and racial prejudices thus seemed to go hand in hand, mutually influencing one another.

We can note just how fragile the term 'prejudice' appears to be. It falters as soon as its source is the justification of domination, not the absence of objective proof. Its strength does not derive from failed procedures of discernment but, rather, services rendered in the interests of its narrators. Conversely, if we take prejudice to mean a pejorative opinion – stereotypes without a solid cognitive base – its use, although weakly heuristic, maintains a degree of relevance. We could thus consider there to be two kinds of prejudices, the effects of which are likely to coalesce: a true-false prejudice, pretext and colonial alibi, and a true prejudice linked to the state of knowledge, the interest of knowing and the reproduction of old images.

The various kinds of knowledge associated with African inferiority connotations form another line through which prejudice is dispersed. We can distinguish between the knowledge of travellers, missionaries, colonial administrators, etc., and scientific knowledge. Within the scientific knowledge domain, history professionals can be set apart from other human science specialists. The colonial sciences differentiated the natural sciences from the human and social sciences.

The tension between the ideal of scientific disinterestedness and the will to assist civilizing missions weakened attempts by human scientists to put forward a genuinely scientific discourse on African societies.

Four decades after Mohamed Sahli's pioneering syntheses on the coloniality of history and sociology, the French historian Singaravélou summarized historical trends 'in a colonial situation' by attempting to isolate knowledge, epistemology and the teaching of colonial times. Noting the heterogeneity of discourses advanced by professional or amateur authors of history, he drew up some consensual features of the colonial sciences:

- Eurocentrism,
- diffusionism,
- dehistoricisation,
- essentialism (inferiority/superiority/racism/racialism),
- mesological determinism (geography, society, ethnicity, etc.),
- propaganda, colonial expertise, legitimization.

Ignorance and a psychological component (fear, abomination, difference) cannot be omitted from the properties contributing to the reproduction and spread of prejudice (Rose, 1951).

According to Singaravélou, innovations such as the promotion of oral traditions, the economic dimension of history with colonial companies, ethnic psychology and its diversity, interest for the contemporary, etc., can be credited to these colonial sciences and their 'scientists'.

European prejudice has dominated history (prejudicatory history or history-prejudice) since at least the fifteenth-century conquests, bearing down with all its might until the relatively suspensive appearance of professional historians. This domination is so great that these periods of history, while not reduced to it, nevertheless appear dominated by hegemonic interests: evangelization, the slave trade, colonization, cold war. M'Bokolo (1980) identifies the 1950s as a point of rupture with the past through the nationalist push coinciding with the birth of historical science for Africa (first reviews of African history, interest in orality, etc.).

The historiography of dispersed prejudice outlined here was justified by the interest of African historians, and by the epistemological value of prejudice. Gaston Bachelard (1934, p. 14) thus warns: 'When it comes to scientific culture, the mind is never young. It is indeed very old, since its age corresponds to that of its prejudices'. He specifies: 'Science, in its need for completion as well as in principle, is absolutely opposed to opinion'. Prejudice thus constitutes a source of epistemological obstacles, that is, the kind of inertia that occurs in the very

act of knowing. Added to this is the hysteresis of 'authoritarian antecedents', following in the footsteps of Hegel and the Enlightenment thinkers revisited by Sala-Molins (1992), whose influence still represents an impediment to objectively thinking about Africa's past.

In addition to the empire of words and definitions in which prejudice is clad, there are two modes of privilege, two meta-categories, through which parts of history that cannot be integrated into dominant models of thought are devolved: silence and white noise.

Meta-categories of African history: silence and white noise

African historians view the prevalence of racial stereotypes as real epistemological obstacles. Bachelard (1971) thus instigates a semantic insurrection against such uses: 'the language of science is in a state of permanent revolution'. This could be seen as a neo-language ensuring the translation of common terms into scientific concepts.

Beyond the lexical dimension, history-prejudice is nevertheless rooted in cognitive and institutional forces invisible in narrative, but never absent: access to archives, research programmes, publications, etc. Silencing, together with its masking by the tropes of 'mainstream' knowledge metaphorically called 'white noise', represent two meta-categories of discourse on Africa. A vigilant Eduardo Galeano (1997) recalls an unaddressed African proverb: 'As long as lions do not have their hunters, hunting stories will continue to glorify the hunter'. In other words, silence for the vanquished, history for the victors.

The Haitian anthropologist and historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1949-2012) proposes a theorization of silencing in the writing of history. In his *Silencing the Past* (1995), he reveals the power relations omnipresent in the way narratives are put together. In this regard, the marginal place accorded to the Saint-Domingue revolution (1791-1803) in history is a case in point. This revolution, which inflicted more casualties on France than the famous Battle of Waterloo, was presumed to be the only revolution accomplished by enslaved populations outside their countries of origin. Trouillot identifies the reasons for this muting, defining it as unthinkable, 'contaminating', ostracized with all the history of slavery and colonialism. He also notes the way in which Saint-Domingue's revolutionary scope was undermined by the use the words 'revolt' and 'rebellion', along with the search for external causes to diminish the merit of the Blacks. Moreover, the historian specifies, 'the silencing of the Haitian revolution is only one chapter in the great narrative of domination' (Trouillot, p. 107).

In an ambitious article entitled 'Hegel and Haiti', the American philosopher Susan Buck-Morss (2000) analyses Hegel's silence vis-à-vis the Saint-Domingue revolution against the slave traders, recalling Jean-Jacques Rousseau's mute stance when it came to the servitude of Africans, as highlighted by Catalan philosopher Louis Sala-Molins (1987). Hegel, who 'invented' the metaphor of 'the master-slave dialectic' in the midst of the slave trade era, manages not to mention the fate of the Blacks in the European colonies! Susan Buck-Morss provides convincing evidence that Hegel could not have been unaware of the Haitian revolution when elaborating the famous metaphor published in his book *The Phenomenology of Spirit* in 1807. After taking stock of the situation, the philosopher asks whether the hidden origins of the master-slave dialectic might, in fact, be found in this Haitian revolution veiled in silence.

The commemoration in 1992 of the 500 year anniversary of Christopher Columbus's 'discovery' of America offered Trouillot the opportunity to disassemble the silence produced not by an absence of facts, but by the unequal capacity for memory reappropriation among the competing social groups: Amerindians and descendants of the colonial settlers. This sociological dimension of the production of history challenges the naive positivism that portrays a science impervious to its environment. Here, we can recall the work of epistemologist Thomas Kuhn (1962), for whom the validation of scientific paradigms is also founded in the beliefs of dominant groups within scientific communities.

The dimensions and directions of this silence are thus linked to chronology, the sociology of reappropriation and semantics. The very use of the words 'discovery' or 'encounter' to refer to the invasion of lands occupied by peoples was only possible as a product of the Eurocentric power that went on to structure the whole 'New World' narrative (Trouillot, p. 115).

The 'discoveries' trope is probably one of the most problematic in the writing of history, insofar as, applying only to European conquests outside Europe, it favours essentialist sentiments by naturalizing a technical inequality in history. Ivan Van Sertima (1981) argues that there were nevertheless African nautical experiments predating those of the Portuguese. Herodotus teaches us that the first circumnavigation of Africa can be traced to Pharaoh Necho II (610 BCE to 595 BCE), around 2,000 years before the Portuguese endeavours. In short, it is the theme of 'discovery' in itself that carries an exteriority conducive to diffusionism and obliteration of the indigenous creative element.

Congolese (Democratic Republic of the Congo) author Jacques Depelchin (2005) presents two syndromes behind silence in history: the syndrome of discovery, which insinuates a tabula rasa, and that of the abolitions rendering

victims' struggles invisible – a double theft of history. The 'colonial massacres' chronicled by Yves Benot (2001) in Madagascar, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and Algeria, not to mention their epigones in Angola, Congo or Kenya, for example, along with the resistance of subordinated populations and their victories, however modest, are threatened with extinction in major narratives. Silences fill the interstices of periodization, spatial compartmentalization and disciplinary categories. They neutralize 'denials of experience', in the same vein as African and diasporic innovations that are untouchable within the framework of racial inequality, the indigenous call to colonize.

The notion of white noise,[5] borrowed from science, can act as a metaphor for the idea that silences are accompanied by many other types of knowledge, produced to form a screen, like an omnipresent background hum to which we easily become accustomed. The recurring narrative of a problem Africa, with no significant history, functions as white noise, the frequency of which has annihilated the faculties of critical reaction. This schema would appear to be at work in a rearmament process, relativizing the imperialist and capitalist dominations so indebted to primitive accumulations outside of Europe. On this subject, M'Bokolo (1995) speaks of revisionism, to be distinguished from negationism, in relation to the historiographical minimization of the extent of the transatlantic slave trade (M'Bokolo, 1995, pp. 260-264).

One form of these occultations manifests itself in what Cheikh Anta Diop refers to as 'the falsification of history', when the evidence of a Black Egypt became unacceptable during the colonial period: 'With the help of imperialism, it was becoming increasingly "inadmissible" to continue to accept the hitherto obvious thesis of a negro Egypt' (Diop, 1954, p. 62). The researcher adjusts the narratives to the dominant ideology, but the theory can also withstand artificially neutralized evidence. Falsification saves the ideology of an empirical history where there is no guarantee of relationships of superiority.

White noise favours a 'whitening' of important historical episodes. The marginal place of African soldiers in the official memory of the Second World War contrasts with the real significance of their contributions, documented by the historian Eric Jennings (2014). This historical occultation recalls the military 'whitening' of the French 1st Army, as African soldiers who participated in the liberation were sent back to Africa in 1944. Some of the reasons behind

5 In science we use the term white noise to refer to a variety of hums, such as the crackles emitted by a TV without an antenna. These monotonous and repetitive noises tend to mask other sounds like an invisible screen. They are often conducive to falling asleep.

this were linked to segregation, with the overriding desire to portray a racially acceptable end victory.

Zeleza's 'paradigmatic silences' (2005) are based on a form of sophism, the *argumentum a silentio*, which assumes that silences have a scientific value, either to invalidate intruders or to validate white noise. Produced in an omnipresent and global manner by their institutional agents – categories, meta-categories and prejudices – they protect a major trait common to the various narratives: Eurocentrism.

History between coloniality and Eurocentrism

The call to evaluate the general orientation of knowledge makes sense in the light of this identification of a prejudiced, mythical history – an obstacle to a narrative of the past seen from the inside – along with the obstruction of paradigmatic silences and white noise. Frantz Fanon thought that colonization perpetuated a physical and psychological domination over colonized populations. However, as Mudimbe (1988) rightly points out, it also integrated local histories in the European perspectives. Stories of the African past are thus, a priori, difficult to free from subjection to European knowledge networks.

Since coloniality is a constitutive and inseparable facet of modernity (Quiano, Grosfoguel, Mignolo), Eurocentrism expressed itself within it and in most narrations of the past. Mudimbé speaks of 'the discipline of the continent' by means of 'the invention of savagery', 'the process of meaning and the conceptual grid', and 'the surveillance and sanction of objects created' (Mudimbe, 1982, p. 129). The negative, empty, sick and nonsensical image of the Blacks is only made possible by reducing discourse on human beings to an immutable centre: Europe, i.e. Eurocentrism. If we see coloniality as stemming from the abuse of epistemic power, Eurocentrism would be its substance. Eurocentrism, prejudice, silence, white noise and coloniality are thus held up by this operative rationality.

Seen in this light, the writing of African history becomes a sub-multiple of the European writing of the world, which refuses any address or locality. Muted as a single subject, Europe arouses the criticism of Indian scholar Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988). She deplores the disappearance of subalterns, women, Black people, the poor, advancing narratives of social change that she feels could be restored by a Derrida-style deconstructive approach.

Critical sociologists such as Gurminder Bhambra (2007) argue that, within world narratives, the monopolistic conception that Europe has of modernity should be called into question. In Bhambra's view, the codes of modernity were

not solely provided by the European Renaissance. The East also played its part (discoveries, humanism, printing, etc.). The same questioning applies to the iconic place given to the French and Industrial Revolutions in world history. These changes were not achieved by a Europe isolated from the rest of the world. In this vein, anthropologists such as Jack Goody speak of (as in his book) a *Theft of History* (2007). We can make the link with Eric Williams' position on the slave trade and its contribution to the development of capitalism, as well as Walter Rodney's perspective on Europe's underdevelopment of Africa for its own benefit.

From all this it follows that, when the issue of modernity is introduced, teleological biases arise. Europe becomes the invisible grid setting out the categories within which Others are evaluated. However, Eurocentrism did not spread uniformly with colonialism. We can perceive divergences between different Eurocentrisms, from the racism of the planters in the colonies to the condescending perspective of the administrators in the metropolises, for example. The needs of evangelization, adventure or conquest did not draw upon the same representations of the Black race.

These shifts in European ethnocentrism, reaching their climax during the colonial period, can probably be linked to the effects of the formation of African elites, along with the new disciplines that also had their Eurocentric paradigms, such as classical and neo-classical economics. The hegemonic schools of this discipline convey an idyllic vision of markets and capitalism, and so-called development indicators tend to structure historical narratives. Eurocentrism thus becomes pluralistic and acquires a dynamic of its own, infiltrating new narrative spaces every day.

There is, nevertheless, another dynamic of Eurocentrism generated endogenously. The Zimbabwean scholar Ndlovu-Gastheni (2018) analyses a form of 'native colonialism' in relation to Ethiopia. Referring to the work of Ethiopian historian Yirga Gelaw,[6] he notes the paradox of a country with no formally colonial political past that has nevertheless alienated its own epistemic freedom. By favouring a Western knowledge system and higher education in a foreign language, Ethiopia has, according to Yirga, allowed its ancient literary and philosophical knowledge to deteriorate. Cheikh Anta Diop was quick to report the contribution of Africans to Eurocentric myths.

While the complexity of the politics of knowledge certainly cannot be denied, the Ethiopian ideal type objectifies an internal dynamic of Eurocentrisms and

6 Cf. Gelaw Woldeyes, Y. 2017. *Native Colonialism: Education and the Economy of Violence Against Traditions in Ethiopia.* New Jersey, The Red Sea Press. Cited by Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Sabelo in 'The struggles for Epistemic Freedom in Africa'. Inaugural Council for the Development of Social Science in Africa (CODESRIA) Day Lecture, Holiday Inn Hotel, Harare, Zimbabwe, 21 February 2018.

their reproductions. It also assists us in our understanding of the epistemic coloniality and, at its centre, the European historical experience, as the heart of what Thomas Kuhn calls (1962, p. 46) a 'normal science'. We could see this cognitive activity as research reduced to phenomena and theories already provided by a paradigm, without making any notable breaks with it, forcing nature – African historical facts – to flow into the preformed, inflexible mould of the commonly accepted model. Hence the statement by Maria Lugones, an Argentine feminist philosopher, that 'coloniality is a conceptual and social prison'.[7] We could, for our purposes, add epistemological to these adjectives.

Prejudices, silences, coloniality and Eurocentrism in a 'normal' historical science devoted to intellectual permutations rather than the eruption of a new mode of writing – such are the elements that will need to be reformulated in a matrix that will attempt to deploy the arguments of an epistemological re-thinking.

Coloniality of history: an epistemological reformulation

Taking account of the conceptual 'disciplination' of the discourse on Africa, given the forces through which the writing of history is controlled – agents of meaning (modes of thought, languages, etc.) and agents of power (socio-institutional forces) – the issues surrounding the restitution of an intelligible African past through an African intentionality are anything but trivial. Reformulating the plot of discursive utterances analysed as prejudices, colonialism and Eurocentrism based on the types of bias and nature of the barriers to knowledge will enable us to propose a decolonial epistemological approach.

Coloniality and epistemology: problem variables and the PSC model

A broad consensus is emerging among African historians of a double corruption of the narrative on Africa's past: the postulate of savagery or, at best, inferiority when it comes to living beings and their collectives, along with the externality of any notable historical movement concerning them. After its 'prehistory', Africa is seen to exist almost only as an echo of 'superior' peoples, dominated by the East and then Europe.

Mohamed Sahli (Sahli, p. 27) believes he can decrypt the conventions of colonial ideology, the congenital inferiority of colonized peoples and

7 Cited by Veronelli G.A. 2015. The coloniality of language: race, expressivity, power and the darker side of modernity. *Wagadu*, Volume 13. The author quotes a personal conversation from summer 2010.

geographical, sociological and racial determinisms. These biases can be reduced to three main schemas:

- racial and regional essentialism,
- the diffusionist perspective (externality/teleology),
- determinisms (geographical, sociological, mesological).

These schemas correspond to three categories of epistemological barriers:

- the problem of existence and intelligibility (historicity/rationalities),
- the problem of subjectivation (becoming a subject/endogeneity/agentivity),
- the problem of internal movement (breaks, continuities, adaptations, etc.).

Once this structure of epistemological obstacles has been established, a categorial matrix can be proposed, from which coloniality as a problem will find an operative formulation. In general, historical discourses on Africa and Afrodescendants could be seen as organized based on *a perspective, reproducible thought schemas, concepts and definitions*, what we call the Perspective-Schemas-Concept (PSC) model.

The perspective will be the first instinct of the narrative, the direction of its flight, its natural drift. It is generally characterized by a major postulate, whether explicit or not, and a main orientation. The perspective can be performed or induced by the narrator's structural position and intentions.

Thought schemas are categories, defined by Kagame (1976) as 'entities of reason'; when they are transversal, we call them *meta-categories*. History and its related disciplines can be distinguished as disciplinary categories. We have shown that silences are meta-categories that neutralize points of incompatibility when it comes to great narratives and dominations. There are other meta-categories that, regardless of any coloniality, accompany each narrative: writings, cartographies and languages. The latter are transversal categories of communication, translation and, simultaneously – Kagamé argues – encyclopaedias, living memory archives, allowing or prohibiting the expression of authenticity, the subject specificity of a history.

For historians, the first categories of thought are: *time*, i.e. periodization and chronological references; *space*, structured around geography, places of circulation, etc.; and those that describe *living beings* and *material things* – the subjects of history.

The adjacent disciplines of the humanities, anthropology, sociology, economics, etc., provide historians with some of their production tools. *Methodology* can be integrated into the schemas, with its major contribution to both coloniality and

the scientific quality of history. Finally, concepts, definitions and terminologies allow for a general perspective to be put into words, based on given categories of thought and writing.

This scheme is very relative, with other possible categorical entities and combinations. It is driven by a heterarchy that puts the three central focuses – perspective, schemas and concepts – into a dialogue with each other. These focuses are nevertheless linked by a comprehensive interdependence. A perspective tends to engender categories and concepts that act as instruments. Conversely, inappropriate concepts and categories would not be able to serve a desired perspective. In addition, some categories are also concepts, such as the concept of 'slave', which is also a subcategory of living beings.

After Kuhn, we will consider a paradigm to be a general proposal accepted by a scientific community, containing a perspective, characteristic schemas, specific concepts and major facts used for empirical confirmation. Let us illustrate our overall schema with two significant paradigms.

White Pharaonic Egypt is a paradigm. From this point of view, the discourses in question have a perspective: since civilization is necessarily Caucasian (Gobineau, etc.) only an external diffusion could explain its accidental location in Africa. This paradigm is based on categories: the Sahara as a barrier, a watertight white Africa (Braudel, 1987), the Persian and Greek dynasties of Egypt, etc. The meta-categories of silence make it possible to ignore the testimonies of the ancients and even deny archaeological and genetic facts. Braudel underestimates the interest of Egyptian artefacts discovered in Central Africa, such as the statuettes of Osiris found in Malongue, in the former Belgian Congo, dismissed as too fragile to be evidence of an influence between the Pharaonic kingdom and Black African societies (Braudel, 1987, pp. 158-159). The truncated cartographies often only represent the 'Lower Egypt' part of the Nile, with the Egyptians' popular iconography and cultural adaptations socially supporting the Caucasian paradigm of Egypt.

Another illustration is the paradigm of Africa's lack of history. This derives from a perspective based on the postulate of questioning Africans' humanity and a scriptocentric concept of historical sources. Writing being originally Eastern and essentially non-African, the fate of African historicity was quickly sealed. Such quick judgement will always imply silence when it comes to endogenous or reappropriated African writings (Nsibidi, Adjami), along with a racialization of writing (Braudel attests to this in Ethiopia, in an attempt to better differentiate this country from the 'true Melano-Africans' of Black Africa [p. 151]).

These two illustrations of the Perspective-Schemas-Concept model (PSC) put together the constitutive elements of a categorial matrix of coloniality. It would be useful to try to generalize this model.

Coloniality of history: an epistemological representation

Diop sees Africa's history as cluttered with prejudices, myths and falsifications, a prejudicatory history. According to Ki-Zerbo (1972, p. 31), it thus requires a 'third discovery', following on from those of the fifteenth-century conquistadors and nineteenth-century explorers, but this time scientific and disinterested.

If we admit the existence, in contemporary historiography, of an age of prejudice that dominates African history, the European age itself splits into two: that of the conquistadors and slave traders, followed by that of the explorers and colonial science. This leads us on to distinguish three ages of African historiography (Table 1):

- the Age of Conquests (conquerors, missionaries, slavers, traders),
- the Colonial Age (colonialists, anthropologists, philosophers, politicians, economists, missionaries, etc.),
- the Age of Scientific History (both African and European).

The names of these roughly identified ages derive from an approximation of the representations dominating each period, despite their heterogeneity. Some types of authors – traders, travellers, missionaries – might feature in all three ages, with a greater or lesser influence.

Table 1. *Table of the coloniality of history*

Age of Conquests 15th-18th century	Colonial Age 19th-20th century	Age of Scientific History 1950/60-1990?*
Africa-Prejudice		Africa-Coloniality, contested Eurocentrism
PARADIGM		
The discovery of the savages	Colonialism, the civilizing mission	Africa as lagging behind, problem Africa, aid, etc.
PERSPECTIVE		
- Savages, lack of soul, etc. - No writing, no history - Europeans in Africa - Clerics, traders, slavers	- Racial superiority - Diffusionism / teleology - Colo-centrism / Disciplinary Eurocentrisms	- Universalist Formalism / Positivism - Eurocentrism disputed - Diffusionism disputed - Historicity
SCHEMAS		
Meta-Categories		
- Silences or deformations of African civilizations - Writings, European languages - Europeanized maps and place names	- Silences on African Egypt, the genocides of the Amerindians, revisionism (slave trade) - Colonial languages and writings - Europeanized maps and place names	- Silences or revisionisms on colonialism, neo-colonialism, resistances, epistemicides, extractivism, etc. - Foreign languages and writings - Biased maps and place names
Categories		
- Time: Before / After the discoveries - Space: Nigritia, Barbary, Moorish Africa - Beings: Savages, Caucasian races, atavisms, etc.	- Colo-centric time: precolonial / colonial - Colo-centric and ethno-racial space: British, white, sub-Saharan Africa, Interland, etc. - Inferior races, colonized populations, etc.	- Eurocentric periodization disputed (GHA) - Dominant spatial categories that are not very decolonized (Black, white, sub-Saharan and francophone Africa, etc.).
Methodology		
External, non-scientific sources	Dominant external sources, limited internal sources	Internal sources brought to the fore, archaeology, orality, sciences
CONCEPTS		
Concepts		
Slavery, Middle Ages, race, etc.	Colony, civilization, ethnicities, evolved, head taxes, etc.	Modernity, development, dependence, human rights, identities
Terminologies		
Negroes, slaves, savage, tribes, pagans, Christianity	Races, colonized, acephalous societies, dialects, indigenous status, Blacks, inferiors, etc.	Universalism, underdevelopment, traditions, etc.

* The age of African scientific history could be situated around the beginnings of scientific writing and structuring from 1950-60 (Cheikh Anta Diop, *Journal of African History,* Vansina, Sahli, etc.) and coming to a possible end around 1990, with the breakthrough of a strong challenge to Eurocentrism (Anibal Quijano, decoloniality, Gulbenkian Commission, etc.).

Source: Martial Ze Belinga.

We could argue that each perspective induces compatible schemata that support its orientation. The coloniality of content therefore applies only exceptionally to isolated terms, concepts or notions. These are lexical and semantic fields that convoke each other mutually. The 'tribe' thus calls upon savagery to civilize and the acceptance of a group closed around it – idolatrous, culturally homogenous and ideally affected by an irreducible difference (cannibalism, etc.). These lexical fields are organized into categories.

The summary table of the coloniality of African history above (Table 1) allows us to consider the development of the dominant representations and paradigms of African history. It tries to identify central trends. The presentation, focusing on the problematic character of paradigms from an epistemological point of view, does not purport to deny the relevance of any of these ages in the writing of Africa's past. It attempts to identify the epistemological variables based upon which decolonization would be concretely conceivable.

Decolonizing the writing of history: a creative destruction

The contemporary writing of African history, in its need to reinvent itself, is part of the socio-historical context of a decolonial break with the past. In the light of increasing initiatives from South American, Indian, European and African researchers to challenge the writings of modernity, we might be tempted to extend Mkandawire's 'three generations of African scholars' (Mkandawire, 1995), arguing that the next generation of African researchers will be epistemological, or will not be at all. Those involved in this transformation intend to have a definitive impact on the general production of knowledge concerning humanity. This new endeavour is an opportunity to rid African history of its perceptual and conceptual biases and categorical dross: a creative destruction.

The concept of creative destruction comes from the Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter (1942), who argued that innovation stimulated the emergence of new economic activities that themselves destroyed old ones. Drawn upon metaphorically, we feel that this could be used to give the decolonization of history a conceptual image, integrating new frameworks of intelligibility and adapting or doing away with other paradigms. In a more genealogical sense, we can recall the Mandingo proverb quoted by Ahmadou Kourouma (1998): 'it is with the end of the old rope that we begin to weave the new'.

A decolonial challenging of Eurocentric knowledge

The flourishing of protest initiatives by social and human science researchers occupies a growing space in world humanities. For the sake of synthesis, it is possible to objectify this challenging of Eurocentrism based on three reference points:

- *The rise of the South American school of decoloniality since the 1990s*, particularly with the invention of the fruitful concept of 'coloniality of power' by Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano (1991). This school, which is developing a paradigm and Lakatosian-style research programme (Escobar, 2007), inextricably links modernity with an entangled mesh of colonialities: epistemic, linguistic, existential, etc. It challenges the epistemology of a point zero (Europe) and notes the epistemicides that accompanied Europe's expansion in the world. Walter Mignolo (2009), one of the thinkers behind this trend, advocates an 'epistemic disobedience' to respond to what he calls an epistemic racism. Postcolonial studies share with the decolonial scholars this drive to rewrite colonial history in the light of modernity and participate in ongoing thematic shifts.
- *The identification of a crisis of the humanities in the West*, precipitating a rush to radically revise its dominant models and methods. The most ambitious proposals focus on putting an end to traditional disciplinary divisions, considered archaic, abandoning Eurocentric universalism in a move towards plural universalism, and going beyond positivism and its search for rigid laws in favour of complexity and the acceptance of uncertainty (Wallerstein, 1996).
- *A profound reflexivity in the relationship between the humanities and the production of an unequal societal order*, which the American sociologist Burawoy (2005) has paved the way for, along with the provincialization of Eurocentrism in the humanities. The reality of radically questioning the relevance of the usual categories of the humanities and their contribution to the contemporary world is being instigated from the inside by eminent thinkers and institutions (OECD, 2004; UNESCO, 2010). The necessary 'provincialisation' of Europe as discussed by Chakrabaty (2000) tends to become an intellectual rallying point.

The decolonial challenging of Eurocentrism and positivism, along with the quest for greater epistemological pluralism, which are also found in the so-called hard sciences (Ruphy 2013), are primarily being enunciated on an epistemological level in South America, India, Europe and North America.

African researchers have not been left behind, however, with CODESRIA (Sall, 2015), one of the continent's most productive research centres, becoming a focal point for contesting Eurocentrism. The demands for an Africanization of the human sciences since the 1960s have continued at the same pace. The great figures of these struggles are now well known: Ali Mazrui, Betwell Ogot, Jean-Marc Ela, N'gugi Wa Thiong'o (1986) and his *Decolonizing the Mind*, Kwasi Wiredu and conceptual decolonization (1998), Claude Ake (1982) and the imperialist human sciences, Théophile Obenga, Kofi Anyidoho (Lauer and Anyidoho, 2012), Mlambo Aloïs, Mahmood Mamdani, Paul Zeleza, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, and so on.

Subversion of perspectives and methodological indiscipline

In the words of Thomas Kuhn (Kuhn, p. 136), African history needs to emerge from its enclosure within 'normal science', where it is surrounded by silence, white noise and other biases. It must place itself in a situation of scientific revolution, i.e. seize the productive impetus of a non-cumulative leap forward/break with the past in order to move, frame, remediate and/or replace the old paradigms of a poor, underdeveloped Africa with no real history and no writing, in short, the equivalent of the failed Europe of medieval times.

Contemporary African historians have begun the work to decolonize history. They have criticized the diffusionist perspective of narratives, rejected time categories compressed around the colonial experience (precolonial, colonial, postcolonial), relativized ethno-spatial categories (white and black Africa, etc.), along with identity and sociological categories, and showed a growing interest in the contextualization of concepts deemed common (State, feudalism, slavery, etc.). M'Bokolo (1995) reviews the main patterns of thought and writing in history with an emphasis on the dynamics of history between breaks, continuities and adaptations. He is particularly interested in unwritten internal sources, demonstrating his distrust of conceptual commodities focusing on hypostatized ethnicities or eternal, immobile tradition. The *General History of Africa* has already relativized the usual chronology and ethno-spatial or colonial categories resorting to African toponyms and anthroponyms (Konaté, 2009).

The idea is to drive this indocility to push forward new paradigms. Taking the categorical 'Perspective, Schemas, Concepts' matrix as its starting point, this creative destruction will first consist of variabilizing each of the three terms of the matrix and formulating a set of different hypotheses and interactions between categories of living beings. Perspectives are probably the aspect most discussed

by historians, sociologists and philosophers. Since Blyden and Du Bois (1915), historians and thinkers have put forward the premises for a global history. The perspective of a Global Africa transgresses geographies and fixed temporalities, envisaging circulations rendered invisible by Eurocentric history. We have good grounds for speaking of 'de-continentalization/globalization', of 'denationalization' of African history, and of a series of decentrations: provincialization of Europe, neutralization of Atlantico-centrism, and investment of the diasporas of the so-called Indian Ocean and of Europe (Afro-Turks).

A river metaphor can help us with this perspective, with an original source (Africa) and extended sources (diasporas). Oceans, gorges, nodes, comings and goings animate a historical hydrography made up of circulations, traumas and resilience. A botanical analogy with Glissant's rhizome also works (Glissant, 1995), taking us back to Yai's alternative metaphor, that of a seed.

More generally, the perspective of a single, ethnocentric modernity should fade into insignificance in the face of what Arjun Appadurai (1996) calls plural, hybrid and multiple modernities. Gurminder Bhambra (2014) suggests combining the local, a necessary starting point, with the global concept of 'connected sociologies'. 'Euro-America' could, in some respects, be foreseen, based on contemporary African ethnographic realities (effects of neoliberalism) – what anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff (2012) call 'a theory from the south'.

The angle from which history is viewed shifts from one of an 'extopia' to a reading from the inside as proposed by Ki-Zerbo (1972). Such a reading inevitably summons agency and the scenes through which it invokes its subject, endogenous knowledge, and languages offering arenas for self-production and freedom, even in captivity. All the available or reinvented cultural signifiers contribute to an alternative production of history by the dominated, the subalterns.

One application of this complex perspective connecting the local to the global from the inside is provided by the concept of 'intersectionality' discussed by Kimberlé Crenshaw (Crenshaw, 1995; Hooks, 1981). This Afro-feminist situates the condition of Black women in the United States at the intersection of racism and patriarchal domination – a real epistemological and political blind spot. This central concept as regards Black women's conditions of existence is very much in line with a decolonial viewpoint, from the inside, and a refusal of epistemological racism.

Under the Eurocentric paradigms, 'categories of localization' – time and space, going back to Kagamé (1976) – would be unable to handle a reversal of perspective. The scriptocentrism and its epistemological limitations of the concept of prehistory, already criticized in UNESCO's *General History of Africa*

(GHA), are striking. A certain obsolescence is levelled at the dependence on European written sources: historians are now able to come to reliable conclusions through the use of other sources and techniques that complement them. On a purely historical level, the numerous human and technical innovations achieved by humanity during the so-called prehistoric periods are evidence of a human experience comparable to that of historical times.

The fate of other categories of temporal location – the historical quadripartism of 'Antiquity, Middle Ages, Modern Times, Contemporary Times' – cannot thus be differentiated from that of prehistory. African historicity requires them to be reflexive and evaluable.

In the process of reducing the coloniality of history, spatial categories shift from metropolitan and racial designations (British, French, Belgian and Portuguese African) to seek endogenous toponyms and local and historical entities (Wagadu, Kongo, Kanem Bornou, Wolof, Zulu, etc.).

The issue of revising mapping conventions is a sensitive one here, as indicated by the Beninese scholar Bagodo (2015). The role of maps in providing visual enlightenment is a real burden: any technical, topographical, toponymic or graphic deficiencies may accentuate bias in the intelligibility of history. All the more so since, as strategic tools of colonialism, maps offer empirical evidence that does not always speak the language of political decolonization, as argued by James Akerman (2017). Craib (2017, pp. 51-56) argues that the terms 'decolonization' and 'postcolonialism' often risk obscuring the continuums and forms of adjustment by which dominions, far from being abolished, have been maintained and transformed. Using mapping to take up a dissonant discourse with respect to the tropes of independence fits perfectly into the repudiation processes of exogenous or endogenous hyperboles that favour national narratives, official history.

Toponyms – 'ethnonyms', 'anthroponyms' – dwell at the intersection of linguistic, spatial and cartographical issues. UNESCO's GHA 'Studies and documents' series devoted a whole volume to the issue of their relationship to history (UNESCO, 1984), revealing the heuristic promise of African onomastics. The exteriority (mainly Arabic and European) and internal or hybrid corruptions of place names and ethnonyms also constitute a set of epistemological obstacles identified and proposed for revision by authors such as Cheikh Anta Diop, Pathé Diagne, Mohamed El Fasi, Olabiyi Yai and Pierre Alexandre.

The meanings and interpretations of indigenous names for the places that feature in history make it possible to relate them to a body of contradictory narrative sources, favouring deep-rooted narrations of subjected Africans.

Toponyms and ethnonyms as names of places and peoples, thus identity and structure, are intertwined in the endogenous conceptualizations necessary for any narrative. Indigenous languages, described by Kagamé (1976) as living encyclopaedias and memories of institutions, the epigraphic inscriptions Moraes Faria held so dear, along with local writings (Ajami, Osmania, Nsibidi, etc.) and material culture understood from the inside, all induce a decolonial conceptualization. Looking at conceptualization and definitions/redefinitions as problems to be investigated is essential to African history. Cissoko (1985) and Verdier (1985) insist on the endogenous concepts of African political, legal and social institutions, such as mansaya (royalty in the Manden), along with conceptual innovation as a way of short-circuiting the traps of histories already written elsewhere – feudalism, polytheism, etc. The difficulties of these conceptualizations mean that significant areas of indefiniteness or ambiguities remain: traditions, cultures, identities, development, African Christians or Muslims, etc. are terms that do not always have a self-evident meaning in the contemporary African sociological context.

Here it is important to mention Cheikh Anta Diop's fruitful approach to telling this history based on the meanings and internal intentions of Africans themselves, hoping to escape the ubiquity of Eurocentrism. Théophile Obenga (1990) continued in this vein by accessing direct sources of ancient Egypt, comparing hieroglyphs to other African languages. This approach can also be likened to Alexis Kagamé's desire to found an African philosophy based on the linguistic categories specific to its peoples. These pathways have a common volition, embodying a loophole, an African alternative to Eurocentrisms.

Conceptual deconstruction will always be necessary to limit the Eurocentric leaking of discourse and ensure the intelligibility of imported abstractions concerning the concepts of state, society, market, family, slavery, etc. It completes the process of reconceptualization in the mindset of those involved, making the interpretative dimension of histories reliable. The 'mansaya' concept of royalty in the ancient Manden (Tata Cissé and Wâ, 2009), the 'xeer' ethical code of the Somali pastoralists (Moussa-Iyé, 2014), the Mandingo 'sanankuya' or its fang-beti cousin the 'avuso' find a natural place in decolonial narrations. Pierre Legendre (2014) discusses this issue and its localities in his *Tour du monde des concepts*.

Methodology is an essential schema that brings together the procedure and formal protocols for producing history. Its arrangements, internal rules and silences also result in a certain orientation of the historical discourse. It has maintained the hopes of the GHA faced with a barrage of myths, with historians refusing to endorse racism vis-à-vis African sources. Internal and

external writings, or rehabilitated oral narratives (Vansina, 1961), combine with sources that have been unearthed, including more archaeology, linguistics and interdisciplinarity to bring them together. Toyin Falola (2003) calls upon archaeology to be considered in addition to documentary sources and not limited to verification but used in association with other sources to propose working hypotheses. Indeed, archaeology works on ritual sources, representations today considered artistic, and so many artefacts indispensable for an objectification of subjective processes in historical societies. Silencing the voice of objects in this context is another form of epistemicide.

Economic sources could help overcome certain biases concerning the slave trade (Eric Williams, Inikori), colonial history (Walter Rodney) and social history. Edmondson (1985) makes an important point about the contribution of non-academic intellectuals and thinkers in relation to the Caribbean (Padmore, C. L. R, James, etc.), an observation which is also valid for Africa, and which reassesses the quality of non-academic sources.

The so-called regressive methodology in history, which consists of using the present as a starting point to retrieve or understand certain past states, also lends itself to the narratives of a history of the diasporas, or recent migrations. It could also reveal certain blind spots in African and diasporic sociabilities. Care must nevertheless be taken to eliminate anachronisms and illusions of continuity.

Finally, the evolution of sciences and techniques, palaeoenvironment, paleogenomics, offer heuristic possibilities as shown by Holl's new summary (2017) of Bantu expansion. The decolonization of history could be understood as transforming the fixed entities of reasoning moulded by history-prejudice, coloniality and the ubiquity of Eurocentrism into variables. It is adopting and reinventing the perspectives of subjected Africans, subverting the convenient categories of colo-centred time, ethno-racial space or imperial border setting. It potentially transforms a sociology of absences (Boaventura Santos, 2014) in the history of subalterns. From it, other narratives of another globality of another Africa are able to emerge, drawing upon an African imaginative mindset. These indisciplines and subversions include endogenous sources to call upon, along with the evolution of science.

Table 2. *Categorical table of an epistemological turn*

Age of Scientific History 1950/60-1990?*	Decolonization of history 1990- ?
Africa-Coloniality, contested eurocentrism	Epistemological break with the past? Decolonial turning point?
PARADIGM	
Africa as lagging behind, problem Africa, aid, etc.	Global Africa, diasporas, local/global
PERSPECTIVE	
- Universalist Formalism/Positivism - Eurocentrism disputed - Diffusionism disputed - Historicity	- Pluriversal (diversity)/Rationalities - Dynamics: breaks, continuities, adaptations - Connected histories - local/global - Domination/Resistance/Resilience
SCHEMAS	
Meta-Categories	
- Silences or revisionisms on colonialism, neo-colonialism, resistances, epistemicides, extractivism, etc. - Foreign languages and writings - Biased maps and place names	- Sociology of absences versus silences - Languages, writings, epigraphies and endogenous signifiers brought to the fore - Adjustment of maps - Native place names and ethnonyms
Categories	
- Eurocentric periodization disputed (GHA) - Dominant spatial categories that are not very decolonized (Black, white, sub-Saharan and francophone Africa, etc.)	- Periodization according to thematic focus - Scales of actions and plural temporalities - Africa, diasporas, Indian Ocean, Atlantic, localities, communities, etc.
Methodology	
Internal sources brought to the fore, archaeology, orality, sciences, etc.	Decolonization of external sources, internal, archaeology, linguistics, ritual sources, oralities, non-academic sources, diasporic sources, ecology, genetics, interdisciplinarity, etc.
CONCEPTS	
Representative Concepts	
Modernity, development, dependency, human rights, Third World, identities, ethnicity, nation-states, traditions, Africanization	Criticisms and contextualizations; conceptualization in African languages, deconstructions, provincialization, decentralization, plural modernities, globalization, innovations, etc.
Critical Terminologies	
Underdevelopment, ethnicities, traditions, clans, tribes, family, feudalism, dialects, etc.	Diasporas, emergence, endogenous knowledge, ubuntu, African religions, local languages, innovations, Kurugan Fuga, oriental slave trade, etc.
THEMATIC AREAS	
Identity, independence, underdevelopment, democracy, Atlantic slave trade, colonialism, national and African heroes, cooperation, etc.	China, Asia, Egypt, Renaissance, Pan-Africanism, epistemological break with the past, globalization, environment, sustainable development, genetics, Africa-diaspora circulation, resistance, Structural Adjustment Plan (SAP), etc.

Source: Martial Ze Belinga.

Decolonial radicality, endogeneity and the freeing up of futures

It is no longer possible for history to label Africa an imperfect Europe, a damned cradle abandoned into darkness by humanity, returning only through the diligence of isolated external intermittences quickly swallowed up again by the evil genius of status quo past. Rejecting pejorations and transforming this categorial and conceptual apparatus is a way of gearing up to write and think differently about another Africa – an Africa that is global in a different sense, a diverse Africa, with imaginative arenas that transcend the here and now.

The challenge of liberating historical thought is not, however, limited to decolonization. In relation to the internal biases of Africans and Afro-descendants, it implies a commitment to move beyond all hegemonic libraries, as a matter of principle, whether they derive from dominant Eurocentrism or neo-liberalism. The aim is to broaden the endogenous forces of a narrative still ruled by ancient schemata.

Decolonizing history to free up a framework of intelligibility is necessarily linked to a more global decolonization of dominant thought within the humanities, as well as the place therein for imagination and vectors of endogeneity. On a fundamental level, this decolonial turn cannot be understood without a linguistic shift, without the revivification of endogenous knowledge. Further down the line from historians' immediate preoccupations, each society takes care of the status of science, people and knowledge groups (people deemed important enough by Soundiata Keita, in the thirteenth century, to be mentioned in the Kurukan Fuga). The very definition of the profession of historian and its relationship with knowledge comes into play. In this sense, thinking differently about African history begins with a re-evaluation of this profession. What should historians be held to? Which truths should bind them – those of the past, present, research protocols, those they discover or communicate? These questions cannot be covered in this preliminary reflection, but should nevertheless be noted, especially given their current state of debate among African historians such as Ba Konaré (2006). She observes possible tensions between the functionality of oral narratives, the values defended and the profession of historians following the Western scientific model, which is supposedly axiologically neutral and positivist. By bringing this profession closer to endogenous reference points – cosmogonies, charters, ethical codes, among others – it is possible to extract one or more ways of viewing the wordsmith's trade.

If 'becoming free' or 'becoming self', as Eboussi-Boulaga implored, is the existential horizon for once-colonized populations, and the 'recourse to tradition' as 'critical utopia' makes this more than a cautious memory (Eboussi-Boulaga, 1977, pp. 152, 160, 185), then other non-exclusive missions must be assigned to

historians. It follows, then, that the vocation of history also consists of making the past a resource, as rare and 'debatable' as Arjun Appaduraï (1981) believes this to be. The interest in endogenous knowledge (Houtondji, 1994), and the fight against epistemicides or 'death of knowledge', according to the sociologist Santos (2014), takes us back to the scale of historians' concerns. The science and technology of iron work, artisanal crafts, construction, etc., enshrined in their sociability, thus become salient research subjects for this history. A 'bottom-up' approach to historical subjects guides such work towards social and lineage ties (matrilineage, patrilineage), local and global objects such as African musical instruments that have spread throughout the world (djembe, kora, sanza, etc.), so-called traditional architecture, and so on.

What about an attempt to write a history of the uses of Ubuntu, sanankuya, xeer Issa, mansaya, old judicial institutions, palaver (Bidima, 1997), in socio-political dynamics? The global circulation of African identities reinvented throughout the world – braids, culinary and agrarian techniques, musical canon, the role of syncretic cults in resistance, for example – may carve out a different place for themselves in these historiographical bifurcations.

The same is true of social mobility, survival and prosperity strategies in Africa and the diaspora, using techniques of rotating savings and credit associations, known by various names in West Africa and the diasporas, the most common term probably being Esusu or Susu (Bonnet, 1980). These associations (often of women), readjusted in the diasporas, have succeeded in breaking down financial, gender, class and race segregations, allowing their offspring to rise through the social ranks and access education and credit denied elsewhere.

Contributions are thus being made to an 'ecology of knowledge' – the knowledge of humanity – rendering 'cognitive justice' to Africa and its diasporas, in Shiv Visvanathan's sense of the term (1997). Research themes are being redirected towards knowledge that has been undermined or fallen victim to (bio)piracy (Vandane, 1997), based on African cosmovisions. As a result, new hitherto unthinkable issues are now coming to the fore. Taking our inspiration from the Dogon cosmogony of the water god, Ama, revealed to Marcel Griaule (1948) by the wise old man Ogotemmeêli, we can say the gender of things (male, female), gemellarities of the world, the genealogical approach to history, elder things and younger things, the world from above and below, invisible in historical and contemporary social dynamics. These research themes might, at first glance, appear incongruous, unimaginable in the framework of prejudicatory history.

An example of the expected reversals brought about by embracing these internal perspectives, this ecology of knowledge, is provided by the discourse on

African art. Classifying the sculptural portion of cultural expressions historically dedicated to ritual uses exclusively as 'art' could be likened to an African anthropological regression. Indeed, there is a whole world of imagination built around this meticulous material production aiming to create an arena for conciliation and intercessions between families, lineages and their ancestors, who are invisible but can nevertheless be called upon. This disappears in the formal liturgy of the objects. The reversal of the process would thus consider them signifiers, writings, message-carrying signals and thus testimony to the relationship between two poles of the same humanity.

Indeed, what might appear a legitimate thought and, indeed, historical, is now increasingly being regarded as a product of commercial, or even capitalist, utilitarianism. Once again, we are faced with the silencing of other values, of possible alternatives, such as the quest for harmony between living things, a value or set of values that bring many ancient African peoples very close to the Quechua concept of *sumak kawsay* (*Buen vivir*) in Andean America.

The epistemologist Paul Feyerabend (1979) also warns that it can be vital for science to be 'against the method', i.e. to adopt a pluralist approach to the anarchist limit, open to the most unlikely hypotheses. Haitian voodoo, according to Lévi-Strauss as cited by Feyerabend, has a real material base misunderstood by the West. The precedent of Chinese medicine, long mocked before it was adopted by those who established themselves as the guardians of superior knowledge, can be taken as an epistemological foundation, imparting the pluralistic energy that comes from embracing the diverse, the unusual, the improbable.

The perspective of a history-inquiry into the knowledge of humanity, a history to combat the death of pre-capitalist cultures and knowledge, sees historians as pillars in the reconstruction of this ecology of knowledge so dear to the Portuguese scholar Santos. This is an urgent process of recovering and resuscitating consciousnesses, wisdoms, inventions and sciences from the worlds of yesterday and today, in order to guarantee the pluralities of living beings and future decolonization. This genesis of epistemic plurals, of the largest library of integrated worlds, restored to contemporary consciousnesses – a movement we could call 'epistemogony' (Ze Belinga, 2015) – could form a significant horizon for a pluriversal writing of history.

As part of its innovation and situational case studies, filling gaps in the needs of contemporary societies, such a historical approach should be daring in its openness to hypotheses, modes of induction, causalities and scenarios considered improbable. It should investigate objects deemed insignificant, giving rise to narratives grounded in science, in tune with the needs of existence and dreams of future generations.

Conclusion

The issue of decolonizing the writing of history started, imperceptibly, at the same time that the European expansion absorbed Africa and the world in its narrative. It is now coming under societal and academic pressure to foster new categories of thought, models and concepts, able to express humanity in the widest possible sense. Prejudices, pejorations, selective silences and omnipresent white noise have produced tropes and unthinkable presuppositions in writing that are now under examination. They are being summoned to give way to other relationships, voices, languages, types of archives and inscriptions, in line with reinvented centres of interest. The work of creative destruction has the potential to provincialize a European experience overestimated in the history of humanity, decontinentalizing a Global Africa, decompartmentalized and reconnected to its internal and external dynamics. It thus carries the promise of chapters to be written of a world invested differently, from its initial periods up to the present day; a re-enriched humanity able to re-energize its contemporaries, drawing upon the fountain of social innovations and productions of history, which are probably immeasurably more stimulating than the risks of a haunting, impoverishing Eurocentric commentary.

While the global challenges covering the entire production of knowledge in the human sciences are more vivid, visible and perceivable, the transformation of decolonial expectations into practices of thought and writing is, in comparison, only at a promising starting point, with a daunting task before it. When it comes to the writing of African and diasporic history in accordance with the alternative epistemology sketched out here, it is certain that the Copernican revolution desired by Mohamed Sahli will be accomplished only in the holistic context of a decolonial transformation of African thought. The score played by epistemology will remain dependent on institutional and political factors, as evidenced by the academic revolts in South Africa during the 2010s. Young students vigorously claimed the end of symbols of Apartheid in universities, a transformation of power relations and a radical change in curricula to embrace the teaching of indigenous African languages, history and humanities. In spite of these limitations, and perhaps also because of them, the profound need for another history is being felt. It is as if the expectation of 'miraculous weapons' (Césaire, 1946) revealed to the younger generations, were being crystallized, heralding the resumption of an abortive impulse.

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CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORY OF AFRICA IN THE DIASPORA

Epistemological and Ideological Barriers

Yoporeka Somet

'What was most difficult for the Ancients was to change the law. For the Moderns, it is to change mores, and for us the real difficulty begins where Antiquity's ended. This stems from the fact that for the Moderns, the immaterial and transitory fact of slavery combines in the most disastrous way with the material and permanent fact of racial difference. The memory of slavery dishonours the race, and race perpetuates the memory of slavery.'

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*[1]

The weight of prejudice

The Western view of Africa is still largely imbued with prejudices and clichés[2] that are rather devaluing and reductive. Having come such a long way, this image tends to perpetuate itself. Admittedly, it is not enough simply to note its links to the continent's recent history, with its long centuries of

1 The entire last chapter (Chapter X) of Volume 1 is devoted to the problems posed by coexistence and to the 'probable future of the three races that inhabit the territory of the United States'. Tocqueville examines this issue with great foresight.

2 These clichés, delivered in a broad and sweeping fashion, are in reality often contradictory, at least if applied to Whites themselves. The Blacks are thus described as 'childish' but also 'lewd', 'ugly' but 'happy', 'lazy' but 'servile', 'vain' but 'cowardly', 'indolent' but 'obsequious', etc.

slavery and the slave trade (Eastern and Transatlantic), the dark days of colonial rule and the racist ideology they churned out. It is still necessary to explain the intellectual and ideological mechanisms that cemented this image of Africa, and Black people in general, at the turn of the nineteenth century. This, indeed, had a dual inhibiting effect, paralysing both the present and projection into the future. Moreover, it tended to render obsolete any plans to reconnect with the times prior to the Arab-Muslim and European episodes. It is impossible to understand the difficulties encountered by African historians wishing to reconnect with the continent's precolonial[3] past if we neglect this fact. A fortiori, it would be even more difficult to understand the hostilities faced by Afro-descendants in the diasporas, in America and in the Antilles.

This study aims to take stock of the epistemological and ideological obstacles that have plagued the writing of a history of Africa, particularly in a context where Black men were immediately perceived and defined as ahistorical beings. The idea that they had no past was a direct result of the memory of their recent slavery, as Tocqueville so aptly describes in the excerpt quoted above.

The perception of Blacks and Africa in the Western world

More than any other discipline perhaps, European philosophy has provided the bulk of the conceptual apparatus for conceiving of, and ultimately expelling, Blacks from the frontiers of humanity and human dignity (Plumelle-Uribe, 2001 and 2008). This dehumanization was so well constructed that it still has a bearing on the entire African continent as the Blacks' natural habitat.

To name but a few of the most eminent thinkers, the German philosopher Emmanuel Kant (1724-1804), who is reputed never to have left his hometown of Königsberg, was nevertheless able to write about Africans as follows, in a work dated 1764:

> The Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above the trifling. Mr. Hume challenges anyone to cite a single example in which a Negro has shown talents, and asserts that among the hundreds of thousands of blacks who are transported elsewhere from their countries, although many of them have even been set free, still

3 Ancient Egypt is not, moreover, the only area in which the work of the Blacks is contested. This also occurs in relation to other, more recent, cultural and/or artistic achievements, such as Great Zimbabwe (formerly attributed to the Phoenicians), Nok, Ife (attributed to the Greeks, notably by Léo Frobenius), and even the fortress of Loropéni, in Burkina-Faso (attributed, from the outset, to mythical Portuguese navigators). In retrospect, this indeed facilitates our understanding of the obstinacy and strength of the disputes on the Black African origin of the Egyptian civilization of the pharaohs.

> not a single one was ever found who presented anything great in art or science or any other praiseworthy quality, even though among the whites some continually rise aloft from the lowest rabble and through superior gifts earn respect in the world. So fundamental is the difference between these two races of man, and it appears to be as great in regard to mental capacities as in colour… The Blacks are very vain but in the Negro's way, and so talkative that they must be driven apart from each other with thrashing (Kant, 1980 [1764], pp. 505-506).

Since Kant refers to the authority of the Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711-1776), it is relevant to look into the latter's view of African Blacks. In the 1753 edition of his work *Of National Characters*, Hume expresses his feelings about Blacks in general, not only as individuals but also as a people:

> I am apt to suspect the negroes, and in general all the other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient Germans, the present Tartars, have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of men. Not to mention our colonies, there are Negroe slaves dispersed all over Europe, of whom no one ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity; though low people, without education, will start up amongst us, and distinguish themselves in every profession. In Jamaica, indeed, they talk of one negroe as a man of parts and learning; but it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments, like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly (Hume, 1986, p. 208).

The extract quoted from Kant passes over an essential aspect on which the Scottish philosopher nevertheless insists: the fact that, as a people, the Blacks have never produced anything big, beautiful and sustainable: no form of government, no works of art or ingenuity, no theory worthy of the name, no technical or scientific achievements. Similarly, on an individual level, not a single Black man could rise to the level of the crudest white man, not even that 'Jamaican Negroe' who, according to Hume, was no better than a parrot. But who, then, was this man, and why is his name not mentioned? Hume was unlikely not to have known the identity of

Francis William,[4] his contemporary. In the same vein, we would expect Kant to have been aware of Anton Wilhelm Amo (Somet, 2016), the learned philosopher who studied law (Halle) and philosophy (Wittenberg) before teaching this discipline at institutions such as Halle and Jena in the eighteenth century. In addition, Amo was one of the founders of the German Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*), a current of thought of which Kant would also be one of the most prominent representatives.

Following on from Hume and Kant, Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel (1770-1831) went even further, opening another front: denying that the Egypt of the pharaohs was geographically and culturally an African country. In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History,* we read:

> Africa proper, as far as History goes back, has remained — for all purposes of connection with the rest of the World — shut up; it is the Gold-land compressed within itself — the land of childhood, which lying beyond the day of self-conscious history, is enveloped in the dark mantle of Night. Its isolated character originates, not merely in its tropical nature, but essentially in its geographical condition… The second portion of Africa is the river district of the Nile — Egypt; which was adapted to become a mighty centre of independent civilization, and therefore is as isolated and singular in Africa as Africa itself appears in relation to the other parts of the world… Egypt will be considered in reference to the passage of the human mind from its Eastern to its Western phase, but it does not belong to the African Spirit. What we properly understand by Africa, is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature, and which had to be presented here only as on the threshold of the World's History (Hegel, 1987, pp. 75-80).[5]

'*Africans*', in Hegel's eyes, were neither subjects of history, nor '*historical personages*', creators of civilization, capable of projecting themselves into the

4 It is very curious that Hume refrained from quoting the name of this Jamaican Black man, of whom it is impossible that he had no direct knowledge, which would have allowed contemporaries to verify his statements. For this man indeed existed and had a name: the mathematician and black poet Francis Williams (1700-1771), a Cambridge graduate. His personal story goes against Hume's main thesis. The Duke of Montagu, then governor of Jamaica, wanted to check whether, placed in the same social conditions, a black child was capable of the same intellectual performance as a white child: the result obtained did not quite correspond to the vision of the world previously elaborated by Hume. See the following works and writings on this figure: L'Abbé Grégoire, *De la littérature des Nègres ou recherches sur leurs facultés intellectuelles, leurs qualités morales et leur littérature* (1808), introduction and notes by Jean Lessay, Paris, Perrin, 1991, pp. 235-245; Richard H. Popkin, *The Third Force in Seventeenth-century Thought*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1992, pp. 70-71; Robert Palter, 'Hume and Prejudice', in *Hume Studies*, Vol. XXI, No. 1, April 1995, pp. 3-23; John Immerwahr, 'Hume's Revised Racism', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1992), pp. 481-486; Aaron Garett, 'Hume's Revised Racism Revisited', *Hume Studies*, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, April 2000, pp. 171-177.

5 This text can be considered a kind of testament since it was actually a lecture given by the author in 1830, a year before his death, reflecting the essence of his thinking on universal history. The same text was published in a slightly different format, with the title *Reason in History: A General Introduction to the Philosophy of History* (French translation, *La raison dans l'histoire. Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire*, by Kostas Papaioannou, Paris, Christian Bourgois, collection 10/18, pp. 247 and following).

future: they existed only in the moment, in '*its immediacy*', with no past or future. On this precise point, Fanon brilliantly demonstrates how colonial ideology, which also tended to deny colonized subjects any historicity, would go on to disfigure and annihilate the past of the colonized peoples:

> Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it. This work of devaluing pre-colonial history takes on a dialectical significance today. When we consider the efforts made to carry out the cultural estrangement so characteristic of the colonial epoch, we realize that nothing has been left to chance and that the total result looked for by colonial domination was indeed to convince the natives that colonialism came to lighten their darkness. The effect consciously sought by colonialism was to drive into the natives' heads the idea that if the settlers were to leave, they would at once fall back into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality… The contention by colonialism that the darkest night of humanity lay over pre-colonial history concerns the whole of the African continent. The efforts of the native to rehabilitate himself and to escape from the claws of colonialism are logically inscribed from the same point of view as that of colonialism. The native intellectual who has gone far beyond the domains of Western culture and who has got it into his head to proclaim the existence of another culture never does so in the name of Angola or of Dahomey. The culture which is affirmed is African culture (Fanon, 1991, pp. 255-257).

This is the intellectual and ideological context in which African historians have struggled to rekindle an African past freed from the blinkers of colonial ideology. It is now appropriate to turn our attention to the way in which this debate has taken place across the Atlantic.

The perception of Blacks in the diaspora and barriers to writing a history of Africa

In his analysis of the issue of race in the United States of America, the French philosopher and politician Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1858) focuses on the Black population. In contrast, he handles the native American population as a marginal or non-existent issue. Indeed, according to him:

> The Indians will perish in the same isolated condition in which they have lived; but the destiny of the negroes is in some measure interwoven with that of the Europeans. These two races are attached to each other without intermingling, and they are alike unable entirely to separate or to combine. The most formidable of all the ills which threaten the future existence of the Union arises from the presence of a black population upon its

> territory; and in contemplating the cause of the present embarrassments or of the future dangers of the United States, the observer is invariably led to consider this as a primary fact (Tocqueville, 1986 [1836], pp. 498-499).

Without directly justifying slavery or the servitude of Black men and women, he limits himself to describing the reality observed during his stay in 1831-1832, then coldly analysing its subsequent development. It appears impossible for Tocqueville to conceive of the white race and the Black race existing on an equal footing, not just in America but anywhere at all (p. 520).[6] He puts forward two main reasons for this, with reference to the specific situation of the United States (p. 503):

1. The more the Black population ceases to be slaves, the greater the prejudice with which they are repelled.
2. The more inequality is countered by the law, the more it grows in people's hearts.

To appreciate the full extent of the task at hand, we must keep these philosophico-sociological considerations in mind, to which will be added other conclusions drawn from science or inherited from some of Europe's great minds. Indeed, based on the philosophical theses already mentioned, great European scientists such as anatomist Georges Cuvier (1769-1832), naturalist and biologist Georges-Louis Leclerc, Count of Buffon (1707-1788) and surgeon and anthropologist Paul Broca (1824-1880), all of whom were French, along with Swedish naturalist Carl von Linné (1707-1778), would use the data from their respective sciences to conclude that Blacks were inferior to whites.

This 'scientific' side of the argument on the racial inferiority of Blacks was particularly prevalent in the United States, where it found favour among proponents of physical anthropology, an emerging discipline. Such individuals included Louis Agassiz (1807-1873) and, in particular, Samuel George Morton (1799-1851). The great naturalist Louis Agassiz was born in Switzerland and emigrated to the United States in the 1840s. He was recruited by Harvard, where he created and managed the Comparative Zoology Museum until his death in 1783. George Morton was born in Philadelphia and first studied medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, followed by Edinburgh University in Scotland, before returning to his home institution as a professor of anatomy.

6 In a footnote, Tocqueville goes on to write: 'This opinion is sanctioned by authorities infinitely weightier than anything that I can say: thus, for instance, it is stated in the *Memoirs of Jefferson* (as collected by M. Conseil), '*Nothing is more clearly written in the book of destiny than the emancipation of the blacks; and it is equally certain that the two races will never live in a state of equal freedom under the same government, so insurmountable are the barriers which nature, habit, and opinions have established between them.*'

In, *The Mismeasure of Man* (Gould, 1997), the biologist and science historian Stephen Jay Gould[7] has shown how these two scientists were the true founders of polygenism and thus also of 'scientific' racism in the United States. Indeed, while monogenism traces a single (African) origin of the human species, polygenism will, on the contrary, attribute a different ancestor to each of the human 'races' (white, yellow and black), thus acting as a 'scientific' foundation for the existence of distinct human species, with hereditary cognitive abilities that vary significantly from one race to another.[8] This leads on to the conclusion that there is a biologically based correlation between intellectual capacity, moral qualities and delicacy of feeling, on the one hand, and skin colour, skull shape, hair texture, etc., on the other. White becomes synonymous with beauty, goodness and rationality, while Black symbolizes ugliness, instinct, emotion, stupidity, etc.

Having collected, measured and analysed numerous skulls (over 600[9]), Samuel George Morton prided himself on proving that a large skull meant a large brain and therefore high intellectual or even moral capacities and, conversely, that a small skull indicated a small brain and, consequently, low intellectual, cognitive and moral capacities. These theories, which quickly earned him worldwide fame, are developed in two major works: *Crania Americana, or A comparative view of skulls of various Aboriginal Nations of North and South America. To which is prefixed An Essay on varieties of Human Species*, Philadelphia, 1839 and *Crania Aegyptiaca, or Observations on Egyptian ethnology, derived from anatomy, history and the monuments*, Philadelphia, 1844.

We might wonder why, after having studied skulls found in America, Morton went on to examine nearly one hundred skulls of ancient Egyptians, which he had been able to obtain thanks to the intervention of George Robinson Gliddon,[10]

7 According to the author, 'it is obviously not accidental that a nation still practicing slavery and expelling its aboriginal inhabitants from their homelands should have provided a base for theories that Blacks and Indians are separate species, inferior to whites', Stephen Jay Gould, *La Mal-mesure de l'homme*, *1997*, p. 76. The author shows, moreover, how craniometric measurements were either manipulated or disguised so that they met the expectations of their authors: to prove the biological inferiority of the Black man and superiority of the white male.

8 Cheikh M'Backé Diop, 'Anténor Firmin, Cheikh Anta Diop et Stephen Jay Gould. Notes de lecture sur la genèse du racisme moderne, ses spécificités et sa deconstruction', personal communication. I would like to thank the author for providing me with an unpublished version of his article, which deals, among other issues, with the way in which modern racism disguised and then parasitized the history of humanity, and in particular that of Africa, to such an extent that the Egypt of the pharaohs became detached from the black continent and attached to Asia.

9 In his book, *Crania Aegyptiaca*, Philadelphia, 1844, p. 3, Morton indeed writes: 'I have been enabled to make extensive and satisfactory comparisons by means of nearly six hundred human crania, which form a part of my private anatomical collection'.

10 Speaking of George R. Gliddon, Morton points out that 'he procured one hundred and thirty-seven human crania, of which one hundred pertain to the ancient inhabitants of Egypt', *Crania Aegyptiaca*, 1844, p. 1.

Consul General of the United States in Cairo at the time. The reason is that, for him, Egypt constituted a case study and test of truth. He would thus examine it to confirm the thesis according to which the various human species had always lived apart. Morton thus argued that two main races coexisted during the Pharaonic period: the Caucasian race and the Black race, the former being solely responsible for the ancient Egyptian civilization, while the latter was enslaved, as was still the case at that time. Here, in order, are some of the fifteen main conclusions (Morton, 1844, pp. 65-66) that he reaches at the end of his book, *Crania Aegyptiaca*:

> 1 - The valley of the Nile, both in Egypt and Nubia, was originally peopled by a branch of Caucasian race.
>
> 2 - These primeval people, since called Egyptians, were the Mizraimites of Scripture, the posterity of Ham, and directly affiliated with the Libyan family of nations.
>
> 3 - In their physical character the Egyptians were intermediate between the Indo-European and Semitic races. ...
>
> 8 - The Negroes were numerous in Egypt, but their social position in ancient times was the same that it now is, that of servants and slaves. ...
>
> 15 - The physical or organic characters which distinguish the several races of men, are as old as the oldest records of our species.

Morton also specified that the French scientist Georges Cuvier had previously achieved the same results.[11] Subsequently, his own findings would be corroborated by other research projects, including those conducted under the auspices of Josiah Clark Nott and George Robbins Gliddon. In a voluminous work of more than 700 pages, entitled *Types of Mankind*, Morton's two disciples point out that:

> In the broad field and long duration of Negro life, not a single civilization, spontaneous or borrowed, has existed, to adorn its gloomy past. The ancient kingdom of Meroë has been often pointed out as an exception, but this is now proven to be the work of Pharaonic Egyptians, and not of Negro races (Nott and Gliddon, 1854, p. 52).[12]

This is the intellectual and ideological context in which historians and researchers of black or African descent would attempt to make another voice heard on the history of Africa.

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11 'I have examined in Paris, and in the various collections of Europe', says Cuvier, 'more than fifty heads of mummies, and not one amongst them presented the characters of the Negro or Hottentot', in *Crania Aegyptiaca*, op. cit., p. 20.

12 It is worth mentioning here the full title of this work: *Types of Mankind, or Ethnological Researches based upon the Ancient Monuments, Paintings, Sculptures and Crania of Races, and upon Natural, Geographical, Philological and Biblical History: Illustrated by Selections from the inedited papers of Samuel George Morton, M. D. and by Additional Contribution from Prof. L. Agassiz, LL.D.; W. Usher, M.D.; and Prof. H. S. Patterson, M.D*

Although not the very first to tackle the issue, a Haitian scholar, Joseph Auguste Anténor Firmin (1850-1911), put forward the first structured and argued response dismissing the theses of the polygenic school (which was as American as it was European) piece by piece.

His work, long misunderstood, was unearthed from oblivion at the beginning of the twenty-first century. No other work takes such a clear stance against the racializing theses put forward by the American School of Anthropology at that time. Indeed, we find no such thing either in any of Martin R. Delany's works,[13] nor indeed, thereafter, in those of W. E. B. Du Bois (1946),[14] George J. M. James (1954), or even Chancellor Williams (1987), who nevertheless all refer to ancient Egypt as African and Black.

Anténor Firmin was a lawyer by training and a diplomat by profession, as well as a politician. He arrived in Paris in 1883. Thanks to the help of two fellow doctors, he was elected a full member of the Société d'Anthropologie de Paris (Paris Anthropology Society) in July 1884. At the time, this learned society, founded by Paul Broca in 1859, focused most of its discussion on the 'scientific evidence' for the inequality of human races. This same year, 1884, marked the publication of the second edition of *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (*The Inequality of the Human Races*) by the writer and diplomat Joseph Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882). All this explains Firmin's choice of title for his book: *De l'égalité des races humaines. Anthropologie positive* (*The Equality of Human Races: Positivist Anthropology*) (Firmin, 2003 [1885]). It was published in 1885, only a year after he joined the Anthropology Society, and the year of the Berlin Conference. The book is dedicated to Haiti, expressing the wish that it might 'inspire in all the children of the Black race around this big world the love of progress, justice and liberty. In dedicating this book to Haiti, I bear them all in mind, both the downtrodden of today and the giants of tomorrow.'

This is testimony to how important Firmin regarded this work to be in the context of the Black population's struggle for emancipation. The book is dense in both form and content, and extremely well documented. Firmin discusses an impressive number of authors and texts in various languages: Latin, Greek,

13 In 1879, the African American Martin Robinson Delany had published a work entitled: *Principia of Ethnology: The Origin of Races and Color, with an Archaeological Compendium of Ethiopian and Egyptian Civilization from Years of Careful Examination and Enquiry*, Philadelphia, Harper & Brothers, 1879. In a recent study focusing on this author, African-American Egyptologist Mario Beatty stresses that, although he does not respond directly to Samuel Morton, Delany was perfectly aware of some of George Robbins Gliddon's works, along with those of Josiah Clark Nott on ancient Egypt (Mario H. Beatty, 'Martin Delany and Egyptology', *Ankh* No. 14/15, 2004-2006, p. 78-99).

14 Chapters IV, V and VI relate directly or indirectly to ancient Egypt.

French, English, German, Italian. This testifies to his great erudition and exceptional capacity for work. He is also well informed about the most recent works on ancient Egypt. He thus explicitly refers to the *Grammaire égyptienne* by Jean-François Champollion, to whom he pays homage in these terms:

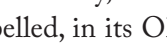
> We must praise Champollion's genius. He deserves immortal fame not only for having revealed ancient Egypt to the European world by deciphering the hieroglyphics, but also for having understood at first sight and with his characteristic profound intelligence, that the Egyptian and Ethiopian peoples were one and the same race, with a common language, the same skin colour and identical physical traits (Firmin, 2003 [1885], p. 205).

We have already discussed the whole issue of ancient Egypt in the race inequality debate. It is therefore not surprising that the most structured response against this point of view also focuses on this civilization. Egypt is indeed present throughout Firmin's work. In particular, Chapter IX is entirely devoted to the country of the pharaohs, with a twofold aim: to affirm the primacy and excellence of this civilization, and then to place it in its Black African geographical, linguistic and cultural context. This chapter's title, 'Egypt and Civilization' is thus followed by a phrase by Champollion, affirming that 'Egypt is wholly African, not Asian' (p. 203).

Those who declared that the Black race was inferior to all others were required to prove the ongoing validity and perpetual nature of this fact, i.e. to demonstrate that it continued to be true, as it had always been in history. Firmin argues that this opinion is contradicted by the true history of the African continent, especially during its Pharaonic period, thanks in particular to the decisive contribution of Jean-François Champollion. Firmin goes on to endeavour to refute the pseudo-scientific theses of the scientists forming what he calls 'the whole proud and arrogant phalanx of those who proclaim that the Black man is destined to serve as a stepping stone for the White man in his quest for power' (Firmin, 2003 [1885], p. 139). Such figures include Morton, Renan, Broca, Carus, Quatrefages, Büchner and Gobineau. He nevertheless reserves a direct response for Samuel George Morton:

> The American scholar Samuel Morton, who promoted with such perseverance the theory of polygenism of which he was the leading expert, was also the first to transform into a scientific doctrine the mistaken opinion that the ancient populations of Egypt had belonged to the White race. In his *Crania Ethnica*, he strove to demonstrate that the study of the cranial configuration of the *Retous* resembled more the White type than the Black type. His immense erudition, a rigorous and recognized methodology, but above all the general propensity of Europeans to attribute only to their own race

> every great and beautiful thing ever accomplished on earth, made people accept his ideas without questioning them (Firmin, 2003 [1885], p. 206).

Thanks to his precise, in-depth knowledge of the ancient Egyptian civilization, he then proceeds with his argument based on a series of facts, leading to the conclusion that ancient Egypt is of African character. He begins by naming the country, in the language of the pharaohs: *Kmt* (p. 204), written as follows in hieroglyphics:  Kemet, Black, Negro, or the Black Country, like Black Africa. He does not fail to point out that nowhere else in the world is the adoption of the colour black so general and consistent as in Egypt (p. 223). He then names its inhabitants, once again in the language of the country: *Retous* (p. 206). This reading of the hieroglyphic word:  , with its variant was not incorrect in 1885. Today, we know thanks to the *Pyramid Texts*, that the same word was thus spelled, in its Old Kingdom long version:  with the variant  (Faulkner, 1972, pp. 149-150), thus revealing the presence of a phonogram 'm', between the 'r' and the 't', giving us the reading rmT (*remetch*). Usually translated as 'the Egyptians', this word actually means 'human beings', 'people', 'men'. Other words were used to designate the Egyptian people:  *Kemet* (Faulkner, 1972, p. 286) or indeed  *Kemtiyu* (Erman and Grapow, III, p. 128; see also, C. Anta Diop, 1980, pp. 39-72), words that literally mean 'Blacks', 'Negroes'. Finally, these last two terms have the common root  *kem* (Faulkner, 1972, p. 286), meaning 'charcoal', 'black'.

Turning to the linguistic argument, he reiterates Champollion's recommendation of the Coptic intermediary for the reading of the ancient Egyptian language. Similarly, he rightly links the Egyptian language to the Nilotic group and remarks upon its close link with *Kanuri*, a language spoken in Bornu (p. 210).

He goes on to examine the flora and fauna of ancient Egypt, focusing initially on the first papyrus, the country's heraldic plant, still abundant beside the lakes and rivers of Nubia, Abyssinia and Sudan. He then cites three animals worshipped by the ancient Egyptians: the ancient greyhound, black ibis and sacred scarab (p. 216). As regards material culture, he uses an emblematic object, the chevet (Lam, 2003),[15] as evidence to confirm the Ethiopian origin of the Egyptian civilization (p. 217), once again a very pertinent use of intuition. Finally, he arrives at the study of the Egyptian monuments, the statuary qualities of which testify to the Black African character of this people. He takes particular care over the transcription of Egyptian names, which are all properly written, demonstrating his solid linguistic knowledge (Obenga,

15 Aboubacry M. Lam dedicated his third cycle Egyptology thesis to this ancient artefact.

2008, pp. 132-145): Râ-mes-sou (p. 207), Kha-f-Râ (p. 218), Râ-hotpou, Nofri-t, Nofri-t-ari (p. 221), Pi-ânkhi-Meri-Amoun (p. 227).

After a series of diverse and varied arguments, never used by the defenders of a white or Caucasian Egypt, Firmin is confident that he has dealt with all the claims of both the American school and all the partisans of polygenism, of which he refutes the craniometric measurements. His conclusion has now been fully confirmed:

> Whatever else may be said, a mortal blow has been struck against Morton's school, Maspero's dogma, and the theories of system-bound anthropologists. Egypt was a country of Negroes, of Black Africans. The black race has preceded all other races in the construction of civilization. It is in the Black race that thought first emerged and human intelligence first awakened (Firmin, 2003 [1885], p. 230).

Conclusion

At the end of this analysis, it would appear that it is not only the history of Africa that needs to be rewritten, but that of humanity too, namely the history of our common history,[16] based on a paradigm shift. In the particular case of Africa, there is a need to expand the ongoing work on the oral tradition, the important written literature of the ancient (Egypt, Nubia, Meroe) and medieval (Timbuktu) periods, as well as archaeological, linguistic and molecular biology data, etc. Anténor Firmin had the perspicacity to foresee all this, imbuing it with a profound meaning in the conclusion of his work, demonstrating that he was a pioneer, very much ahead of his time:

> There will be no question of race, for the word implies a biological and natural fatality which has no correlation with the degree of ability observable among the different human communities spread around the globe. It is no news to anyone today that there are countless Negroes who are much more civilized, intelligent, and educated than most Caucasians (Firmin, 2003 [1885], p. 403).

What is asserted here is not an inversion of the relationship of domination of one race over another, of one people over another. On the contrary, it is the recognition of the unity of our origins and the equality of the human species, whose common ancestor, born in Africa, was naturally African and black. This was the very conclusion reached, in the middle of the twentieth century, by the work of Cheikh Anta Diop (1954, 1967, 1981). Like Firmin,

16 This is the title of the first chapter of a recent book by palaeontologist Michel Brunet entitled *Nous sommes tous des Africains. A la recherche du premier homme*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2016.

the multidisciplinary work of Cheikh Anta Diop also concludes with the affirmation of a monogenetic and African origin of the human species, as well as with the recognition of an autochthonous and African origin of the civilization and people of ancient Egypt. By restoring to the African continent its true past, these two researchers laid the foundations for an objective rewriting of the general history of humanity, free from the yoke of racism. Condemning racist ideology and its misdeeds once and for all, Cheikh Anta Diop echoes Firmin's call for universal brotherhood, beyond the notion of race:

> It is at the level of the phenotype, that is to say, physical appearances, that the notion of race intervenes in history and social relations... So, the problem lies in re-educating our perception of the human being, detaching it from racial appearance so that it focuses on the human, freed from any ethnic coordinates (Diop, 2007 (1981), p. 11-18).

Is this not, ultimately, the challenge and overall goal of restoring the history of Africa and its diasporas around the world?

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CHAPTER 3

THE CONCEPT OF AFRICA AND HISTORY OF AFRICA

Salim Abdelmadjid

Introduction

A text on philosophy in a history book may seem suspect – unless the book is found in the archives – especially when the topic is Africa. The best-known supposedly philosophical conceptualization of Africa (in the absence of historicity) remains that of Hegel. This instance of colonial appropriation of philosophy is also one of its frequent generalizing and anti-empirical misappropriations. Historians must be wary of this, as it diverges from the rigour and singular power of historical science. The latter cannot, nevertheless, escape philosophy, which must take history into account – that is to say, the meaning of historical facts and their narratives, the sense of one's own history and its foundations in history – while retaining its scientific character. Yet philosophy cannot escape historical science either, which must not fail to historicize philosophy, nor integrate it, to the point at which it falls to historians to act as philosophers and ask about their subjects, 'What is it?'

With Africa as their subject, philosophy and history must address that same initial question: What is Africa? Therein lies reciprocal determinism: if we ignore it, we cannot write its history, and if we cannot write its history, we cannot know its history. The historicization of Africa depends on the concept of Africa. To be correctly attempted, it thus requires an accurate concept of

Africa, namely an answer to the question 'What is Africa?' This is accomplished by building an idea relating truly and exclusively to Africa and its name, the development of which is governed by posing a philosophical problem, to which it provides the solution. The conceptualization of Africa depends on a knowledge and an accurate understanding of its history, namely the historical facts relating to what took place in Africa and outside Africa, against, by and for Africans, along with how these have been set out and their historical explanations. The question becomes multi-faceted: 'What is Africa?' And therefore, 'What is the idea of Africa?' 'What does it mean?' 'Where is it located?' 'Since when has it existed?' 'What is an African?'.

To this day, and even in scientific texts, a contradictory plurality persists in the ordinary and indeterminate understanding of Africa, whether geographical (the African continent), racial (Black Africa), demographic (all Africans), or political (the African Union, or a number of States on the continent deemed representative). This would suggest that the question 'What is Africa?' has not yet been adequately answered. A consciousness of reciprocal determinism regarding philosophy and historical science, and their roots in the history of Africa and Africans, both subjected to a long period of oppression and an unfinished liberation, might reveal some of the reasons for this persistence. A knowledge of the outcomes of history and philosophy in Africa over the last fifty years or more would permit an understanding of the possibility of asking the question now, and in such a way that an answer can be found. The history of Africa depends on a clear definition of its subject, and the philosophy of Africa on defining itself. This does not mean setting out a 'world view' of societies situated in Africa (ethnophilosophy), nor the main work of African philosophers – 'rational, theoretical, critical or professional philosophy' (Floistad, 1987) – but rather a philosophy itself in which Africa and Africans are the subjects. The key issues to be faced in formulating the question are: furthering an understanding of the African situation and African self-awareness, and determining, through a concept, the necessary action required to overcome Africa's critical situation.

In a philosophical text within a history book, the reciprocal determinism of philosophy and history in response to the question 'What is Africa?' can only be explained by following the philosophical perspective and making it available to historians. It is a matter of philosophically asking the question 'What is Africa?' in order to philosophically articulate both sides of determinism in the conceptualization and historicization of Africa, not only to explain why the concept of Africa varies according to the history of Africa and vice versa, but also to precisely determine the concept of Africa corresponding to its known

history. Its possible determination of the future historicization of Africa can thus be identified, namely the inseparable nature of Africa's future history of science and the future historical facts of Africa. Which notion of Africa's history does the philosophical position of the question 'What is Africa?' imply?

First and foremost, the methodological requirements of the specific and empirical foundation of Africa's conceptualization require the formal acknowledgement of the historical foundation of the reciprocal determinism of philosophy and history, along with an understanding of this in the current context to craft a genealogy of Africa's conceptualization. It is a question of explaining the consistency in the chronology and the logic of the reciprocal determination of philosophy and history with Africa as the subject and, with this in mind, identifying and linking these moments as possibilities. As these become active, they constitute steps towards the possibility of a correct concept of Africa: moving away from negation through the African historicization of Africa; moving away from the colonial, unhistorical conceptualization of Africa; then moving from this to an analysis of the meaning thus revealed as a historical construct of Africa; and finally towards the conquest of a space for thought where it is henceforth possible to create a concept of Africa.

Colonial concept of Africa and the history of Africa: the philosophy of history

Concepts of Africa exist in the repertoire of modern West-European philosophy that, although they differ according to author and period, share a same discourse (Foucault, 2001), which also evolves, but in which Africa's position does not change: radical negative otherness, anti-European, against which Europe is portrayed as anti-African. Consider the example of Hegel in 1830 (Agossou, 2005; Bidima, 1995; Dieng, 2006; Okonda, 2010) in *Reason in History*:

> What we take the name of Africa to mean in short, is a non-developed, ahistoric world, entirely a prisoner of the natural spirit and whose place is still on the threshold of universal history (Hegel, 1994).

The philosophical aspect of this concept derives from a previously introduced philosophical problem: how to reconcile the universality and clarity of reason with the diversity of its geographical expressions? By reducing the universality of reason to its Western-European expression, Hegel identifies this diversity through a series of stages of human achievement. To reflect the differentiated and tiered

externalization throughout time of reason, which is nonetheless unequivocal and universal, Hegel was driven to form concepts of countries and peoples corresponding to different moments of externalization. Africa corresponded to the first of these, non-externalized reason, due to an absence of historicity. The question 'What is Africa?' had been asked and the answer given was a combination, according to the section dedicated on Africa in *Reason in History,* of the following: a geographical delimitation (Southern Africa) (Hegel, 1994), a historical delimitation (since the 'origins' of time), a demographic delimitation ('blacks') (Hegel, 2012), the formulation of an idea (absence of historicity) and a meaning (the passivity of Africa requiring its external activation).

When framed in this manner, the understanding of Africa's history implied in the question is that it is non-existent. Among the reasons that explain why the question has not been correctly framed, one is an error identified as history-related; another is a fault related to the perception of the humanity of the African. Hegel's error regarding history was at least twofold. First, the critical insufficiency of historians' narratives and sources he took into account and the concept of historical science with which they were associated. Secondly, and indissociably, the anti-empiricism of history, especially through its deconstruction from geography. This deconstruction was achieved through the subordination of geography to history, the synchronic diversity of the former being deferred to the supposed diachronic unity of the latter. This deconstruction, which seemed to Hegel to condition the understanding of the meaning of history, and which was necessary to its conceptualization, to the subjects' matter and identity, actually negates the foundation of these concepts in the reality of history and geography, i.e. its irreducible spatiality (Benoist and F. Merlini, 2001; Grataloup, 2009). In *Reason in History*, he thus claims that, before any geographical characterization of 'Africa per se', 'Africa, as far back as history goes, has always been closed, disconnected from the rest of the world; it is...the land of childhood'.

Yet what 'as far back as history goes' actually means is: back to the point at which our knowledge of it stops. This identification of present-day and historical Africa cannot be founded upon any empirical justification, meaning that the conceptualization loses any cognitive potential. For example, when later citing the invasion of 'hordes of negros (...) in Abyssinia', Hegel asks: 'Was this turmoil provoked by some internal movement and, if so, what was it?' He readily admits: 'We do not know', and goes on to conclude that: 'In this main part of Africa, there cannot be any history as such. What took place was a series of accidents'. The limited information (both qualitatively and quantitively) that Hegel had at his disposal when setting out his reasoning was not enough to

justify his claims. Not only does he explicitly assume his ignorance, he proclaims it to be an additional argument in claiming an absence of African historicity. Rather, it reveals that for Hegel, it is a question of adapting the reality of Africa to its system, already conceived, and to the colonial discourse in which it is built. Hegel's fault as far as Africans are concerned, consists of the separation and hierarchization of closed human groups whose unification can only come from the anthropological conversion of those who, according to him, realize humanity the least in relation to those who realize it the most. There is a link between error and fault. The methodological flaw makes the discursive environment of his reasoning – colonialism – which initially made it seem acceptable to lack rigour, all the more contagious. Hegel legitimized slavery, and his concept, far from being philosophical, could only ever be effective as a discursive tool (that is to say, a concept replicating the discourse within the environment in which it was formulated), which, when subjected to the world order, he reinforced.

Faced with such a discourse, the first challenge to exposing the historicity of Africa was practical. This would contribute to exposing the humanity of Africans, thus off-setting the discursive effect of affirming Africa's absence of historicity and theoretically structuring a plan of action with a view to its liberation. The same would apply to historical science, scrutinizing the methodology and faults revealed by its inapplicability to Africa and, indeed, to philosophy. The Hegelian affirmation of Africa's absence of historicity was more of an avowal of the absence of historicity in his own philosophy of history – the fact that such a lack of historical foundation made considering history impossible. Exposing Africa's historicity requires philosophy to examine critically its general methodology in order to make it available, in particular, to the empiricism, spatiality and 'eventuality' of historical facts. For these three challenges – practical, historical, philosophical – the erroneous deconstruction of history and geography by Hegel indicates a negative need to always consider the geographicity of Africa which, as it involves geopolitics, also involves geohistory and geophilosophy.

African history of Africa and the concept of Africa: a problematic unity

The radical criticism of the colonial conceptualization of Africa by the absence of historicity could only have been the product of history itself, with its dual sense of facts and narrative, that is to say, by both the historical exposure of African history and the historical fight for the liberation of Africa. It is therefore historically

and philosophically consistent that the African history of Africa was definitively written during the periods of independence, as recorded by historians such as Ki-Zerbo (1972) and continued shortly afterwards by the African community of historians in monographs such as UNESCO's *General History of Africa* (GHA) (Ki-Zerbo, 1980), and *The Cambridge History of Africa* (Fage and Oliver, 1975-1986). Ki-Zerbo's *Histoire de l'Afrique noire* (1972) is a good illustration of this. When undertaking this work in 1962, he was confronted with the negation of Africa's historicity and its historiographical method: the history of Africa had been mostly written by Europeans and based on European sources, and the criteria of historicity were determined according to what the history of Europe had been. The affirmation of Africa's historicity is therefore inextricably linked to the epistemological renewal of history and the indivisibility of the politicality and scientificity of historical science applied to Africa. An African history of Africa was a political act in itself – a manifestation of the politicality of history itself, the reflexivity of which produced the kind of knowledge that could transform the situation. Ki-Zerbo explained this from the outset by emphasizing this extract from Lumumba's last letter to his wife: 'One day, history will have its say ... Africa will write its own history.' This quotation is a sign of political positioning only insofar as it attests to the politicality of history: Lumumba's formula, which made history, reveals the political nature of history by clarifying the ambiguity that defines it. Fact and narrative coexist, and all historical transformations take place and reference each other according to this reciprocity.

The political power of *Histoire de l'Afrique noire* lay in its scientific rigour. The practical and theoretical difficulties of the task were evident, given the size of the subject and the prejudice encountered in the 1960s. These were further complicated by the limited number of written sources and chronological references in Africa relative to other areas, and by the fact that the period of colonization had corresponded with the domination of the positivist school of European historiography, linking the objectivity of the historical narrative to the scripturality of the source and its dating. An epistemological modification was, however, taking place, with which an articulation was possible to produce the methodological renewal necessary for the study of African history. Ki-Zerbo presented it in these terms: 'Fewer and fewer authors and readers of history take an interest in history that historicizes dates of battles and years of reign. History wants to embrace the breadth and depth of the river of human evolution' (1972, p. 16).

He was referring in particular to the work of the Annales school (l'école des Annales), and took up Bloch's criticism of the positivist school, as summarized by Le Goff:

> What Bloch did not accept in his master Seignobos, the main representative of "positivist" historians, was to start the historian's work only with the collection of facts, whereas an essential earlier phase requires the historian to be aware that the historical fact is not a "positive" datum, but the product of an active construction on his part to transform the source into a document and then to constitute these documents, these historical facts in question (Le Goff in Bloch, 2005, pp. 12-13).

Historical fact as a problem requires it to be situated in its historical context. In order to do this, the economic activities and social and cultural organizations on which it is based must be considered in the long term. The methodological corollary of this epistemological premise is interdisciplinarity: integrating other sciences into historical research, starting with that of the human and social sciences. To combine the epistemological necessity of structuring these sciences and the spatio-temporal importance of his subject, Africa 'since its beginnings', Ki-Zerbo (1972) adopts the theory of three-tiered plans put forward by Braudel in *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*. Braudel, in prefacing *Histoire de l'Afrique noire,* signals its success: from the first chapter, 'Prehistory: Africa, the Patrimony of Mankind', to the third, 'The Dark Centuries', history is 'almost motionless, that of man in his interactions with his environment' (Braudel, 1979, p. 16). From Chapter 4, 'Sub-Saharan Africa from the 7th to the 12th Century: From Kingdoms to Empires', to Chapter 9, 'The Invasion of a Continent: Africa Snatched from Africans', history is 'slow-paced, that of groups and groupings'; and from Chapter 10, 'The Golden Age of Foreigners' to the last chapter, 'African Problems Today', history is 'traditional history…the history of events'. This tiering makes it possible to organize interdisciplinarity: archaeology, physical anthropology and physical geography, for example, are very useful in the first tier; sociology and linguistics in the second; political economics and cultural anthropology in the third. Rather than 'juxtaposed multidisciplinarity', which would make the historical limits of each discipline insurmountable, Ki-Zerbo explains (in Chapter 15, 'The Interdisciplinary Methods Adopted in this Study') in *Methodology and African Prehistory*, the first volume of the GHA, that he practises 'an interdisciplinarity by grafting together various approaches', on the presumption that social life is multidimensional. These results definitively contradict the colonial conceptualization and the philosophy of history

to which it is subject. Annulling the concept of history is one example: to follow an anthropological argument, humans were already human when the written word first appeared, so it is therefore senseless to reduce history, that is human history, to the period after the appearance of writing; to follow a relativist argument, defining prehistory amounts to considering societies in which writing is not used as ahistorical, that is, a human; to follow an epistemological argument, it is possible to scientifically study oral history, which must therefore be integrated into the historical narrative in the same way that humanity that speaks without writing must be included. To follow a strictly historical argument, defining prehistory abstractly reduces the influence on 'historical' humanity of 'prehistoric' humanity, which is even more critical in the case of Africa since the land corresponding to it was the theatre of universally decisive technical and sociocultural changes for the first hundreds of thousands of years of humanity. Finally, to follow a political argument, reducing this period to prehistory is ideological, and minimizes the universal acknowledgment of Africa's contribution to humanity. The reminder (notably in Chapter V of *Histoire de l'Afrique noire*, 'Grands siècles'), that African societies were relatively viable economically before slavery and colonization is a second example, which makes it impossible to use Africans' inability to support themselves as an argument to justify colonization or explain Africa's current difficulties, and makes it necessary to acknowledge the consequences of slavery and colonization, and therefore the responsibility of Europe and America up to the present day. The reminder that different African regions maintained key relationships with other regions of the world, South Asia via the Indian Ocean, the Arabic peninsula via the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, is a third example which invalidates Hegel's claim that Africa was a closed continent, cutting itself off from the spirit of the world. Yet another example is the reminder that the Sahara is not a border, which renders any geographical legitimization of the racial division of Africa between Black and white absurd. Furthermore, the title chosen by Ki-Zerbo for his work paradoxically represents a call against such a division. He specifies in his preface that the history of Africa can only be concluded when 'a systematic study of Northern Africa' has taken place. The results of *L'Histoire de l'Afrique noire* justifies that the publication was received as a technical contribution to historical methodology and a theoretical contribution to the definition of historical science, which leads him to insist on the diversification of historians' skills, their association with representatives of other disciplines and the singularity of research methods according to the subject studied.

A philosophical reflection on the *Histoire de l'Afrique noire* is possible, for a specifically historical reason explained by Ricœur at the beginning of *Histoire et vérité*, under the heading 'Objectivity and Subjectivity in History':

> We expect...history to allow access to the pasts of human societies with [the] dignity of objectivity. That does not mean that this objectivity is that of physics or biology: there are as many levels of objectivity as there are methodical behaviours. We therefore wait for history to add a new province to the varied empire of objectivity.
>
> This expectation implies another: we expect *historians* to have a certain quality of subjectivity, not just any subjectivity, but a subjectivity precisely adapted to the objectivity appropriate to history. It is a question of *implied* subjectivity, implied by the objectivity expected.
>
> We therefore suspect that there exists good and bad subjectivity, and we expect a separation between good and bad subjectivity, through the very exercise of the profession of historian.
>
> That is not all: under the banner of subjectivity, we expect something more important than the historian's good subjectivity; we expect history to be the history of mankind and… to help the reader, informed by the history of historians, to build up high levels of subjectivity, not only one's own subjectivity, but that of mankind.
>
> However, this interest, this expectation – through history – of a passage from oneself to mankind, is not exactly epistemological, but strictly philosophical: because it is the *subjectivity of reflection* we expect from reading and contemplating historical works; this interest already no longer concerns the historian who wrote the history, but the reader - especially the philosophical reader – the reader in whom any book, any work, finds its end, at its risk and peril.
>
> Such will be our path: from the objectivity of history to the subjectivity of the historian; from one and the other to philosophical subjectivity (Ricœur, 1955).

Histoire de l'Afrique noire exemplifies 'implied subjectivity by expected objectivity' in a paradigmatic manner. Such an implication, based on the foundation of research in the situation of independence, has allowed events to be organized around the historicity of Africans, by making their history, thus 'constructing' a high level of subjectivity, the subjectivity ... of mankind', giving rise to 'a subjectivity of reflection'. The understanding of the world and humanity that required an absence of history in Africa is invalidated by its historicity, and humanity's consciousness of itself is thereby radically altered. The African consciousness of Africa is also transformed, deepening its consciousness of itself as African. The historical unification of Africa presupposes and, at the same time, promotes Africa's situational unity. It can therefore be conceived as a guiding thread in this situation, which Ki-Zerbo, an independentist and pan-Africanist, has moreover consistently followed and embodied.

In *Histoire de l'Afrique noire*, at least three elements allow for this interpretation: first, the subtitle, *D'hier à demain* (From Yesterday to Tomorrow); second, the setting out of the various periods by chapter; and third, the fact that Africa is thus considered as a whole unit. This latter point is problematic in two respects: synchronously, since Africa, however it is understood, is diverse; and diachronically, since the construction of what is now Africa began in the fifteenth century (implying a need to justify the integration of what was not Africa prior to that period). In relation to the first issue, the most important terms in the subtitle are probably not 'yesterday' and 'tomorrow' as much as the prepositions 'from' and 'to': does a sense of African history exist? No, if this means that it must be effectuated. Any historian of Africa who notes the transformation caused by the European invasion is conscious of the contingency of historical fact. (Ki-Zerbo gives his sixth chapter, in which he discusses 'the first contact with Europeans and the slave trade from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries' the title 'Le Tournant' (the Turning Point).) 'From Yesterday to Tomorrow' presupposes that a contingent fact can be determinant, however long the interval, shaping conditions up to the present day and beyond into the future. This does not constitute 'the meaning of history' but the possibility of *a conditional* meaning of *a particular* history.

Secondly, considering how the various periods were set out by chapter, it would seem that, in contrast to Braudel's tiered plans, which are quite equally split, the periods themselves are not: the first three chapters (64 pages) of the book cover several million years; the next seven (361 pages) cover fourteen centuries; the final three (181 pages) cover the period after the Second World War. There is no doubt that such an imbalance is partly necessary due to the unequal amount of information available for each period. With regard to the subtitle, and tiering plan, it would appear that Ki-Zerbo grasps the rush and momentum that culminates in independence. There is a relationship between the importance thus accorded to the period of independence and the analytical unification of Africa. Ki-Zerbo admits that the continent's spatio-temporal diversity does not make such a unification very evident. 'Rassembler l'Afrique' (Rallying Africa) is, furthermore, the last segment of the final chapter, 'Problèmes africains d'aujourd'hui' (Today's African Problems), and proves that Ki-Zerbo took into account its initial diversity. He nevertheless postulates that this feeble evidence, far from diminishing unification, magnifies it and contributes to expressing its meaning. The analytical unity of Africa is justified historically at the moment of independence by how simultaneous and integral this was (independence was gained at the same time throughout the entire continent), in such a way that the sense of Africa's history as a unified whole can also be set out

starting from such a political summation of Africa. (Ki-Zerbo also postulates that this is a conscious summation and expresses this in the first two points of 'Rallying Africa': 'From its origins to the OAU' and 'The Birth of the OAU'). *Histoire de l'Afrique noire* therefore calls for a philosophical reflection on the sense of African history in a teleological direction and, unnecessarily, towards unity and liberty.

Ki-Zerbo's teleology differs from the one in which Husserl paradigmatically proposed to conceptualize Europe in 1935, in his conclusion to *Philosophy and the Crisis of European Humanity*: 'It is necessary to elaborate on the concept of Europe as the historical teleology of infinite goals of reason' (Husserl, 1992). Although Ki-Zerbo's teleology is a component of Africa in the sense that it is negatively implicated in the European colonial unification of Africa, it cannot – in contrast to Hesserl's teleology – be identified as something Africa 'innately' possesses (Husserl, 1992). The European colonial unification of Africa and African resistance correspond to historical fact, whereas Husserl's Europe falsely positions itself in a Greece that was not Europe, through the philosophical creation of philosophy, which Husserl believes must be de-historicized to be expressed philosophically. Ki-Zerbo's teleology is geographically anchored, whereas Husserl removes geography from the concept, which, in accordance with the colonial context in which it expressed, extends 'the spiritual figure of Europe' beyond any territorial limit. Ki-Zerbo's teleology is contingent, whereas Husserl's is necessary. Ki-Zerbo's *telos*, that is to say, the link between unity and liberty during independence, is historical: it is identified both in history and the present day, which finds itself historicized, as a condition for overcoming Africa's critical situation. In this sense, it is a *telos* only if it is also an *utopos*. Husserl's *telos*, on the other hand, is de-historicized, as 'infinite goals of reason'. In summary, whereas Husserl's teleology is supposedly historical (to regulate history), Ki-Zerbo's history is periodically teleological (within the geographical and historical limits as defined by a particular period and region) and, as such, utopian (identifying a *utopos* only as a necessary condition and integrating it into history and the historicized present day). Husserl's historical teleology can be contrasted with Ki-Zerbo's teleological history as utopian history, which allows for the simple, decisive affirmation that, at a certain moment and in a certain place, delineated by the European invasion of Africa and the African liberation of Africa, the history of Africa was determined by the progressive – but necessarily unanimously African – goal of its liberation.

Ki-Zerbo also asked the question 'What is Africa?' His answer combined a geographical delimitation (continental Africa – namely the continent and its neighbouring islands), a historical delimitation ('since its beginnings'),

a demographical delimitation (all Africans, namely those who live or come from continental Africa and are citizens of the new independent States), the determination of an idea (the utopia of unity and liberty), and of a meaning (the political summation of Africa). This answer calls for philosophical reflection. The idea of a utopian history is also evoked in *Histoire de l'Afrique noire*. This reflection includes an epistemological dimension: the epistemological liberation of history, necessary for the historicization of Africa, reflects the necessity of epistemological liberation from philosophy, against non-philosophical history, for the conceptualization of Africa. How do we empirically anchor the philosophical problematization of Africa and, in particular, its unity, singularizing it methodologically according to the singularity of Africa's history and situation, and realizing it from the perspective of Africans?

Philosophical analysis of the discursive concept of Africa and historicity of Africa's historicity: Africa as a historical construct

The concept of Africa implied by this history of Africa – that is, these delimitations of Africa, this idea and this meaning – must be analysed. Whereas Africa's synchronic unity could be affirmed politically at the moment of independence, its diachronic unity, beyond the beginning of its colonial unification, could not. The relativization of any historical inaugural definition of Africa in the first African historicization of Africa indicates that the question 'What is Africa?' has not been thoroughly discussed. In fact, the subject of 'Africa' is often incorporated into history on the basis of how it is normally understood, in particular geographically and racially, without these being the subject of historicization. In the great monographs of the last decades – *Histoire de l'Afrique noire*, the GHA or *The Cambridge History of Africa* – what is referred to as the 'history of Africa' is actually the history of a space which, before the fifteenth century, was not Africa. The subject's historicity, which is taken into account even though the historicity of its understandings is not, is handled without Africa being considered as an historical construct – the very history of which is supposedly being traced. The risk, therefore, is a neutralization of Africa. At the very least, this creates bias in the research. The retrospective application of unity of the subject 'Africa' to periods preceding the formation of the African geographical space is full of risk. Not of missing the diversity

of historical processes preceding and following the European invasion, which have been reported with impressive detail in these three monographs, but of not taking this into account in accordance with their diversity, by subordinating it to the same retrospectively unified historical process. We have seen how Ki-Zerbo, in *Histoire de l'Afrique noire*, immediately questions the legitimacy of the common reduction of Africa to so-called Black Africa. Chapters 5 and 6 of *Methodology and African Prehistory* (the first volume of the GHA, which he edits) – 'Written sources before the fifteenth century' (Djait, 1999) and 'Written sources from the fifteenth century onwards' (Hrbek, 1999) – demonstrate an awareness that Africa was a quite clearly defined historical construction from the outset. However, although Africa's historicity has been demonstrated, along with the historicity of the discussion held around it, and appropriate means gathered to account for the historicity of Africa's historicity, this latter issue has not really been thematized as such.

Moving forward requires thematization framed in the same way as the question 'What is Africa?', along the lines of V.Y. Mudimbe's (1988) work in demonstrating the historicity of Africa's historicity in *The Invention of Africa*. However, it is not a question of opposing history and philosophy, nor hierarchizing their cognitive contributions, but, rather, of affirming the interest, for Africa and for philosophy, of a philosophical reflection on Africa itself (and not only African philosophy). This would counteract the prejudice according to which Africa can only be regarded as a human and social science study subject. The cognitive interest of a philosophical reflection on Africa can, indeed, be linked to the epistemological interest of the structuring of disciplines. Noting here the way in which history can benefit from philosophy, we immediately reiterate the fact that philosophy cannot ignore it. *The Invention of Africa* would have been impossible without the work of history. This anchors the question 'What is Africa?' within the realm of history and African historical science, which Mudimbe (1994) can aim to expose as the 'concept of Africa', an expression that he uses in *The Idea of Africa*. In *The Invention of Africa*, he considers Africa as a historical construct and is thus able to identify it as the subject of a discourse. He takes a particular interest in scientific discourse relating to Africa, especially anthropology. In his Introduction, he presents his project in the following manner:

> I shall be dealing with discourses on African societies, cultures, and peoples as signs of something else. I would like to interrogate their modalities, significance, or strategies as a means of understanding the type of knowledge which is being proposed. In fact, I do not address the classical issues of African anthropology or

> history, the results of which might or might not mirror an objective African reality. Rather I am looking upstream of the results, precisely at what makes them possible, before accepting them as commentary on revelation, or restitution, of an African experience (Mudimbe, 1994).

Mudimbe later adds: 'In sum, rather than simply accept the authority of qualified representatives of African cultures, I would like to study the theme of the foundations of discourse about Africa.' By endeavouring to analyse the scientific discourse on Africa and its historicity, Mudimbe is able to research the meaning of his historical construction and the way it is formed, studying and expressing its methods of effectuation, and to grasp the historicity of Africa's historicity. By doing so, he is constantly asking the question 'What is Africa?', albeit implicitly. In *The Idea of Africa*, the question is explicitly framed, from the preface onwards, as the goal towards which his research is directed: 'it is evident that, to approach the question "What is Africa?" or "How do we define African cultures?", we cannot neglect a body of knowledge in which Africa has been included by Western disciplines such as anthropology, history, theology, or any other scientific discourse.'

The Idea of Africa explicitly extends *The Invention of Africa* (to determine, precisely, what we can call '*the idea of the invention of Africa*'). Mudimbe goes one step further towards asking the question 'What is Africa?':

> *The Idea of Africa* is both the product and the continuation of *The Invention of Africa* insofar as it asserts that there are natural features, cultural characteristics, and, probably, values that contribute to the reality of Africa as a continent and its civilizations as constituting a totality different from those of, say, Asia and Europe. On the other hand, any analysis would sort out the fact that Africa (as well as Asia and Europe) is represented in Western scholarship by "fantasies" and "constructs" made up by scholars and writers since Greek times. That such constructions have simplified cultural complexities and made complex *the being* of these continents as objects should be obvious.

Mudimbe goes on to expose and align these characteristics of the Western representation of Africa, concluding that they were thought of as a 'paradigm of difference' and constructed as a 'double negative' of Europe. This is what he calls 'the idea of Africa'.

Is this a concept of Africa? Mudimbe uses an expression to define his project: 'In [this book], I explore the concept of Africa by bringing together all the levels of interpretation, and I examine their roots in and reference to the Western tradition'.

As the title indicates, this expression is synonymous with 'the idea of Africa'. It is not a question of *elaborating* a new concept of Africa but, rather, of getting to

know and understand the concept we already have. This is identified with the idea of Africa as expressed and transmitted through the Western discourse on Africa, which must first be reconstituted. Although such work is a necessary condition for asking the question 'What is Africa?', the aim is not to use this question as the explicit foundation of a philosophical problem which, in order to be answered, requires the philosophical elaboration of a concept of Africa. In the two publications cited above, Mudimbe unveils the ordinary ways of understanding Africa as a series of historical constructs, and, in so doing, allows them to be put on hold while, at the same time, exposing the whys and wherefores of the 'concept of Africa', in the sense of the dominant understanding of Africa. His work is decisive for the field of African philosophy, in particular with regard to the division between ethnophilosophy and 'rational, theorical, critical or professional philosophy'. The incommunicability between these two great schools of African philosophy is very much due to the fact that neither has been given the main task of developing a concept of Africa. Yet, how can the existence of an African philosophy be affirmed, or, what boils down to the same thing, how can the way the existence of African philosophy is affirmed be criticized, without first having a concept of Africa? Mudimbe suggests that the delimitation of the field of 'African philosophy' always goes beyond its only and supposedly objective geographical or geographical-racial characterization, and always includes precisely a certain concept of Africa, a certain understanding of what characterizes it as such, as well as its populations, their societies and their history. This is, however, presupposed, unexplained and therefore subject to whatever collective and sedimented representations of Africa are inflicted upon it. By doing so, Mudimbe creates a new understanding of African philosophy, as described in the Introduction, not as ethnophilosophy of African societies, nor as an inventory of the philosophical works of Africans, but as African philosophy: a philosophy in itself, with Africa and Africans as its topic. He gives methodological means to this new understanding of African philosophy, participating in the epistemological liberation of philosophy. This is necessary for its geophilosophical modelling, and for making Africa available to it. Foucault's (1966, 1969) methodological conceptuality – of discourse and devices, of archaeology and genealogy, and of events – is thus applied to African history and situations, the analysis and formation of which give the concept a single empirical foundation. The idea and meaning of a concept of Africa invested in the African historicization of Africa remain, but are confirmed by a redefinition of the reference, imposed by taking into account the historicity of Africa's historicity: the beginning of the historical construct of Africa is to be found in the second half of the fifteenth century. Africans are, first and foremost,

all those who have been and have identified themselves as being African, and who have referred to each other, and continue to refer to each other as African. This does not exclude the history that previously existed in the area that became the African space, but it determines the correct method for its integration into the history of Africa – on the one hand for the restitution of its own diversity, on the other to examine what took place and what changed after the beginning of the historical construct of Africa.

In summary, Mudimbe made a decisive contribution to the philosophical re-appropriation of Africa, having the audacity to ask 'What is Africa?' as a philosophical question, and working to expose the sedimented idea of Africa with and against which an answer was sought to the African philosophical question. Through the philosophical exposition and analysis of the sense of a historical construct of Africa, along with the discursive concept of Africa (the concept of Africa, prevailing in the discourse corresponding to the violent colonial construct of Africa – in this sense, again, *the idea of the invention of Africa*), he enabled the philosophical problematization and conceptualization of Africa.

Concept of Africa and history of Africa: African negativity

Supported by the knowledge of the historicization of Africa and the philosophical analysis of its discursive concept, it is up to the philosophical conceptualization of Africa to grasp the sense and current events of the African re-appropriation (of which the historicization and the philosophical analysis of its discursive concept are themselves expressions) of the colonial construction of Africa. We will limit ourselves here to showing how two main conditions for the elaboration of a concept of Africa are guiding the problematization: the unity of Africa (as a conceptual subject) and the universality of its concept (as a conceptual definition, a communicable mental analytical unit, and intrinsic to its singular and empirical foundation).

Africa's unity first seems empirically unjustifiable. Whatever ordinary understanding is accepted, whether geographical, racial, political or even demographic, an infinite number of differences and contradictions – political, economic, social cultural and others – run through Africa. In addition to this observation, which appears to signify the impossibility of affirming the unity of Africa and therefore elaborating a concept, two others can however be put forward. The first, set with V. Y. Mudimbe in *The Invention of Africa,* is that the African continent, as well as the reduction of Africa to 'Black Africa' or the

ordinary delimitations of Africans as a whole, far from being a natural given, is the result of a historical construct. The beginnings of this can be found in the second half of the fifteenth century in the events that marked the start of the Atlantic slave trade (M'Bokolo, 2008) and the European circumnavigation of what was becoming a continent. The second is that, while, from the beginning of the slave trade to the systematic colonization of the continent, this massifying and simplifying construction consisted of continuous oppression, during the liberation struggle practically all the independence organizations, in spite of the infinite differences and contradictions that cross the continent, took on the watchword of African Unity, institutionalized in 1963 as the Organization of African Unity. These two facts, which are interlinked, take on a decisive significance: the common re-appropriation of an initial forced unification. The name of oppression became that of liberation – Africa – in a structured evolution through the three moments of unification (of Africa) through negation (African) of the (European colonial) negation (of Africa), which can be summarily described as follows. The first moment was of colonial negation of what was not, at the time, Africa (Grataloup, 2009). This was, with the slave trade and the colonization, carried out with extreme and systematic violence, denying the differences that constitute what was not yet Africa. It united Africa by massifying and simplifying what was not Africa, and for those who were turned into Africans, causing their alienation as such. The second moment saw Africans' negation of the initial negation, as expressed in all forms of resistance to all forms of colonial oppression. It corresponded to the assumption of alienation, including the recognition of the framework of oppression as the one to reverse for liberation: oppressed as an African, it is necessary to liberate oneself as an African. The methods of African negation differed from those of colonial negation. The hypothesis resulted in a reversal. Recognizing themselves as African, they grasped their forced unification as the flip side of the oppressor(s) unity and the oppression they suffered, along with their de facto solidarity towards common oppression. The unification became active, paving the way for the third moment, in which the struggle made possible by unification was materializing, and at the same time the liberation it sought was becoming concrete (to which the liberation struggles have eminently corresponded). These three moments cannot be separated. They generated each other and are part of the same evolution, only making sense in this context. If we had to put a name to this, we would need to call it 'African negativity', rather than 'African negation', naming precisely what, in the future, would become its imminent power of effectuation. Such a future is valid for 'Black Africa'

as well as 'continental Africa', and also for those Africans who were deported, along with their descendants: from this point of view, there is a remarkable simultaneity between the fight for African independence and, for example, the fight for civil rights in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s. The unity of Africa is therefore justifiable through the concept of African negativity, understood as the unifying and liberating productivity of European colonial negation of what was, in fact, to become Africa.

The logically expected universality of the concept of Africa empirically corresponds to the globality of Africa. Can defining a unifying and liberating self-productivity for Africa (through the self-negation of the negation of the self) have a global meaning? The decisive finding here is the contradiction between the concept of the world, which presupposes its unity, and its reality – very much one of division (Badiou, 2007), clearly revealed in the asymmetry of borders, from Tijuana to the Bosporus via Gibraltar, separating the 'dividing world' from the 'world divided'. This makes a global negativity, analogue to African negativity, conceivable: the existence of the world, like that of Africa, depends on its unification which, like that of Africa, depends on the negation of its negation – a world divided. This goes hand in hand with the observation that the intensity with which the world is divided (hence its inexistence) is particularly apparent in Africa. Such a finding brings out the fact that these relations are not only identical but are expressed in the division of the world itself. It is therefore possible to combine the concept of African negativity and global negativity with that of productivity, uniting and liberating the world, along with the divided negation of the dividing negation of that which, therefore, was becoming the world. A hypothesis can thus be formulated according to which African negativity affects the divided negation of the division of the world, and global negativity affects the African negation of Africa's domination.

This allows the philosophical problem of Africa to be framed as that of the world's inexistence, through the following question: does the unification of Africa imply that of the world? This signposts the elaboration of a concept of Africa as a 'u-topia' of the existence of the world, insofar as it is the superlative negative.

Conclusion

The reciprocal determination of the conceptualization and historicization of Africa is historically attested by each of the stages highlighted: the Hegelian conceptualization of Africa through its absence of history is consistent with Hegel's ignorance of its history; Ki-Zerbo's historicization through utopia of unity and liberty is consistent with the Ki-Zerbian concept of Africa – all Africans subjected to a common oppression against which they recognize their solidarity and deploy it in their resistance and fight for freedom; the Mudimbian analysis of the discursive concept of Africa as a historical construct is consistent with the recognition that Africa is a historical construct with its own history; the philosophical conceptualization through the articulation of African negativity and global negativity is consistent with the Mudimbian historicization of Ki-Zerbian historicization of Hegelian ignorance. The reciprocal determinism of the conceptualization and historicization of Africa is also historically anchored (Ki-Zerbian historicization is independentist in the same manner that Hegelian conceptualization is colonialist), on a foundation that explains the chronological and logical coherence of a deeper understanding of Africa's history and philosophy: radical criticism of the colonialist philosophical absence of historicization consisted of an independentist African exposure of Africa's historicity. Drawing upon an anthropological significance applied to Africa 'as far back as history goes' thus required the identification of a single, common origin, and meant that the problem of Africa's unity was framed not only synchronically but also diachronically, with the issue of the historicity of African historicity framed alongside it. To correctly conceptualize Africa, the meaning of its historical construct had to be grasped, and it became possible to define the reference to a philosophical concept of Africa by including the discursive concept of Africa (to overcome it dialectically). This necessity and this possibility are included and expressed in the concept of African negativity. The answer to the question 'What is Africa?', in philosophical terms, from the point at which our elders left off and we began, is a concept of Africa as a u-topia of the existence of the world, in that it is its superlative negativity. The implied conception of Africa's history is that it cannot be reduced to a succession of facts, even though these would be contextually relativized and long term. It recognizes a future driven by African negativity, which historical science can take as its topic. Since African negativity is linked to global negativity, such a conceptualization of Africa further instructs the historicization of Africa to present itself as the history of African negativity and the connection between African and global negativity. In order to conform with the reality of Africa and be faithful to

the possibility of an African voice (universalized around the universal and regained through independence), the history and philosophy of Africa must necessarily be global. That is to say, they must not only relativize Africa in the global context, but also relativize the world in the African context, with a view to an African history of the world and an African concept of the world.

The distinction between history and the future is consistent with the distinction of the present, duration and lasting location of past events, and the relevance, duration and location of imminent events. The contemporaneity of historic events and African philosophical and historical events indicates that the historical foundation for the reciprocal determinism of philosophy and history can itself be reflected upon. It can be the aim of history and philosophy, to which they return together, disconnecting history and future, disconnecting present and current events in the here and now. History and philosophy do not always come 'only with the falling of the dusk', but also before the event. Therefore, a concept of Africa as a u-topia of the world's existence, in the context of the history of 'Africa's invention', is 'a call to this new land, this new people'. Would history and philosophy be worth their salt if they did not support this convocation? As Fanon wrote in *Peau noire, masques blancs*:

> Let us be clearly understood. I am convinced that it would be of the greatest interest to be able to have contact with a Negro literature or architecture of the third century before Christ. I should be very happy to know that a correspondence had flourished between some Negro philosopher and Plato. But I can absolutely not see how this fact would change anything in the lives of the eight-year-old children who labor in the cane fields of Martinique or Guadeloupe (Fanon, 1967, p. 180).

The main challenge when reflecting upon the relationship of philosophy and history with regards to Africa concerns philosophy and history only insofar as it concerns, first and foremost, Africans: it is finding a link between the two questions 'What is Africa?' and 'What to do, in Africa and outside Africa, with and for Africans?', which would influence the situation. That is to say, effectuating a concept of Africa as a standard of action to overcome Africa's critical situation, to be seized upon now, and within the context of an African history of Africa, of the unification and liberation of Africa, and thereby, the unification and the liberation of the world. Following the philosophical perspective in which theory and practice are inseparable, the effectuation of a concept such as Africa has an inherent tendency in action. It is mainly this understanding of African history that the philosophical conceptualization of Africa implies: tracing the history of Africa cannot be reduced to simply revealing and explaining it, or indeed knowing and understanding it, because it also includes future acts of history.

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CHAPTER 4

AFRO-CHINA RELATIONS BEFORE 1500

Anshan Li

The beginning of the long history of Afro-China relations is revealed to us through archaeological findings and diplomatic records. This chapter focuses on the period from pre-1000 CE to 1500 and is based on Chinese sources, either direct or indirect; evidence of contact dates from before written records. This bilateral contact between the cultures helped develop mutual understanding and laid the foundation for other interactions later on.

Before 1000 CE

Archaeological evidence suggests the possibility of contact between Africa and China as far back as antiquity (Chang, 1968). In Anyang, China, the capital of the Shang Dynasty (seventeenth to eleventh century BCE), an excavation shows a skull had similar characteristics to those of the Oceanic Negroids and Black Africans (Yang, 1966). Negroid images in stone, metal and jade were also found in Anyang. Traces of sati burial practices, thousands of cowrie shells used for money, and more than 500 jade objects were discovered in a royal tomb, described as 'evidence of African participation in royalty' and indicating that 'an African presence existed in China from a most remote period and an evolution of this physical type is an indigenous phenomenon' (Brunson, 1985).

Official records

The presence of Black people is recorded in the *Juyan Han Jian*,[1] Chinese local archives of the Han Dynasty (202 BCE to 220 CE), discovered in the 1930s. Various details describing individuals were noted, including their height and skin colour, and fifty-three people were recorded as 'black'. Regarding the origins of these persons, opinions differ, but one holds that they were ordinary Chinese and did not belong to one specific ethnic group (Zhang, 1977, pp. 197-198). Another argument holds that most of them lived in the Hexi area and around Chang-an, the capital of the Han Dynasty, just as other foreigners did. Their height was measured at 165.6–177.1 cm, taller than ordinary Chinese but similar to Nilotic Blacks in North-East Africa. Other signs indicate they lived a different lifestyle and came from a different culture. Therefore, they may have been foreigners from overseas, most probably from the West Region, a specific term to describe the vast area west of China (Yang, 1995, pp. 969-987).

In the tombs of the Han Dynasty excavated in Guangzhou, 152 pottery figures were discovered, with some of them appearing to depict black-skinned people. There are different views regarding the origin of these figures as well, and one of them points to West Asia or East Africa (Institute of Archaeology of CASS et al., 1981). *Qilin* (麒麟), an imagined fortune animal in ancient China, appeared in a stone sculpture found in Xuzhou during the Han Dynasty, resembling a giraffe (Wang, 1980). At the time, several writings mentioned places which some scholars regarded as being located in Africa, such as Ethiopia and Alexandria (Sun, 1979; Li, 2000, pp. 44-48). The *History of the Later Han Dynasty* records that an envoy was sent to China from *doule* (兜勒) in 100 CE, with *doule* presumed to be the ancient port of Aduli in Ethiopia (Shen, 1990, pp. 70-72).

From China to Africa

Evidence has also been found regarding the possible cultural impact in the other direction, from China to Africa. A *ding* (鼎), a round ritual vessel with three legs that was seen as a symbol of dynastic and political power in ancient China, was discovered in the remains of the ancient city of Meroe and later exhibited in the Sudan National Museum. In 1993, in Egypt, Austrian archaeologists discovered fibres from silkworms in the hair of a female skeleton dating from the twenty-first Dynasty (1070-945 BCE). At that time, silk was only produced in China; the

1 'Juyan' is a place in North-Western China. 'Han' indicates the Han Dynasty, and 'Jian' refers to records carved into wood or bamboo.

Egyptian queen Cleopatra (69-30 BCE) was also known to like clothes made from Chinese silk (Charlesworth, 1970, pp. 109-262). *Periplus Maris Erythraei* [Circumnavigation of the Erythraean Sea], describing early maritime trade among Roman Egypt, eastern Africa, southern Arabia, and India, mentioned the Chinese metropolis 'Sinai' or 'Thinai', a Sanskrit form of 'Qin Dynasty' (221-207 BCE). Early contact is also recorded between China and Ethiopia (Hable Sellassie, 1972), and the astronomer-geographer Claudius Ptolemaeus of Alexandria included China and the Silk Road in his *Geography,* in the second century.

Pictures on stone walls

Images depicting 'foreigners' were found on the walls of rock shelters in Southern Africa. Drawn by the San people (considered the first inhabitants of Southern Africa), the foreigner's headwear in these illustrations looks like a 'peaked Chinese hat' (Dart, 1925) (Figure 1). Whether it is Chinese or not, this popular hat or *'dou li'* (斗笠) is used in southern China to shield the wearer from the rain and sun. There is also a resemblance to a Chinese character 'tian' (田, meaning 'field', also a surname in China), which is also found as a local decorative motif in Southern Africa (Dart, 1939). In addition, Chinese porcelains were found in Africa (Ma and Meng, 1987). Kenyan archeologist Kiriama argues that porcelains were transported from China to Kenya at certain peak times, the first appearing during the ninth and tenth centuries. Shards of Yue ware, Changsha ware, Canton Celadon and northern white ware were found in Kenya's Lamu Archipelago (Kiriama, 2014). Specimens of currencies from the Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE) have also been found in Africa (Xia, 1963; Zhang, 1986, p. 91).



Fig. 8. — Bushman painting in ligh brown and dark brown, fron Magdala, near Barkly East. (Afte Miss Tongue.)

Fig. 9.—Bushman painting on a stone block, Eliweni, Kei River, depicting a foreigner.

Fig. 10. — Bushman painting in black from cave on the White Kei River, Cape Province, depicting a foreigner.

Figure 1. *'Chinese Hat' in the San's stone pictures in Southern Africa.*

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References in literature

During the Tang Dynasty, several places mentioned in literary works are identified as places in Africa, such as *Molin* (摩邻) and *Laobosa* (老勃萨) in Du Huan's *Record of Travels*

(经行记，812 CE), *Xiaoyi* (孝亿), *Renjian* (仍建) and *Xida* (悉怛) in Duan Chensi's *Youyang Miscellaneous Writings* (酉阳杂俎, ninth century), and *Sanlan* (三兰), including a sea route from South China to East Africa in *New Tang History* (新唐书, 1060 CE) (Smidt, 2001). *Sengzhi* (*zengqi*,[2] 僧祇) and *kunlun* (昆仑), two terms referring to Black people, appeared in various writings; *'kunlun'* was more fashionable than *sengzhi* at the time. Buddhist wall-paintings in Dunhuang contain Black figures, and Black pottery figures have been found since the 1940s in Xi-an (formerly Chang-an), the capital of ancient dynasties (Du, 1979). There are quite a few studies on the topic (Chang, 1928; Zhang, 1965; Xu, 1938; Ai, 1987; Wilensky, 2002; Wyatt, 2010). As for the origins of these persons, another view holds that they come from South-East Asia (Ge, 2001), but multiple origins may be the more reasonable view (Li, 2015, 2019).

1000-1500 CE

During this period, contact between Africa and China increased in scale and depth, evinced through various aspects (Xu, 2019). There were Chinese artefacts in more African places. Chinese porcelains were discovered in Africa, sea routes developed, and maps including African locations were produced in China. Mutual visits and diplomatic activities evolved and increased as well.

Evidence in the Arab world

Al Idrisi (1100-1166) had heard about the Chinese in Zanzibar involved in trade. Chinese merchants carried out commercial activities with residents there, and the islanders were noted as being moral and just (Levathes, 1994, pp. 200-201). Sudanese scholar Ahmed argues that Sudan had a long history of business with China, and ancient Aihdab was a Sudanese port where Chinese goods and porcelains were later unearthed. The famous Karimi merchant family was neither Jewish nor Egyptian, but Sudanese, conducting business with China during the Mamluk reign (Gaafar, 1999; 1999a); Chinese goods were traded with local products (Fei, 1954 [1436]). Giraffes and zebras, two African animals, appeared in China during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

2 The Arabs called the Africans from the East African coast the *Zanj*, '*Zengqi*' (Irwin, 2007 [1995]), p. 143).

Mentions in literary works

Zhou Qufei is a geographer of the Song Dynasty (960-1279) whose *Lingwai Daida* (外代答, 1178), or *Notes on Lands beyond the Mountain*, mentioned several places in Africa, such as *Wusili* (勿斯离), *Mulanpi* (木兰皮), and *Kunlun Cengqi* (昆仑层期) (Zhang, 1977 [1930], pp. 31-34). These places appeared in *Zhu Fan Zhi* (诸蕃志, 1225) or *Record of Foreign Nations* by Zhao, a customs official who was in regular contact with foreigners. More than ten African locations appeared in his book, and descriptions of East Africa include information on local customs of dress, household management, local products and descriptions of social classes (Zhao, 1996 [1225]). Officials from the staff of Zheng He (the fourteenth-century Chinese diplomat) mentioned places such as *Mugu Dushu* (木骨都束, Mogadishu), *Malin* (麻林, Malindi) and *Bulawa* (卜剌哇, Brava) in Fei Xin's *Xingcha Shenglan* (星槎胜览, 1436), or *Overall Survey of the Star Raft,* and Ma Huan's *Yingya Shenglan* (瀛涯胜览, 1451), or *Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores*. *Zheng He Hanghai Tu* (郑和航海图, 1425-1430?), or *Zheng He's Nautical Charts,* listed more than fifteen African places (Xiang, Da, 1961 [1425-1430?]).

Porcelains in Africa

In early Egypt, Chinese porcelain was admired and imitated by the local people (Chou, 1972). Forty-three pieces of china were found in one cave in Great Zimbabwe (Ma, 1985). Maghrebi explorer Ibn Battuta said porcelains in China were as cheap as in his country, or cheaper; they were the best, and traded to India and Maghreb (Ibn Battuta, 1929). Porcelain of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) was also found in North, East and South Africa. Thousands of porcelains from the tenth to the sixteenth century were found in Sudan (Gaafar, 1999). Kiriama claimed the second half of the thirteenth century to the early fifteenth century was the 'second peak' of China's porcelains in Africa. Blue and white porcelain appeared in East Africa from the fourteenth century (Kiriama, 2014). *Longquan* green-glazed dishes were recently unearthed in Mambrui (Qin et al., 2013). Samples of currency from the Song Dynasty were found in Mafia (Tanzania), Mogadishu (Somalia), Gedi (Kenya), Kilwa (Tanzania) and Zanzibar (Xia, 1963; Shen, 1983, pp. 295-301; Xu, 1993), and in Aihdab in the Sudan in 1991 (Gaafar,1999).

Maps and sea routes

In the maps drawn by Arabians and Europeans, the southern part of Africa was drawn towards the east until the mid-fifteenth century, as observed by Joseph Needham. Zhu Siben (朱思本, 1273-1333) drew a rather accurate map with Africa's tip pointing to the south (Shen, 1990, pp. 385-388). *Da Ming Hun Yi Tu*, or *Amalgamated Map of the Great Ming Dynasty* was made in colourful silk (3.86 x 4.75 m) in 1389, with identical rivers (the Nile and the Orange) and mountains (Drakensberg) (Wang et al., 1994, p. 54; Li, 2004). A full-sized replica was made for South Africa in 2002, and the exhibition caused great excitement there (Figure 2). Africa-China routes also developed through the ports of the Indian Ocean. As for sea routes, opinions differ (Zhang, 1965, pp. 96-97; Ai and Mu, 1996, p. 75). At least three routes existed from China to Africa (Fei, 1954 [1436], p. 24; Xiang, 1961 [1425-1430?], pp. 57-58). It would have been natural for Zheng He's fleet to sail from Mogadishu (or Brava) further south, or to sail from Aden (or Egyptian ports) or Cape Guardafui to the African coast (Li, 2013).

Visitors from foreign lands

Ibn Battuta (1304-1377) visited China around 1346, stayed for a year, and was greatly impressed by what he saw (Li, 1964). He recorded information about the Chinese political and legal system, local customs, construction style, communication methods, economy, monetary system, and so on.[3] His published knowledge about China influenced the Arabs and the world in general. Wang Dayuan of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) visited East and North Africa (Zhang, 1963; Shen, 1983). His description of the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt is detailed, and *Jia-jiang-men-li* (加将门里) in Mozambique was mentioned for the first time in Chinese literature (Wang, 1981 [1350]).

Diplomatic exchange

Dashi (大食) is a loose geographical term to describe the Arab Empire. Chinese records state that *dashi* sent envoys to the Song Dynasty fifty-four times in total, and some of them were envoys with a clear indication of coming from African places. In 1008, China established diplomatic relations with the Fatima Dynasty of North Africa and the Middle East. The Yuan Dynasty established

3 The complete translation of Ibn Battuta's travel book by Li Guangbin was published in 2008.

relations with the Mamluk Dynasty of Egypt; China and Ethiopia also set up diplomatic relations and exchanged envoys. Mogadishu, Pate, Malindi and Zanzibar sent their envoys to China in 1285, 1286 and 1300 respectively. Emperor Kublai Khan (1215-1294) sent envoys to Madagascar (Zhang, 1965, pp. 111-118; Shen, 1990, pp. 374-381).



Public domain

Figure 2. *Amalgamated map of the Great Ming Dynasty.*

Zheng He's voyage to Africa in the fifteenth century is significant, and in the context of navigation history, the scale of his fleet was incredible. During the seventh voyage, the fleet contained 100 ships, including 61 treasure ships (Zhang, 1965, pp. 200-204; Zhu, 1938, p. 37). Columbus's voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, some 60 years later, had only three ships and 87 seamen, and Vasco da Gama's voyage to the East, five years after Columbus, had only four ships and 148 (or 170) seamen.

Da Gama arrived at Mozambique in 1498. When his crews offered local Africans gifts, they were not surprised by their arrival and said that white people

had already come before with the same kind of ships, from the place 'where the sun rises'. After Da Gama arrived in India, he realized that the people the Africans had referred to were not Indians, but most probably Chinese (Snow, 1988, p. 35). This indicates that a Chinese fleet may have arrived in Mozambique much earlier than Vasco da Gama.

The peaceful relations between Africa and Asia were not homogeneous. A Kenyan archaeologist commented on the difference between Chinese and Portuguese contact with Africa in early times: one was on equal terms and peaceful, the other characterized by arrogance and violence (Kiriama, 2014).

Epistemological conclusion

Contact between peoples generally brings about mutual understanding. History shows that indirect contact occurs before direct contact, and non-official interactions before official interactions. Direct evidence shows there was contact between these people before it was indicated in written records, and diplomatic records indicate developed bilateral relations. China's understanding of Africa started early and increased before 1500, and the exchange was balanced and unfolded with equal standing. Yet, biases did exist, since ethnocentrism exists for all people, especially in times when there is little contact (Li, 2015).

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CHAPTER 5

JAPANESE EPISTEMOLOGY AND AFRICAN HISTORY

Katsuhiko Kitagawa

Introduction

In view of the current state of Japanese Africanist historiographies it must be conceded that 'African history is a tiny part of the total output of history in Japan' (Philips, 2009, pp. 1-12). Nevertheless, historical studies of Africa in Japan have developed while taking considerable notice of the trends in Africanist historiographies of other countries, including those on the African continent. At the same time, it is important to note that historical studies of Africa in Japan have made remarkable progress regarding the original or indigenous viewpoint.

This chapter attempts to very briefly look back over trends in Africanist historical studies and take up main issues such as regional division, periodization, historical description and sources in Japan from the mid-1950s to the late 1980s. It will review the main topics which have been considered by Japanese Africanist historians in recent times, and raise the new challenges likely to be faced by these historians in the foreseeable future.

Retrospectives on Japanese Africanist historiography: from the mid-1950s to the late 1980s

Survey of main writings, 1950s and 1960s

Evidence suggests that historical studies in Japan, including Africanist history, began after the defeat in the Second World War that brought about the sudden collapse of Imperial Japan.[1] The first period, from the defeat in war to the late 1960s, is called the era of 'post-war historiography'. In this period Japanese historians began to seriously discuss democracy (democratic revolution) and nationalism (nationalist revolution) with a serious reflection upon, and deep repentance for, historical studies in pre-war Japan.[2] The people who shared the idea of a national liberation struggle but also believed in anti-imperialism and solidarity with new independent countries in Africa and Asia contributed to the rise of Africanist history and African studies in Japan. There is no doubt that the Japanese delegation's encounter with delegations from African countries at the Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955, the first International Congress of Africanists in Accra in 1962, and the third conference of Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity in Moshi, Tanzania in 1963, facilitated Africanist history in particular and African studies in general.[3]

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1 Although Africa was a remote corner in the mapping of late Imperialist Japan, as early as the Meiji period Japan had already paid enormous attention to the protocol of the Berlin West Africa Conference in the mid-1880s, in which European powers partitioned the African continent to find a way to compromise on their conflicting political and economic interests. Also, after the development of both the Sino- and Russo-Japanese Wars, Imperialist Japan was greatly concerned about the establishment of the British Union of South Africa. As might be expected, great importance was attached to the study of African history from the Japanese Imperialist perspective. Understandably one of the first Japanese works on African history was published in the late 1930s under the title *The History of Partition of Africa* (Kitagawa, 'The Relationship between Japan and South Africa before World War II', *Kansai University Review of Economics*, No. 16, March 2014, pp. 31-57).

2 Democratization was primarily aimed at overcoming feudalistic ideas and systems deeply rooted in prewar Japanese society and bringing about modernization in the proper sense of the term. The new nation state, under reconstruction after the war, attempted to recover sovereignty from occupation under the rule of the General Headquarters (GHQ) of the Allied Powers (The Historical Science Society of Japan (ed.), *The Achievement and the Challenge of Contemporary Historical Studies: History in the Era of Neo-Liberalism* (The Fourth Report), Sekibundo, 2017).

3 Public opinion in Japan was divided under the Cold War regime, with liberalists against socialists. On one side, people prioritized the need to conclude the peace treaty, partly with liberalist countries and the Japan-United States security treaty, in order to return to the international community as soon as possible. On the other side, Japanese progressives who were for the Asian-African Solidarity Movement, the rise of anti-imperialism and nationalism in AALA countries, and Pan-Africanism by the African diaspora, doubtless instigated the rise of academic interest in emerging African countries (Kitagawa, 'A History of Japan-Africa Relations in the Post-War period: with Special Reference to the 1950s and 1960s', *Journal of Historical Studies*, No. 920, July 2014, pp. 60-71.)

Thereafter, while Japan experienced rapid economic growth in the 1960s, several frameworks of historical studies flowed into the academic circles in Japan, such as concepts of modernization and industrialization, and theories of economic growth and development. At the time, Japan's top priorities with regard to foreign policy were sustained economic growth, minimal defence spending, and the alliance with the United States of America. With the establishment of diplomatic relations with African countries, Japan expected to be able to expand trade and investment opportunities to sustain its economic growth (Kitagawa, 2013, pp. 1-28). All of this contributed to the rise of African studies, including Africanist history, in Japan. It was in this environment that the Japan Society of Africa, for business circles, was established in 1960, and the Japan Association of African Studies (JAAS), for academic circles, was founded in 1964, with the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964 deeply reinforcing a strong impression of Africa and African people in the minds of ordinary people in Japan.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Japanese Africanists broke away from the dependence on the translation of European literature into Japanese and started to publish original monographs, primarily based on their field research, trying to absorb directly the historical consciousness of original works by African scholars. One of the earliest of such books was *Africa, Breaking the Chain* (1954); also of note was *Africa at the Crossroad* (1967) written by Terutaro Nishino, who also translated Basil Davidson's book *African Awakening* (1955) into Japanese in 1959.

1970s and 1980s

The second period of the 1970s and the 1980s witnessed criticism of the 'post-war historiography' and its success, as well as the transition to 'contemporary historiography'. The oil crises of 1973 and 1979 had a serious impact on the world economy, and Japan and Africa were no exceptions. The Japanese economy, faced with the end of rapid growth and a period of stagnation and uncertainty, tried to extend its economic interests in resource-rich, particularly oil-rich, countries in the Middle East and Africa. Related to this change was the extensive application of a unilinear theoretical framework of modernization and industrialization to the actual path of economic development, which was subsequently brought into question and relativized. This transition also caused concerned historians to reconsider that the nature of historical studies and the subjectivity and selfhood of historians needed to be fundamentally re-examined. In this process, it has been observed that the selfhood of historical epistemology was changed from one struggling against or transforming historical processes

to one restricted and bound by one's own life history or experience. Moreover, European history that had been so far recognized as the normative reference or model for Japanese historians was relativized, and the historical studies which predominantly claimed Japan as deviating from the European model of development was seriously re-examined. Mostly it seemed to be either modified or kept away behind the scenes. On the contrary, historical studies in general and Japanese history in particular tended to be viewed predominantly from an Asian perspective and situated in the context of inter/intra-Asian history and/or Asian-African/Afro-Asian historical relations. In this way, Africanist historiography in Japan gained a different perspective by re-orienting to and intertwining with the rise of the interconnection between African and Asian history towards the end of this period (Kitagawa, 2002).

Quality publications based on joint research projects by eminent Japanese scholars on the African continent substantially increased in the 1970s and 1980s. Junzo Kawada wrote an extraordinary book, *A History of Letterless Society* (1976), primarily based on his original field research in the Mosi society of West Africa. Renowned Japanese anthropologist Masao Yamaguchi's book *Glory and Misery in the Black Continent* (1977) was the first general history of Africa written by a single author in Japan. Additionally, the five-volume series *Modern African History* was a monumental landmark publication for understanding Japanese Africanist historiography in the 1970s. Also notable was *Historical World of Black Africa* (1987), published under Kawda's editorship, an introduction to African history widely read in Japan.[4]

In the meantime, the seventh volume of *UNESCO's General History of Africa, Africa under Colonial Domination 1880-1935* (1985) edited by Professor A. Adu Boahen, was translated into Japanese in 1988.[5] This had a significant impact on Japanese Africanists in the sense that it deepens their understanding of African initiative as a driving factor of African history, and pressed Japanese Africanist historians to fundamentally transform their epistemology of African history in terms of centring Africa in the discourse of colonial history.

Historical studies of Africa in the 1980s made great strides in the practical use of such primary sources as governmental and departmental reports of colonial Africa,

4 Takashi Okakura's book *A History of Black Africa* (1979) played a significant role in sharing with Japanese readers historical knowledge of African peoples' primary and organized resistance against colonial rule. Tachio Urano's voluminous compilation of *Historical Documents: History of International Relations in Asia and Africa* was a fascinating product by Japanese Africanists investigating the historical development of international relations both inside and outside the African continent.

5 The challenging project of publishing the Japanese edition of UNESCO's *General History of Africa* was interrupted, with the regrettable result that only volumes I, IV and VII were published.

compiled and published by former metropolitan countries, and other precolonial and colonial sources written by European travellers, missionaries and explorers among Japanese Africanist historians, anthropologists and social scientists.

Survey of main issues

Time division/Periodization

Until the 1980s, Japanese Africanist historians proposed the following five periods as the provisional chronological division: (1) from the birth of mankind to the seventeenth century, Time of Gold Trading; (2) from the seventeenth to early nineteenth century, Time of Slave Trade; (3) from the early nineteenth century to the late 1870s, Time of Mission and Trading; (4) from the 1880s to the mid-twentieth century, Time of Colonial Dependence; and (5) after the mid-twentieth century, Time of New Independence.[6]

In the 1990s, Japanese Africanist historians thought the eighth century was a critical turning point in African history because of sustained Islamic diffusion. Therefore, the history of Africa until today is divided into four time periods: (1) the early time in various African cultures from the birth of mankind to around AD 1000; (2) the period of cultural interactions within the African continent through the emergence of large-scale commercial states, urban areas and long distance trade (from the eighth century to the end of the sixteenth century); (3) the time of the advancement of European powers, the turbulence of African societies and rise of political integration in various regions (from the late fifteenth century to the early nineteenth century); and (4) the period of colonization under European powers and working towards independence[7] (Kawada, 1993).

6 Such is the frequent discourse heard among Japanese Africanists: 'In the practice of African history, it is not an easy task to see how the stages of historical development constructed by the preceding institutions correspond to those in European history.' Or, from the same source: 'Africa is widely known as a letterless society and so the study of African history cannot exclusively depend on written sources. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to describe the events in pre-colonial Africa chronologically and the periodization of African history is more difficult than for other continents' (Hoshi and Hayashi, 1977).

7 In *New Introduction to African History,* edited by Miyamoto and Matsuda (1997), one chapter dealing with the period from Islamic invasion via the slave trade to the beginning of colonization was included under the title 'Africa's dynamic interactions with the outside world'.

Division of areas or regions

The dynamism produced by the interactions of indigenous societies with input from external forces formed various aspects of African history. Therefore, it is reasonable to define distinctive regions with common features as a meaningful framework to understand this historical process, as well as to make an inter- and intra-regional comparative analysis of its process. The five-volume series *Contemporary African History* adopted a division of six geographical regions (North, South, West, East, Central, West-Central) (Hoshi and Hayashi, 1978). Miyamoto and Matsuda (1997) proposed the concepts of 'River-World' and 'External Interaction World' as original ideas for regional division in order to understand the undercurrent of African history which was created by the historical rhythms made of both internal dynamism in the African continent and the external impact of encounters with the outside world. *A History of Africa,* edited by Kawada (2009), divided Africa into six regions based on distinctive areas of common cultures: East/North-East, the East African coastal area, the Western Sea of the Indian Ocean, West Africa, Bantu Africa and Southern Africa. This book is very interesting in the sense that it includes not only continental Africa but also coastal/littoral areas and oceans in the perspective of African history, and that it opened the way to seriously consider matters like 'African History and/in World History' (Kawada, 2009).

History writing and historical sources

Africanist historians not only need to have thorough knowledge of historical sources but also to be well versed in both historical theories and methodologies to critically assess those sources and documents which were once the core of historical studies. While Japanese Africanist historians have so far seriously tried to study a number of written historical sources in a critical manner, they also tried to find new historical sources available for writing the history of Africa, particularly precolonial Africa. In concrete terms, Japanese Africanists have made a great effort to write variegated aspects of African history by utilizing such sources as historical descriptions handed down in the process of Christianization and Islamization in Africa, and narratives by professional storytellers (e.g. Griot). The process of compiling and interpreting historical sources is always coloured by the politics of the time period, and

therefore historians who try to comprehend historical sources need to be able to search into the 'magnetic field of politics' in which those historical records and narratives were written.[8]

Overview of main topics of recent Japanese African historiography

1990s–the present time

The end of the Cold War, with the collapse of socialist political economies and the abolition of Apartheid in South Africa, radically changed the international environment of historical studies in general and African history in particular. The rise of globalization/globalism (and/or neoliberalism) presumably witnessed the historicizing (thinking historically) of Africa ebbing away. Thought was oriented to the present, emphasizing the divide/discontinuity from the past, and African history tended to be considered in the context of connectedness with and placement in a non-African world; the migration of the African diaspora and their existence in other worlds, for instance.[9]

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Japan enjoyed a substantially more eminent position in the international arena and was requested to clearly account for its engagement with the outside world. In particular, the international community required Japan to play an appropriate role, according to its ability to provide, for instance, official development assistance to developing countries and areas, including sub-Saharan Africa. This led to the launch of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in 1993. Undoubtedly, this official project encouraged academic circles and civil society to set up a number of new agreements that included facilitating various fields of African studies by Japanese Africanists (Kitagawa, 2013).

The rapid rise of East and South-East Asian countries compared with the fatigue felt among European donor countries opened the opportunity to challenge

8 For example, historians have to consider colonial and postcolonial history of Africa primarily based on reading historical documents of the colonial period in a critical and creative manner and then investigating any deficiencies, lack of continuity or modifications hidden in those sources. Such work is subtle but essential to deepen understanding of the past of the African continent.

9 Therefore, historical study of Africa is compelled to seriously confront its epistemological evolution in terms of re-reading the historical sources and rethinking the role of historians as witnesses to history. In other words, there was no era like the present when historians have to be seriously conscious of the historical 'magnetic field' surrounding them. The challenge for historians today is to review and reflect on history in general and African history in particular, as well as the historical imagination of Africa and the self-consciousness of Africanist historians themselves.

Euro centric ideas of history in a critical manner. Also, the process of globalization/globalism in the 1990s caused the analytical methodology of historical studies to be unsettled and turbulent, groping in the dark to reconstruct an epistemological framework to history in general and African history in particular. Japanese Africanists strove to break new ground in cross-cultural interaction between Africa and Japan or East Asia in a wider sense and exploring new historical resources. They also worked to publish introductory African history primarily based on original research by social anthropologists and monographs through collaboration among historians and anthropologists, with the purpose of constructing new frameworks of Africanist history through research on African experience under colonial rule.[10]

Main topics

Prehistory and precolonial studies

Archaeology, palaeoanthropology and prehistory are indispensable to clarify the ancient times of sub-Saharan Africa and its letterless societies. From the late 1960s to the present time, Japanese scholars have continued to contribute to this field of research in East Africa. This kind of research by Japanese Africanist historians is very rare, but some of them are involved in studying and restoring the ancient buildings of religious houses of Ethiopian Christianity. Since the 1970s, archaeological research and excavation have made great progress in various sites and ruins on the African continent, and a variety of historical themes have shed new light on rewriting African pre-history. The main themes of African archaeology include exploring origins of cultivation and metallurgical technology, the development of urbanism, state formation, and long-distance trade. Little progress was made in Japan, but Shoichiro Takezawa's work on *Excavating Kingdoms in West Africa* (2014), based on cultural anthropology and archaeology, is notable, among others.

It is fairly difficult to establish one definite chronological division of a historical period into which almost all regions on the vast and diversified African continent can be fitted. However, it is undeniable that the Islamic invasion in the seventh century signalled the coming of a new era because it had enormous influence on the vast area of the African continent. (Ishikawa,

10 In this regard, it could be useful to rethink and re-explore the complicated state of affairs in colonial Africa with a strictly critical assessment of such historical documents as the *British Parliamentary Papers,* which consisted of huge piles of all records and discourses in the British Empire as one essential case study (Kurimoto and Inose, 1999; Inose and Kitagawa, 2011).

2009; Kariya, 2012). Thereafter, the advent of European people on the coastal areas of Africa in the late fifteenth century and the conquest of the Ottoman Empire in North Africa were also great turning points for the same reason. Moreover, the emergence of social and cultural turmoil in various regions were also a critically important phenomenon in precolonial Africa. It is important to realize that the precolonial period should not be confined to the period on the eve of colonization by European powers but recognized as the longer period from the seventh to the early nineteenth century. Important themes in this period include the expansion of Islam, the formation of society and culture on the Swahili coast, the slave trade and the transformation of slavery, and the vicissitudes of people in South and East Africa, including the ebb and flow on the Zimbabwean plateau (Sakai, 2003; Tominaga, 2001; Yoshikuni, 1999).

Slave trade

Although the slave trade tends to have been viewed from the specific viewpoint of the trading of human beings by other human beings, this trade played a significant historical role that should not be ignored, and it was a well-known factor that connected the African continent with other areas in the development of the Atlantic triangular trade. Also, the slave trade had a grave influence on the population dynamism and ethnic organization in certain areas on the African continent. In addition, the painful memories of slave trade were occasionally evoked by people residing both inside and outside the African continent, and some cases led to serious political conflicts. Therefore, the history of slave trade cannot be treated as a remotely isolated past event but is deeply connected with present issues and mindsets.

In Japan, until recent times, the study of slave trade developed in the field of economic history and the results of overseas research were shared with a Japanese readership. Japanese Africanist economic historians have paid more attention to the slave trade by Britain and France, and slavery in North America and Britain, than to slavery within Africa. Another focal point of economic history was the examination of the so-called 'William's thesis', which explained that increased labour demand on the sugar plantations in the Caribbean, and therefore slavery, was a major contributor to the profits of the British economy. Mari Fujii explored the institutions and practices of the slave trade in Senegal by the French India Company (Fujii, 2001), and Ryo Ogawa described the realities of the slave trade and social change in Senegambia, primarily based on records of French slave traders in the seventeenth century

(Ogawa, 2002). In the case of the western Indian Ocean, Hideaki Suzuki explored the complicated aspects of conflicting interests among slave traders towards abolition by referring to various documents kept in local archives in East Africa (Suzuki, 2013).

Colonial rule/colonialism in Africa

Colonial rule in Africa developed substantially from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. Although several decades have passed since African states achieved their independence in the mid-twentieth century, in some areas there has been denial of that legacy and the contradictions of colonialism are even now tangible in the form of political and social conflicts.

Colonial regimes have influenced almost all areas of the African continent. Even now, various aspects of African peoples' daily lives have been directly and indirectly influenced by political turmoil within national boundaries demarcated by a partition of Africa without any consideration of the local context, and by a distorted economic structure imposed upon Africans linked to the division of labour in European empires. Also, colonialism has significantly influenced the inner consciousness of African peoples, represented in language, culture and the idea of gender in African communities. Needless to say, further analytical research is required from the historical perspective.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Japanese Africanist historians stated that investigation into colonialism in Africa started with serious concern about the historical background of nationalist movements towards political independence in Africa as a reference model for democratization and self-determination in Japan. Even now, Japanese Africanist historians have continued in the struggle to deepen and widen their research towards establishing new horizons of studying colonialism in Africa (Inose and Kitagawa, 2011).

African diaspora: African history bridging world/global history

The term 'diaspora' derives from the Greek word for 'disperse'. This term originally indicated Jewish people dispersed from Palestine and in British-American studies in the 1950s began to be used in the phrase 'African diaspora'

to refer to those who historically originated from that continent.[11] In the 1960s Hideo Oda had already tried to clarify relations between Africa and the diaspora with special attention to Pan-Africanism. However, among Japanese Africanists it is regrettable that studies of the African diaspora from the macroscopic perspective developed less than studies of individual states and areas from the microscopic perspective (Yanaihara and Oda, 1989).

In recent times, diaspora studies seem to lodge a protest against the Eurocentricism of global history, opening the way to the globalization of African history or the Africanization of global history. The concept of diaspora was taken up very recently among Japanese Africanists. Ichiro Majima tried to reconstruct the concept of the Atlantic World as a Eurogenic creation in his editorship of *Individual Organisms in Twentieth-century Africa: Interrogation from the Americas, Caribbean, and Africa* (Majima, 2011). The historical phenomenon of the African diaspora is not confined to the Atlantic system but can be studied in terms of the migration of the diaspora into the west of the Indian Ocean[12] (Suzuki, 2013).

Additionally, Japanese Africanists started to research Africans living in Japan in recent times. Until the early 1980s there were few Africans living in Japan, but thereafter the number increased rapidly. Today, people moving to Japan from various countries in Africa include not only students and elite officials in African embassies, but also ordinary workers employed in the used car industry and entertainers in the world of show business. It is pleasant to hear that African people who experienced living in Japan are often involved in setting up Africa-Japan-friendly societies after returning to their home countries. Now seems to be the time when new generations of young promising Africans are coming to Japan, and Japanese Africanists must begin to research the historical background of African-Japan relations and interactions, the current condition

11 In the late eighteenth century, Europeans thought of Africa as 'the continent without history', and in the colonial period from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, they described Africa as 'the darkest continent' where people lived unchanging, like fossils, since the birth of mankind. At the beginning of the twentieth century, African American historians/thinkers and members of the African diaspora quickened their pace in inquiring about their own identities to demolish the negative image of Africans invented by outsiders. These scholars had developed various views of the African diaspora. However, people of the African diaspora were broadly classified either as 'classical diaspora', who were forced to migrate by slave trading and pursue their symbolic roots in Africa in general or 'new diaspora', who voluntarily dispersed from Africa in the twentieth century and identified individual areas and countries on the African continent as their roots. In Japan, those diasporas are likely to be called 'Black diaspora', with the attention on the racial character of those groups (Ogura and Komai, 2011).

12 Ichiro Majima tried to rethink the 'Black Atlantic' raised by Gilroy without focusing on the symbolic existence of 'Africa' and 'South' in the diaspora studies, but rather on the actual existence of individuals who migrated both in and out of the African continent as labourers, middlemen and refugees.

of the communities formed by African people living in Japan, and employment conditions from the wider perspective of African diaspora studies.[13]

African history and gender

Since the 1980s women's history has developed into gender history, asking questions about such issues as the social position of women, femininity and masculinity, and the constructive process of relations between men and women. African history is no exception to this debate. In historical studies of Africa in Japan, women's history and gender history were introduced by Japanese women Africanist historians since 2000 and the importance of these subjects is widely recognised among Japanese Africanist scholars. In the 2000s a new project on the history of Africa from women's and gender perspectives began and its outcome was edited by Chizuko Tominaga and Yoko Nagahara to rethink the historical process on the African continent. The study in women's history was inaugurated in order to reorient and rewrite history which was written exclusively from a male-centric perspective in the study of historical science (Tominaga and Nagahara, 2006).

Conclusion

Towards the end of the twentieth century the wave of reconsidering 'world history' emerged, along with the growing movement of a decolonizing mindset which has continued to evolve in Africa and Asia since the 1960s. New attempts to reconstruct 'world history', including newly emerging independent states in Africa, and new research on connections between African history and world history, are coming into existence. However, a negative or pessimistic image of Africa as a sort of sacrificial victim in world history seemed to still prevail, and African history was allocated very limited time and space in the history textbooks of primary and secondary school education.

13 Generally speaking, the discourse 'Africa is far away' is circulated in daily conversation among ordinary people in Japan. There is no denying that, in reality, Africa is very far in terms of geography. However, when one looks back to the geography part of *Sekai Kunizukushi,* written by Yukichi Fukuzawa in 1869, it should be remembered that one volume had already been exclusively devoted to Africa and that Japanese people in the Meiji period had already expressed interest in Africa. One is apt to think that Japan's relations with Africa started with the birth of newly independent Africa after the Second World War, but more attention should be paid to the long history of active and actual relations since the late nineteenth century (Okakura and Kitagawa, 1993).

In the beginning of the twenty-first century the rise of an alternative vision tries not to peripheralize but rather centralize African history in the context of world history. It is much to be desired that African history and world history transform themselves into a sphere of intellectual practice and discourse to keep a distance from a stereotypically progressive view of history, and consider the integration of human activities, the value of security in the human community, and transition from sanction to reconciliation as a resolution of conflicts all over the world.

The philosophy and ideology of 'truth and reconciliation' – generated in the post-Apartheid era after a century-long struggle against racial segregation in South Africa – should also be mentioned here. Methodological attitudes emphasizing 'social relatedness' were strongly shared in the consciousness among African scholars whose standpoint was that 'people are wealth, people are power' (Nagahara, 2000, 2009). Such an ethos sees the value of human beings as being determined by their contribution to knowledge and experience in their own communities, while related views and perceptions lead to the recognition that women may represent valuable and reciprocal 'social relatedness'. In short, small-scale communities and their sustainability are considered to have been an essential foundation throughout world history.

Moreover, the study of environmental history opened the way to reconstruct the method of understanding that African history is a dynamic process including complex interaction of human beings and housing, nature and society, history and geography, with a result that the dichotomy of the 'merry African' historical perspective and 'apocalyptic African' should be fundamentally criticized.

The African continent is like a theatre stage where the human being was born, acted and lived for the longest time, achieving a great number of changes and innovations, and bringing their social life into modern times. This kind of long-term perspective on the history of mankind will offer the opportunity to re-centre (re-mainstream) Africa in global history. Thus, joint research projects involving palaeontology, evolutionary biology, ecology, epidemiology, and historical linguistics are essential to correctly reevaluating these human achievements.

There is no doubt today that the historical study of Africa stands in an era of challenge which strictly requests close attention to global relatedness along with the resetting of space and time in historical studies research. Therefore, while Japanese Africanist historians have to fully recognize both the world and the position of Japan therein, they have to be consciously involved in the study of the history of Africa and the world, and the worldwide movement of history education.

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CHAPTER 6

SPEAKING OF HISTORY IN AFRICAN LANGUAGES

Olabiyi B. J. Yai

'Our time has come.'
Aimé Césaire

'Many think that it's over with philology; I think it has not yet begun.'
Friedrich Nietzsche

Introduction

An epistemologically reflective essay on the notion of history in African languages should, from the outset, be based on Professor J. Ki-Zerbo's opening sentence to the *General History of Africa* (GHA) (Ki-Zerbo, 1980). This overture, in the strictly musicological sense, is what makes this whole work the African and global intellectual adventure it is: 'Africa has a history'.

Ki-Zerbo's affirmation here was a more affirmative and cryptic reiteration of the opinion expressed a few pages before in the preface to the same work by Amadou M. M'Bow, himself a historian and Director-General of UNESCO at the time, according to which myths and prejudices of all kinds had obscured the real history of Africa in the eyes of the world.

We have good grounds to suppose that the author of this sentence meant it in its most direct, positive, peremptory, almost kerygmatic sense. Today, this might

appear obvious, or even a banality for the boldest among us. It nonetheless had a revolutionary character at the time. With hindsight and allowing for the ethics of doubt that should inspire any epistemological enterprise, we are now able to legitimately question the epistemological basis of such a statement and raise suspicions about the solidity of the foundations on which it is built. We might, for example, wish to consider things from the point of view of Africans who are monolingual in African languages – surely, at the final reckoning, the prime target audience of such an enterprise as to write their continent's general history.

First and foremost, it is important to bring up the paradox of this *General History of Africa* 'coming out' (to use a modern term) in non-African languages. Indeed, it is difficult to envisage a *General History of Asia* or *Europe*, destined for these continents, not being written, from the outset, in any Asian or European language. An 'African exception' was thus made right at the beginning of the exercise, a form of stigma that should not escape our epistemological analysis.

In his introduction to a seminal book published under Pierre Legendre's direction and entitled *Tour du monde des concepts* [World Tour of Concepts], Jean-Noël Robert (Legendre, 2013) made the following points, highly relevant to our purpose:

> It is fascinating to examine the way in which words that human beings believe speak of the same notions in different languages propagate and diverge, with apparent synonymies revealing profound misunderstandings. It also takes some intellectual audacity to begin such an examination, given the immensity of the task.

The same idea was expressed by the poet Tristan Tzara as far back as the early twentieth century when he presented our world 'thrown into the mould of unanimous approximations', in which we were 'moving notions around and confusing their vestments with their names' (Tzara, 1931).

What better way to characterize the situation of unequal linguistic exchanges – this Babel, anti-Pentecost, as old as colonization itself and exacerbated by the wobbly globalization that fostered neoliberalism? Jean-Noël Robert provides us with a critique of the situation of what is nowadays called world cultural and linguistic dialogue, indicating our difficult exit route. In the context of an epistemological reflection on African history, it is hard not to re-examine Ki-Zerbo's sentence in the light of Robert's pertinent observations. This gives rise to many issues, including those we propose to analyse in the course of this chapter. It is thus difficult to understand why, in his essay, Ki-Zerbo very pertinently explores and explains the notion of 'Africa' but remains silent on the concept of 'history', in spite of its focal positioning in the project's title. Is it

possible that this non-problematized concept is one of those that were 'thrown into the mould of unanimous approximations'? Before we begin to ask this question, it is nonetheless important to make the point that Joseph Ki-Zerbo's emblematic sentence is an answer. An answer to the rhetorical question that the colonizers and racists asked the colonized Africans: 'Africa has a history?'. Of course, the implication of this rhetorical question is... 'a history like ours?' By answering in the affirmative, and in the language of the individual assuming the role of interrogator, Ki-Zerbo's sentence appears to surreptitiously endorse the interrogator's subtext. At the very least, it leaves itself open to the plausibility of such an interpretation. We can imagine, then, the potentialities of immense misunderstandings, or misunderstandings well understood. When an African trained as a historian writes African history in Russian, French or English, does he refer to the same history-subject as that enunciated by a traditionalist intellectual who expresses himself in an African language?

Language matters

Do the two specialists move and deploy their activities in commensurable disciplinary worlds? Do they share the same historiographical project? Are their canons of truthfulness the same or are they always reconcilable? To what extent can they place these canons into dialogue with each other? What concepts, notions or activities does the word 'history' invoke in these European languages and are these synonymous in African languages?

We agree, then, that these are major questions silenced or, quite simply, quashed, in Professor Ki-Zerbo's kerygmatic sentence. But how can we begin to find an answer if we do not first address Africans? Clearly, if an African history exists, if Africans have a history, this must evidently derive from agents of thought rooted in African reality and speaking in African thought-languages.

All historical projects are deployed, or intended for deployment, in a non-innocent universe where received ideas, unspoken choices, and even biases and prejudices operate. We must, therefore, face the facts: the choice or constraint of writing a *General History of Africa* in non-African (in this case, European) languages placed the project, from the outset, within a non-African arena or historiography. This was in spite of its claims to radicality and the aspiration of an epistemological break with the past, without prejudging the quality of the expected result. For example, failing to subject the founding concept of history to 'the experience of the foreign' (Berman, 1984) which, in this particular context, would essentially

have been the experience of *terroir* – a question of passing a concept thought up and expressed in European languages through the prism of African languages – is equivalent to avoiding putting it in its historical perspective. Hence the methodological paradox of African and Africanist historians thus endorsing an ahistorical view of the concept of history, something that cannot be ignored. The fact that most authors of the GHA studied in Western-style academic institutions, regardless of their cultures of origin and ideologies, means it would not be out of place to say that the GHA took its train from the Western historiographic station.

The initial reflex of linguists concerned with epistemological vigilance would thus be to place a term as fundamental and strategic as 'history' under their critical microscope, trying to think of it first in African languages, then, later on, or better, at the same time, between these and all the other languages in which African history is, or could be, thought and written about (Benveniste, 1969; Wiredu, 1996). The challenge lies in freeing the word 'history' from what François Jullien (Jullien, 2015), in terms similar to Jean-Noël Robert's comment quoted above, referred to as 'forced synonymy' or even 'somnolence of synonymies'. Drawing upon African languages, it must be disoriented, removing the notional precedence induced by colonialism and surreptitiously held up as the universal arena of historical thought. It must, in short, be shaken from its satisfied tranquillity. The possibility of a truly general and truly African history is at stake, envisaged through language – a condition for an inclusive and equal universal history.

While it may be true that, as human beings and therefore beings of language, we can communicate with other human beings, whatever languages they speak, the fact remains that each language is nevertheless a way of thinking (thought-language) and a vehicle of culture (culture-language). Languages and cultures always exist in the singular. Speaking of languages, Saussure was right to talk about an 'absolute of difference'. Although language does not always determine thought, there can be no thought without a specific language and, in our discursive activities, it is impossible for us to always do without these 'linguistic inflections of thought' described by Nietzsche (Nietzsche, 2000). Language is, indeed, the first *institution* of a socio-political community. It is instructive, in this respect, to contrast the metaphors used to express this institution. In most European languages, the word is derived from the main organ of the human body that comes into play when we express ourselves: *lingua, langue, lengua, tongue.* Moving away from this metaphor applicable to all humans, the Yoruba language uses *èdè*, a metaphor that refers to a rope or string that ties, knots, unites (*dè*) the community of users of this human faculty. Yoruba therefore emphasizes its role as a 'tool', an 'instrument' (string, rope) created, instituted to

allow people to live together. The two metaphors illustrate the universality and similarity (*lingua, lengua, langue, tongue*), as well as the singularity and creativity (*èdè*) of and in language.

To convince ourselves of the unavoidable nature of language in any innovative historiographical project, it is enough to consider, even within historiographic tradition and English thought-language for example, the emergence of the concept of *herstory*. This neologism, created in the context of the rise of feminism, is the result of a brilliant, albeit false, etymology of the English word 'history', the genuine etymology of which can be traced back to the Greek *ístor*. Here we have a typical example of a deliberate linguistic inflection of thought that seizes upon universal historical discourse as a *consensus virorum doctorum* and claims to reorient and renew it. We have, then, understood that the *linguistic turn* is a foundation for any African writing that aspires towards an authentic epistemological break with the past.

Yoruba views on history

We will now take some examples from Yoruba to explore how 'history' is spoken about in Africa. For the type of exercise in question, navigating between two languages, one of which serves as a 'horse of speech' (Yoruba proverb) is a potentially dangerous exercise. We must therefore subject ourselves to the discipline of thinking about concepts in one language (Yoruba) and then analysing them and seeing them evolve within the intellectual tradition and discursive ecology of the original language and, secondarily, other African languages, before rendering such a dynamic in a European tongue. It is especially important to avoid the pitfall of retrojecting European language concepts surreptitiously and unconsciously taken as benchmarks in the Yoruba language of thought, since this is not a translation or terminology enrichment exercise. And precisely because we are not in translation but, rather, epistemological reflection mode, there is, in Yoruba thought, an upstream version of the notion of 'history', without which the term has no meaning.

This upstream word is *ayé*, and it expresses its anteriority – both notional and chronological – through the following sentence: *Ìgbà ni a ní, a ò ní ayé:* 'We possess/have taken on *ìgbà*; we do not possess/have not taken on *ayé*'. (We have taken on a time or an era, but life-death is out of our reach.)

Ayé means 'existence', 'life' and 'world'. *Ìgbà* could be translated as 'time' or 'era'. This word is commonly used in the temporal expressions of the Yoruba language and has been so often translated into European languages by the word 'time', 'era' or 'period' that it is no longer deemed worthy of etymological analysis.

However, like most disyllabic nouns of type V + CV (vowel + consonant and vowel), its analysis yields two elements: a verbal basis *gbà*, to which is assigned the nominalizing morpheme *Ì-*. The verb *gbà* means: to contain, receive, accept, take, be filled, admit, thus suggesting that *Ìgbà* has a spatial metaphor at its origin. *Ìgbà* would therefore be a receptacle, a container, first and foremost. Moreover, as is sometimes the case in Yoruba, this word has a quasi-homophone: *Igbá* (medium tone + high tone, instead of two low tones), to which it must be semantically related, and which means: 'calabash', the primordial container. As the language developed, the spatial metaphor was thus transformed, taking on a spatial-temporal value. *Ìgbà* is what contains us, takes us, and what we fill. Time would thus be a space that contains us and holds us, like a vessel contains a liquid, for example.

How, then, do we unfurl ourselves within this calabash, *Ìgbà*? How is temporality organized within *Ìgbà*?

Although time could be considered a natural datum of the human experience, each community structures it precisely through the institution that is thought-language. All the studies carried out on time in Yoruba are teleological in their orientation (Fayemi, 2017), insofar as they aim to examine Yoruba temporality based on that of a modernity arbitrarily conceived from the outset as Euro-American. We would therefore prefer to start with the Yoruba language and what it offers in its structure, along with the aphorisms sedimented therein. The organization of time-space into 'days experienced', with its notional consequences 'the day before' and 'the day(s) after', could be deemed a universal feature of human thought. The temporal structure of the Yoruba language, from this point of view, is quadripartite. It yields the following nouns that must be submitted to linguistic analysis:

Òní
Àná
Òla
Òtúnla.

ÒNÍ can be analysed as the disyllabic basic verbal noun *NÍ*, preceded by the nominalizing morpheme *Ò-*. The verb *NÍ* means 'to have', 'to possess'. Within *Ìgbà*, *ÒNÍ* would thus refer to the portion we have, we possess – that which

belongs to us, hence the proverb '*Òní ni a rí, kò sí eni tí ó mo òla*': '*Òní* is what we see, no one knows *Òla*'. We could thus reasonably translate *ÒNÍ* as 'this day', the one that belongs to us, i.e. 'today'.

What about *ÒLA*? This can be analysed as the verbal base *LA*, preceded by the nominalizing prefix *Ò-*. The verb *LA*, together with the semi-open vowel *O* in standard Yoruba becomes *LO*. Several dialects nevertheless use *LA* for the same meaning = 'to go', 'to go away towards an indeterminate horizon', 'to come towards the speaker'. Hence its translation, when followed by *òní*, as 'tomorrow'. The proverb quoted above under *ÒNÍ* could thus be translated as: 'We see/own today, but no one knows tomorrow'.

ÀNÁ is the third element of the quadripartite structure. It is commonly translated as 'yesterday', 'the past'. Symmetrical with the two companions preceding it within *Ìgbà*, it is actually a dissyllabic noun that can be analysed as: *NÁ*, the verbal nucleus that nominalizes the morpheme *À-* The verb *NÁ* means 'to spend', 'to exhaust' (a resource, or even the body). Within *Ìgbà, ÀNÁ* would thus refer to the portion spent, consumed – that which we no longer have (*NÍ*). This is confirmed by the popular proverb '*Ayé lojà, Òrun nilé*': 'Life/existence/the world is a market. The hereafter is our home.' The dead have finished 'spending', 'exhausting' their existence in this world, which thus becomes their yesterday. They join the ancestors in our most certain home (*òrun*), just like all Yoruba, who, after the market (ojà) with all its action and transactions, return home.

The last element of the quadruplet *ÒTÚNLA* is actually a simple noun consisting of *ÒTÚN* + *ÒLA*. *ÒTÚN* is a noun that can be rendered by 'the right side', 'the right'. However, as a disyllabic substantive, it is susceptible to be decomposed etymologically into *TÚN*, the verbal basis that indicates the repetition of an act, and the nominalizing morpheme *Ò-*. *ÒTÚNLA* is, so to speak, 'to the right of tomorrow', 'tomorrow repeated'. Usually translated as 'the day after tomorrow', it actually refers to the iteration *ad infinitum* of *òla* within *Ìgbà*.

These elements, forming the quadruplet that defines temporality in Yoruba, maintain a relationship of solidarity with one another. Above all, through apprehension and intelligence, they are liable to be subjected to a discursive type of investment by *Òrúnmìlà*, the divinity of wisdom, inquiry and knowledge, thanks to a system known as *Ifá*. Hence the following sentence:

Ifá ló lòní
Ifá ló làná
Ifá ló lòtúnla pèlú è
Òrúnmìlà ló lojó mérèèrin Òrìsà dáyé

(Ifa apprehends today
Ifa apprehends the past
Ifa also apprehends what is beyond tomorrow
Orunmila has/apprehends the four days created by the Creator).

It is important to note the original approach in relation to Orunmilà. It starts with *òní* (what is in our possession, acquired), then evolves to *àná* (what we have exhausted) before straddling *òla*, which is not mentioned in the sentence, further projecting itself through the renewal *ad infinitum* of *òla*, i.e. *òtúnla*. The self, based on its experience (today), scrutinizes its 'yesterday', before projecting itself into its 'future' within this temporality. Here, we can easily recognize the intervention of *Sankofa* (Nascimento and Gá, 2009), the mythical bird of the Akan civilizations. Due to the fact that this temporality is divided into four interdependent elements that follow each other and do not resemble each other, allowing movement backwards and forwards, their interrogation at regular intervals is recommended. Through this, the bedrock of historical discursive practice is revealed:

Bí òní ti rí
Òla kò rí béè
Ni babaláwo fi ń dífá oroorún
(Today is thus
Tomorrow will not be so
And the wise man questions/wonders every four days).

In other words, although a linearity can be observed, there is no teleology, and each element can act upon the other(s) at any time: today can contain tomorrow or yesterday.

After this examination of the basic concepts, let us now examine the words and concepts related to discursive practices, the genres related to these practices and the people who devote themselves to them – the thinking agents of Yoruba's historical reality and the texts resulting from their take on it.

Genres: *àló, ìtàn, àróbá, oríkì*

ÀLÓ: Its etymology indicates its formation from the verb *LÓ*, preceded by the prefix *À-*. The verb *LÓ* means: 'to twist', 'to turn', 'to transplant a plant', 'to turn or become almost non-drinkable' when the subject of the verb is a liquid.

What is common to all these meanings – the characteristic semantic feature they share – is the idea of being 'non-original', 'non-straight', 'non-rectilinear'. The discourse of *ÀLÓ* would thus be 'non-rectilinear' or 'twisted', 'marked from the outset by non-authenticity', 'transplanted' from one sphere of *AYÉ* (life-existence-world) to another. Translators frequently equate this with a 'tale' or 'myth', often contrasting it with *ÌTÀN*, which they translate as 'story', 'narrative'. Things are less simple, however, when seen from the point of view of the Yoruba Weltanschauung, within which human, plant, animal, visible and invisible worlds and levels are permeable, porous and subject to transplantation.

ÌTÀN is a major word in the conceptual and epistemological arsenal of Yoruba discourses on life. It can be analysed etymologically as *Ì-*, the nominalizing prefix, coming before the verb *TÀN*. This verb is eminently polysemic. According to the context in which it appears, it can mean, *inter alia,* 'to spread', 'to sprawl', 'to develop', 'to light', 'to enlighten', 'to illuminate', 'to investigate', 'to dig'. The semantic invariant that we could draw from this whole range of meanings is the notion of extension, of deployment from one point to another indeterminate point, both horizontally and vertically. *ÌTÀN* is favoured by translators when it comes to rendering the concept of 'history' in Yoruba. However, it is not certain that the Yoruba use a single term for all the intellectual activities that account for their take on the world and the way they go about their activities in *Ayé*.

ÀRÓBÁ can be etymologically broken down as the nominalizing prefix *À-* and the verbal series *RÓ* and *BÁ*. The verb *RÓ* means 'to interpret', 'to translate'. This is the word used to describe the action or activity of saying aloud to the Muslim community what the imam says in Arabic, or what is supposed to be so, along with the enunciations of a crier, or an interpreter of a king or dignitary, who always address them in a low voice, generally not audible to the public. The verb *BÁ* means 'to join', 'to rejoin', 'to find oneself there', 'to be present', 'to already be found there'. *ÀRÓBÁ* thus takes on the meaning of 'interpreted speech found', 'interpreted speech that is already there'. The following proverb clarifies this meaning and sheds light on the relationship between *ÌTÀN* and *ÀRÓBÁ*:

Bí omo kò bá bá ìtàn
Omo a sì bá àróbá
Àróbá baba ìtàn.
(If the youth has not known ìtàn
At least they will know àróbá
Àróbá is the father of ìtàn).

Here we realize that *ÌTÀN* refers to past experience (*BÁ* = to be present), whereas *ÀRÓBÁ* refers to the interpretation of something that has happened in the past by others – something that can be found by the individual, already interpreted. *ÀRÓBÁ* is thus, literally, 'oral tradition'. This proverb also reveals something important. If oral-tradition-as-interpretation is the 'father' or 'spawner' (*baba*) of past experience, it follows that all narratives, all history, equate to interpretation.

ORÍKÌ can be etymologically broken down into *ORÍ*, a noun, and *KÌ*, a verb. *ORÍ* means 'head' – not in a physical or anatomical sense but, rather, in the spiritual and, so to speak, ontological sense of individuality and a tutelary deity relating to everything that exists (Abiodun, 2014). Everything that exists has its *ORÍ*. The verb *KÌ*, meanwhile, means to 'pack', 'pile', or 'load', in the sense that this word takes in relation to a traditional hand-made rifle, into which we load or pack bullets, powder and other substances.

ORÍKÌ is, *mutatis mutandis*, the Yoruba version of the discursive practice witnessed in several African cultures referred to by French Africanists using the approximate term 'devise' (*praise poetry* in English), like '*zamu*' in Songhai (Sardan, 1982), '*mlànmlán*' in Fon, and '*izibongo*' in Zulu. In Yoruba, everything that exists or is called to exist has or will have its *ORÍKÌ*: divinities, kings, the honest ordinary people or *bòròkìní* (note the similarity of meaning and form with *Burkina*), towns and villages, waterways, plants, clans and lineages, trades, notions, technological innovations that enter the Yoruba world, and so on. One of the functions of *ORÍKÌ* is to reactivate its subject's past in the present, and, through the reverse gesture, with its corresponding verb *KÌ*, to unwind (so to speak) all the items stacked in the *ORÍ* of the entity to which the *ORÍKÌ* discourse is addressed. Karin Barber describes this major genre of Yoruba discourse as follows:

> *Oríkì*…can open windows simultaneously onto the past and the present. They are the principle means by which a living relationship with the past is daily apprehended and reconstituted in the present. They are not "history" in the sense of an overview or attempt to make sense of a sequence of events, but a way of experiencing the past by bringing it back to life. They represent the "past in the present", a past which they have brought with them, and which can be reopened and reactivated by their agency. But they also represent the "present in the past", for through all the stages of their transmission they do not lose their relationship of contemporaneity to the events they refer to. A key notion to retain from this testimony is the idea that *oríkì* represents both the "present in the past" and the "past in the present" (Barber, 1991).

The sources of these speeches vary, along with the places in which they are enunciated. *ÀLÓ* has its specialists (*apàlọ́*) and is only practised at night, as befits the nature of its 'skewed', 'non-genuine' discourse. *ÌTÀN* is the privilege of the elders, the wise, the soothsayers. Orúnmìlà, the divinity of knowledge and wisdom, whose words constitute the *Ifá* corpus (Olupona and Abiodun, 2016) is *ÌTÀN's* place of enunciation *par excellence*. He is thus referred to as *Òpìtàn ilè Ifè* ('Historian throughout Ifè', i.e. Yoruba country). Note that the verb used to express the discursive activity of *ÀLÓ*, as well as that of ÌTÀN, is *PA*. This same verb is the one that takes *adìe* (chicken) as its subject, or egg (*eyin*) or kola nut (*obì*) as its object. Both *ÀLÓ* and *ÌTÀN* are therefore conceived as compact, closed objects or entities to be opened as one opens the two lobes of a kola nut or as an egg hatches to reveal its contents. They are respectively translated by tale/myth and history but are nevertheless discursive activities that aim to open up an enigma, to prise forth the unknown. *PA ÌTÀN* or *PA ÀLÓ* always take us back to this deciphering stance.

Since everything that exists has its *oríkì*, it is not surprising that they come from a wide and diverse range of sources, ranging from the most ordinary citizens to specialists in the most advanced esoteric subjects. Women recite and teach *oríkì* relating to their extended families. Hunters specialize in *oríkì* of animals and plants, towns and villages, lineages and *bòròkìní*. As is the case elsewhere in Africa, the Yoruba kings have their specialist bodies of *orírkì*, the benefits of which go beyond the production of a corpus of dynastic *oríkì* (Farias, 1992). Of these, one particular group deserves a special mention, certainly constituting an exceptional or at least rare case of experts in historical discourse. These are the poets of the palace of Aláàfin, king of Oyo, named *AKÙNYÙNGBÀ*, the speeches of which are reserved for Aláàfin and his palace (Akinyemi, 2004). An etymological analysis of the name *akùnyùngbà* reveals a lot about the type and horizon of expectations in this discourse. It can be broken down into: *a*-nominalizing prefix; *kùn*, the verb and central core of the word, which means 'grumbling', 'growling' (like a dog), 'moaning', 'spreading negative but true rumours about someone'.

Yùngbà is an ideophone used as an adverb and appears exclusively with the verb *dùn* – 'to be nice, sweet'. The *dùn yùngbà* couplet thus means: 'to be sweet, honeyed, pleasant, to experience the ecstasy of orgasm'. The association of the verb *kùn* with the ideophone-adverb *yùngbà* is thus paradoxical. The negative value of *kùn* would not normally allow for the selection of the ideophone *yùngbà*, with its positive valency, as an adverb. It is indeed an oxymoron. The *Akùnyùngbà* are thus *sweet and bitter*. In their speeches, they are able to

associate and harmonize sharp criticism with verbal orgasm. The fact that these discourses are peppered with sharp criticism of the king causes their authors to 'sweeten their bitter moaning', so to speak. Two verses that are frequently drawn upon as a leitmotif and serve a phatic function (Jakobson, 1960) in *Akùnyùngbà* discourse are revealing in this respect:

E jé n sààlò ná
Kí n tóó sàfojúdi
(Permit me, sire, to begin by flattering you
Because I'm then going to be impertinent).

Oríkì and *ìtàn* are both complementary and symbiotic. Although they cannot be hierarchized, the fact that *ìtàn* is the prerogative of sages, old men and 'soothsayers' gives it the aura of a firstborn child.

Here, it is necessary to return to the polysemy of the basic component of *ìtàn*, the verb *tàn*. The geochronological and spatio-temporal dimension of *ìtàn* as expansion, development, the act of leaving a house (*Ilé*), as a starting point, indicates that, for the Yoruba, the diaspora is the natural mode of historical existence, everyone having left from *Ilé-Ifè*.

This dimension of the *ìtàn* concept should not be ignored since it is an essential foundation of the Yoruba intellectual tradition. Hence the meaning of *tàn* not only as 'to enlighten', 'to illuminate', but also 'to dig', 'to rummage', like a rooster rummaging around in the manure for a worm. *Ìtàn* thus requires enlightenment and deepening by whoever chooses to make it a profession. He/she will focus on opening (*ṣí*) the enigma-object that is *ìtàn*, by covering the four elements that make up temporality as ordained by Orisà (the Divine): *ÒNÌ* (today, the present), *ÀNÁ* (yesterday, the past), *ÒLA* (tomorrow, the future) and *ÒTÚNLA* (beyond tomorrow, the indeterminate future).

A linguistic analysis of the words (verbs, nouns, adverbs and their combinations permitted in the language) used to express the notion of 'history' in Yoruba intellectual traditions does not, in isolation, allow conclusions to be drawn on what might be a Yoruba epistemology of history. This would require a deep analysis and synthesis of a vast body of discursive practices at work in the genres identified above, which could only be attempted by a multidisciplinary team of bilingual-bicultural researchers aware that the disciplines of Western universities and Yoruba intellectual tradition do not overlap.

The analysis outlined above nevertheless allows some observations to be made and questions posed: If, to say 'history', the Yoruba, like many other

African peoples, resort to several words/concepts that designate various related activities, this poses a problem of intercultural translation for anyone undertaking to write African history in European languages: the injunction imposed by the European thought-language chosen or imposed by chance in 'history' encourages a one word-equivalent for 'history' to be sought in the African languages chosen for inclusion in the discourse. This is true of Yoruba historians, who have opted to translate 'history' as *ìtàn*. The epistemological problem posed by this choice, this 'induced European linguistic flexion', lies in the fact that it is based on the dubious principle of linguistic univocity. As a result, it is highly likely that it will retain little and lose much of the African language, as this review of several Yoruba concepts has just revealed. The only antidote to this case of epistemological, even epistemic, violence (Sousa Santos, 2016) is to develop a terminology and intense practice of historical discourse in African languages. As a result of this lengthy discursive practice in African languages, each African word-concept would designate its semantic area through use, and writings in European languages drawing upon these word-concepts would refer to bilingual dictionaries to find their meanings, an expected consequence of a more egalitarian intellectual exchange between Africa and Europe. Clearly, we are now raising an issue of major intellectual decoloniality that is nevertheless inescapable in the context of writing a *General History of Africa* that aims to instigate an epistemological break with the past. This brings us to the centre of a more general issue of an existential and political nature and which concerns self-empowerment in Africa.

The quadripartite structuring of temporality in Yoruba challenges the very subject and domains of history. Through its linear and teleological conception of history, Western hegemonic historiography has denied Africa a past to such an extent that, as a response, we have concentrated on the past alone, thus adopting the Western vision of 'history' as a kind of one-way universal monorail. Yet, in Yoruba thought, the present, but especially the 'beyond tomorrow', is also subject to history. The Yoruba conception of history is more like a Janus, and the four 'moments' of the temporal structure maintain a relationship of solidarity, rather than pure linearity, as we see in *oriki*. This is also what the 'mythical' bird Sankofa signifies in Akan culture (Nascimento and Gá, 2009), with its head turned towards the past and its legs towards the future. Here, too, it will certainly be necessary to unlearn the hegemonic Western intellectual tradition to enrich our universal historiographical heritage.

The relationships between *Ìtàn* and *Àló* in Yoruba thought-language should encourage us, when we write in European languages, to revisit the relationships

between 'history' and 'myth', which we use as their equivalents, but which are considered antonyms by the West. With regard to these two concepts, our canons of truthfulness also merit revision in the light of African discursive traditions, especially if we take into account the notion that history is not limited to scrutinizing the past but also illuminating (*tàn*) beyond tomorrow. Revisiting our ways of thinking about the relationship between what is 'myth' and 'history' should encourage us to pay more attention to the enigma introduced by the recurrence of certain toponyms, glossonyms, ethnonyms and patronyms in African languages located thousands of kilometres away, which we often dismiss as mere coincidences. More cooperation between linguists, archaeologists and geneticists will be required to track the routes of very ancient migrations. It is possible that the intuitions of Cheikh Anta Diop, which were all too quickly derided for sometimes lacking scientific substantiation, may be proved right.

Likewise, the saying '*ÀRÓBÁ NI BABA ÌTÀN*', in which *baba* means 'father' and 'spawner', but also, and perhaps especially in this context, 'epitome', 'par excellence', should be understood as 'Any narrative, even of an experience, is an interpretation' but also 'interpretation is the epitome (*baba*) of history, history par excellence'.

This saying also invites us to revisit the notion of 'source' when we say that oral traditions are 'sources' of history. This usage may be tainted by an unsuspected arrogance couched in the scriptocentrism inherited from Western hegemonic tradition. There is, indeed, something unspoken in the expression 'orality as a source of history', an implicit hierarchy that confines and confirms orality within an ancillary position as a tool, a sort of infra-knowledge of the bona fide historical knowledge that can only exist in writing. A misinterpretation of Amadou Hampâté Ba's famous *cri de cœur* is, to this day, still favoured by African and Africanist historians. We are led to understand 'when an old man dies, a library burns' exclusively as an order to quickly gather the texts from the mouths of the elders. In doing so, we have been neglecting these elders and their knowledge – traditionalists and historians, oral tradition and history – neglecting the processes and people in favour of the supposedly finished product, the transcribed text. In actual fact, Hampâté Bâ's plea should be heard together with the exhortation of his master, the wise Tierno Bokar, to be aware that 'writing is one thing and knowledge is another'. The oral tradition as historical knowledge is contained in these words of wisdom and remains, to this day, a lead that has not been sufficiently explored. Here we have a new avenue of investigation.

The existence and nature of *oríkì*, along with its equivalents in African intellectual cultures and traditions (*zamu, izibongo, mlànmlán*), is a useful safeguard against a

narrow conception of history that limits its subject to the humans it makes masters of the universe. Insofar as everything that exists has its *oríkì*, every creature, every living thing, should be entitled to an autonomous history. In other words, respect for African intellectual traditions would require us to revisit the anthropocentrism that pervades the Western historiographic tradition, that is to say, the exorbitant privilege given to 'man' in history. We will have to get used to considering human beings as *relays*, in the electrotechnical sense of the term, and move away from current androcentric historiographical practices. The project for a '*history in equal parts*' (Bertrand, 2011) should concern not only people and states, but also other creatures. Today's turbulent times, shaken by the indescribable ravages caused by the voracity of capitalism, are indeed a catalyst for 'discovering' our solidarity with everything around us. If we cannot give lions the power to speak of the part they have played in the history of hunting, at least humans could consider talking about it empathetically, and as an integral part of universal history, as well as that of baobabs, the air, the Zambezi and other elements of 'nature'.

The *Akùnyùngbà* example could allow us to open up new perspectives and an underexplored vein of African historiography: African women as historians. This would not be a question of taking up a branch of feminism modelled elsewhere or of an abstract and universal *herstory*, but of an epistemological stance, to such an extent that we would be unable to separate the discourse from the subject who produced it. Indeed, in the case in point, the *Akùnyùngbà* derive the raw material of their speeches from the reports of women they send to the market to listen to the people, their desires, grievances and criticism. The paradox contained in their name (as explained above) could result in a '*vox populi* mixed with honey and gall'. It would be interesting to collect and further study their corpus to identify similar female discursive practices in other parts of global Africa. Making an epistemological break with the past would require further exploration of the discursive channels/voices of the female, in the current context of hegemonic androcentric thought in relation to history and historical discursive practices.

The great principle from which all these observations derive their very condition of possibility is the firm stance in and within African languages that should be adopted when thinking about any concept offered to us by our many contacts in the world. This is the place to recall Nietzsche's famous words, according to which *any concept is called into being* (Nietzsche, 2000; Wismann, 2012; Jullien, 2012) in order to create conceptual gaps, naturalizations and appropriations through reflection and intercultural translation without the bi/multilingual and complex of bi/multicultural agents. There is a Yoruba saying that goes:

Ìpàkó onípàkó làá rí
Eni eléni níí rí teni
(We always see the necks of others
Only others can see our neck).

This is true both of cultures and individuals. Every culture, however compact it may be or seem, is never exhaustively readable by itself. It has its neck, visible only to another culture. The Yoruba adage expresses the indispensable principle of otherness, as well as the need for reflexivity in intercultural and intra-cultural relationships. Due to being hegemonic and colonialist for the last 500 years, Western culture, including its historiography, has forgotten that it has a neck. At an epistemological level – i.e. the one that interests us here – this hegemony has made it unaware of the way it ignores other modes of knowledge, other ways of perceiving the world (Legendre, 2008; Nietzsche, 2000). Western culture and, more particularly, Western historiography, have not been enriched by the 'knowledge of non-knowingness', this reflective refocusing of the will to discover the truth about one's own truth, as Nietzsche defines it, and which is acquired through 'a divestment, a distance taken with respect to the certainties based upon which solidity has been measured'. Around fifty years ago, UNESCO's project might have enabled Africa to reveal to the West a part of its neck. We could, indeed, speak of missing an intercultural meeting, at least partially. At the beginning of this essay, we demonstrated that Joseph Ki-Zerbo's phrase: 'Africa has a history' was an answer to a rhetorical question: 'Does Africa have a history?'

The epistemological response to the West's rhetorical question should have been: 'Ask us this question in African languages: in Wolof, Amharic, Kirundi, Malagasi, Cicewa, Twi, Igbo, Changana or Bambara', for example. Faced with the impossibility of answering such a question, or with the great difficulty of attempts at answer-translations, Africans would have realized the provincial character of epistemology and, in particular, Western historiography, in spite of its hegemonic stance.

This epistemological interrogation would have given us the opportunity to call into question certain concepts used in writing an African history, such as: *state, name, sign, tradition, language, myth, mythology, culture, kingdom, king, monarch, queen, reign, noble, empire, diaspora, law, live, life, death, slave, freedom, judge, time, history, writing history, historian,* etc., which, in our various African languages, invite us to test their epistemological relevance. There is, nevertheless, still time to do what needs to be done, and to do it well. To use a Yoruba metaphor, 'we still have enough sun to dry our clothes' (*Òòrùn tó kù tó asoó sâ*).

To conclude, I will borrow the last words of this essay from the Yoruba poets:

Ìbà ni mo fi ojó òní jú,
Orin mi dòla
(I'm only paying homage today
My song is for tomorrow).

In more explicit terms, this test is a call to arms. There is an essential historical task remaining for African historians: to create a historical terminology in African languages and train new generations of historians who think and write in African as well as in European languages, thus producing an ever-increasing body of texts of an analytical nature.

The abridged versions of the eight volumes of the GHA have been translated into some African languages. This effort is commendable and encouraging. It would be highly desirable if, to remain faithful to its vocation of instigating an epistemological break with the past, the ninth volume could be translated into several African languages (with a readership) by translators with proven grounding in their science. This is, without doubt, a real challenge. The reality is that, by doing so, we will only be at a subliminal stage of normality. This normality, and our end goal, would be to write a *General History of Africa* directly in African languages, with concepts from world historiography enriched by African concepts (Sy, 2012). Then, and only then, will we be able to say: 'Our time has come'. This 'our', though different, would not have displeased Aimé Césaire – an 'our' enriched and widened to include all humanity. For there is no question of conceiving a humanity in which the voice of Africa is gagged, 'ventriloquized', killed. This, at the final reckoning, would appear to be the ultimate challenge of 'speaking of "history" in African languages'.

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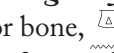
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CHAPTER 7

NOUNS AND *VERBS* OF HISTORY IN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN

Alain Anselin

What we are looking for here, behind vocabulary, is a grammar of human history. Rich in new conceptual metaphors, conveying ancient cognitive markers and heavy with new paradigms, this involves new *paths*, and new met*hods* (Greek: *hodos*, *a path*). The grammaticalization of verbs and nouns was the path followed by the Egyptians to tell the story of their past, in their language.

In Egypt, the ancient concept of history remains ingrained in ivory work by the teams of ***gnwty***, *sculptors,* as indicated by the first determinative, the hieroglyph for bone,  ***gn.t***, pl.  ***gn.wt***, while the second, that for papyrus, refers to the *annals as written chronicles* (Hannig, 1995, p. 901) by teams of ***sš.w***, *scribes.*

Without a doubt, the expression closest to the idea of 'ancient history', ***gnwt ỉmy.w ḥɜt***, used by Khakheperreseneb, literally means *annals of those who came before (**ḥɜt**)* – in a culture where the past is situated before the subject.

The translation of the ***gnwt*** of the Palermo Stone by *annals* is perfectly justified by the determinative of each register, the hieroglyph of the palm coming into bud every *year*,  , ***rnp.t***, *recorded* under the name of an event: thus ***ḥsbt šmsw ḥr***, *the year of the Followers of Horus* of the reign of Netcherichet (Third Dynasty) (Jimenez-Serrano, 2004, p. 50).

The Nagadean iconography *c.* 3500 BCE, with its trials of icons similar to the hieroglyphic plural, which starts at three in ancient Egyptian and implies

the existence of a dual, suggests that the Egyptian language was spoken several centuries before even starting to be hieroglyphicized after the Abydenian Horus Scorpion *c.* 3250 BCE (Anselin, 2007).

In the Old Kingdom (*c.* 2750-2200 BCE), the Pyramid Texts recorded an early stage of the language in which words for the perception of the body and the universe in which it moves were also used with grammatical relations. The texts of the Middle Kingdom developed the analytical character of the language.

The pool of source concepts offered for grammaticalization remains narrow and random. Their choice is conventional and specific to the culture for which the language will act as a black box after its disappearance (cf. Heine, 1997).

Thus, Classical *Egyptian* combines stative verbs, motion verbs (*motion schemas*) and volition verbs (*volition schemas*) (***wnn***, ***i̯w***, ***wn***) with prepositions, themselves dead metaphors of nouns for body parts, in the expression of aspect and time, ***m***, ***r***, *towards* < *mouth*, or ***ḥr***, *on* < *front facing*, ***iw.f r wnm***, *he will eat*: present: ***i̯w.f m pr***, *he is in the house*, past: ***wn.f m pr***, future: ***wnn(w).f m pr*** (Grandet and Mathieu, 1990, pp. 353-356).

The verbs that occur most frequently in Egyptian texts describing the actions of kings and high officials in annals and biographies, ***ir***, *to do,* ***in***, *to provide,*  ***ḫpr***, *to become, to happen, to occur,* ***ḫ3i̯***, *to arrive,* ***ptr***, *to see,*  , ***m33***, *to see, to examine* (Wb II 7, 1-10, 7),  ***gm***, *to find, to observe,*  ***sḏm***, *to hear, to listen, to be informed of*, are in the order of the verifiable reality of the facts, ***rḫ*** (Wb II, 442-445) and ***ḫmt***, *to know,*  ,  , OK ***si̯3*** <***s-r***, *to know, to understand* (Wb IV 30, 1-21),  , ***m33***, *to see, to examine* (Wb II 7, 1-10, 7). For example: '*n* ***m3***(***3***)*-tw m* ***gnw.t nt ḏrty.w ḏr msw ḥr***: *that had not been seen in the annals of the ancestors: since the followers of Horus*', i.e. the time of the first of the Horuses, Scorpion the Abydenian (*c.* 3250 BCE), Iry Hor, founder of Memphis, several decades before Narmer (Tallet, 2012).

The written, together with the spoken, ***mdw***, conveyed the *annals* according to the old cognitive frameworks, from which the concepts evolved into an increasingly analytic language.

The oldest verb from which history is devised in ancient Egyptian, the ultimate source concept, ***p3***, *to be first, to begin,* which provides the reference period of the *primordial times*, ***p3.wt***, *and antiquity,*  ***p3.t*** (Gardiner, 1988, pp. 395-§484, 565), for the Egyptian writing of history is thus auxiliated, ***p3***(***w***), *'have done in the past',* in the construction of the past expression (five examples in Gardiner, 1988, pp. 395-§484).

Similarly, the Egyptian language gradually constructed the tools of its thought of the future that consumes. A pair of antonyms formed on the same lexical matrix brings  ***ḫmt***, *to think, to consider, to plan* (Wb III 285. pp. 5-11) into opposition with ***ḫm***, *to be ignorant of,* which defined *the unknown.* In a thought where the future, placed after the speaking subject, was difficult to consider and formulate, except as divine prerogative, for which the giraffe was the metaphor used by the Nuer, ***gweč kwoth***, *prophecy*, litt. *giraffe-god* (Huffman, 1929, p. 18), and the metaphor for the ancient Egyptians, ^{NE}***sr***,  , *to announce, to predict* (Anselin, 2013, p. 18). Or like divination in China, where the conception of the future is similar.

The auxiliarization of the verb ***kɜ(i)***, *to imagine*, *to reflect, to plan* (Wb V 83, 5-84, 1), followed by an infinitive avoided at times (***ḏd***), always indicates the future: ***mk wi̯***, ***kɜ.k***, *here am I, thou shalt (say)* (Gardiner, 1988, pp. 347-348, 597). The grammaticalization of motion and volition verbs in the formation of the future is seen in other linguistic worlds, not only African: Swahili (***taka***, *to want*, is used to express the future and the aspect: *a* ***taka*** *ku-ja, he (wants) to come* > *a* ***ta*** *ku-ja, he will come*), but Indo-European: Greek (***théloo graphein***, *I want to write* > modern Greek, ***tha grapho***, *I will write*) and English (***will > ‘ll***) (Heine, 2003, pp. 585-592). With its long history, ancient Egyptian was unable to escape the common rule of the planet's other linguistic worlds. He *considers the future*, ***kɜ.f dwɜ***, literally, *the morning*.

Observation, action and research verbs, while common in the royal annals and the biographies of high officials, also experienced the forms of auxiliarization revealed by Gardiner. The list is expanded with them, ***rdi̯***, *to cause,* ***mr***, *to want,* ***rḫ***, *to know,* ***ḫmt***, *to think*, ***gm***, *to find*, ***ḏd***, *to tell,* etc. – most are used as auxiliaries of the verb forms ***sḏm.f*** to which they give a prospective meaning (Gardiner, 1988, p. 184).

Neither the conception nor the expression of time is, therefore, fixed in ancient Egyptian. The historiographical format of the annals is primarily a normative framework, skilfully as conservative as the written form of the archaic plural with its roots in Nagadian iconography. The Ramesside annals broadened the conception by integrating academic literature (Anselin, this volume), freer in its form and contents, in a language equipped for prediction.

Appendix: Egyptian and African vocabulary (Source: Anselin, 2011, pp. 43-53):

The African languages provide strong cognates for the series of Egyptian verbs:  Pyr ***mdw***, *speaking* (Wb II 180, 4-12),  ***mdw(i)***, *to talk*, *to say.* Demotic: ***mt***, *to say* (Wb II 179, 2-28) and ***md.t,*** *speech* (Wb II 181, 7-182, 4). Nilo-Saharan: Teda, daza, ***medi***, pl. ***mede***, *speech.* Chadic: Kwaami: ***maad***, *to say,* Kushitic: Afar: ***mad'a***, *speech*, Niger-Congo, West-Atlantic: Fulfulde: ***medd-***, ***met-***, *talk with someone* (Seydou, 1998, 441).

 ***wn(n)***, *to be, to exist* (Wb I 308, 1-309, 11), Fulfulde: ***won-***: *to live, to exist*, ***wongo***, *to be,* ***wonude*** (Seydou, 1998, 800), Kushitic: Agaw: ****wan,*** Bilin, Qemant: ***wan-*** *to be* (Appleyard, 1984, p. 50), Omotic: Dime: ***wann-****, to become* (Ehret, 1995, p. 467), Nilo-Saharan: Nyimang: ***wen,*** *to live* (Kronenberg, 1959, 192) and I-III° Dyn  ,  ***iy***, ***iw***, *to come, to arrive* (Kahl, 2002), Bedja: ***yi;*** Sukur, Musgoy, ***ya*** (Takacs, 1999).

pɜ*, to be first, to begin,* ***pɜwt***, *early years* (Wb I 494-496). Central Chadic: Bura: ***pal***, Kotoko: ***fal***, *one*, Daba: ***pl***, *to precede (in time)*; West Chadic: ****par***, *to begin*, Gwandara: ***pára***, Hausa: ***fárá***; Kushitic: Qwadza*:* ***pal***- (Anselin, 2011, 2015 and this volume).

Pyr***sḏɜ.t***, CT***srɜ.t*** <****s-r***, *to understand, to know* > *God of knowledge* (Wb IV 30, 1-21). The word is written using the hieroglyph for clothing. Intelligence is the weaving loom for ideas. Phonetically, **/*i*/** is identified here as a reflex of **/*r*/**. On **/*ɜ*/ = /*l*/** see Lacau (1972), Garba (1996), **/*l*/** and **/*r*/** (Takacs, 1999). Cognates: Central Chadic: Mofu-Gudur (Matakam, Cameroon): ***sər***, *to know* (Barreteau, 1984), Merey: ***sər*** (Gravina et al*.,* 2003)*,* Udlam: ***-sər****, to know* (Kinnaird and Oumate, 2003), Muyang: ***sər*** (Smith, 2003).

OK***rḫ***, *to know* (Wb II 442-445). Cognates: Beja: ***erh***, *to see,* Bisharin (Beja): ***rēh*** *to see*, Agaw: ***arq***, *to know,* East Kushitic: ****arg***, *to see* (Takacs, 1999, 293).

OK***mɜɜ*** < ****mVl***, *to see, to watch, to examine* (Wb II 7, 1-10, 7). Kushitic: Agaw: Bilin: ***miliʔy-***, *to watch, to examine*, Kemant: ***mel-***, *to examine, to observe*, East Kushitic: Oromo: ***mal-*** *to think*, Sidamo: ***mal-***, *to sense,* Somali: ***mala***: *thought*, Burji: ***mala****, plan* (Anselin, 2001, 21-43). Omotic: Kafa: ***mallet***, *to observe* (Dolgopolsky, 1973).

ḫmt, *to think, to consider, to plan* (Wb III 285, 5-11), antonym: ***ḫm***, *to be ignorant of*, with the determinatives of the negative gesture and the buccal activity: *ignorant* man (Wb III 280, 6-8). Kushitic: Afar: ***igim***, *ignorant*, ***iggima***, *ignorance*, (Parker and Hayward, 1985), Saho: ***agam***, Beja: ***gam***, *to not know*.

Niger-Congo, West-Atlantic: Fulfulde: ***hiimago***, *to reflect, to think, to plan, to calculate*, ***kiim.ol***, *calculation* (Noye, 1989, p. 160), ***hiim-***, *to think*, *to imagine* (Seydou, 1998, p. 279), Wolof: ***xam***, *to know (vb)*, ***xam-xam***, *knowledge (n),* ***ne xiim***, *to be ignorant* (Fal, 1990, pp. 250, 259) (Anselin, 2001, pp. 21-43).

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CHAPTER 8

THE WORD *AFRICA* AND ITS STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

From Heteronomous Assignation to Endogenous Assumption

Charles Binam Bikoi

What are you called? What is your name?

Who hasn't been asked that question? So simple. Yet so dreadful, too! Our name. Undoubtedly our most beautiful, precious and endearing asset, the only thing of which we assume ownership beyond ourselves and, in the case of our country, the only treasure we are ready to defend with blood and sword, at the cost of our lives. We agree, as required, to make the ultimate sacrifice to defend ... our name!

Throughout time, the names of people and things have always been considered important. It is difficult to think of a group of humans that has not placed names and titles among its cardinal principles. This could almost be claimed as a human attribute so universal that it disrupts the difference between nature and culture. This difference is, nevertheless, vital to our knowledge schema, our depiction of phenomena and our collective self-representation, and thus plays a prominent role in the founding of the idea of humanity and the so-called human sciences.

From the outset, Jacques Derrida (1967) had in mind such epistemological, theoretical and methodological challenges in his pugnacious essay *La Structure, le signe et le jeu dans le discours des Sciences humaines* (Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences), which contributed to ringing the death knell of structuralism. This is a method that, more than any other, has had and,

through a palimpsest effect, will continue to have, a totalitarian claim over the perception of objects in social science. Indeed, Derrida noted that, with the taboo on incest, the distinction between the universal dimension of nature and culture had collapsed, since the taboo on incest was cultural – and therefore relative, yet also universal. It is thus absolute and confined to the natural, something which had escaped Lévi-Strauss (1949).

The implications of naming are therefore eminently epistemological. They can, however, also be political and civilizational. The same holds true for the designation of Africa, the word *Africa*, the name Africa, the continent of Africa, etc., in terms of its etymological origins, futurological challenges and everything that links the two. This is a far-reaching issue, and one of pressing urgency.

This can be seen in the light of the great challenges faced by Africa, which, through its projections of renaissance, intends to take the initiative of its history back into its own hands, and even more so its historicity. For the latter concept, the meaning to be retained is the one given by Alain Touraine (1973, 1976, 2005), i.e. the capacity for society to 'produce its social and cultural orientations from its activity and to give a "meaning" to these practices'. Before Touraine, Aimé Césaire in his letter to Maurice Thorez (1952) already claimed this 'right of initiative', from a strongly endogenous point of view, asking for Africa, in poetry, to 'germinate a head of its own on its knotted shoulders' and this 'out of foreign days'. It is in this sense that the proponents of the specific historicity of African societies gathered around the review *Politique Africaine* (Bayart, 1989; Mbembe et al., 1992; 1992; Onana, 2007).

It is also reflected in the relationship between knowledge and power drawn out by Michael Foucault (1966, 1969) and, following him, so-called postcolonial thought. From Edward W. Saïd onwards, this allowed for the Neo-Gramscian perspective of hegemony and latent or glaring hegemonism. For the most part, contemporary postcolonial studies start with the publication *L'Orientalisme : l'Orient créé par l'Occident* (Orientalism: The East Created by the West), an entire essay dedicated to a powerful, obvious fact which, paradoxically, had escaped everybody's notice, namely: it was the West that had a discourse on the East, and not the reverse, and also that it was the West that dominated the East. This leads to an undeniable conclusion (or, at the very least, the conclusion that can be observed everywhere): the master of a discourse is never simply the master.

This takes us on to the issue of the power to bestow a name, which reveals very few differences between the various fields when it comes to the way naming is exercised. Its deepest principles are the same in culture as in government, in the sciences of discovery as in the exercise of political power and the national interest. This exercise always involves and draws upon a variety of dynamics, procedures

and hierarchies that establish, institute, sanction and crystallize relationships of power and authority. The recipient of a name or label is always in an unfavourable position of inequality with regards to those who bestow these names or labels: in the biblical myth, this is Adam's first burden, the one that establishes the ascendance of man over the rest of creation. The Nietzschean imperative of probity obliges us to push coherence to the point of inscribing *God* among this creation, as well as in this one provision, the only provable one, where *He* is created and appointed by Man, his cultures and his religions, but not only.

In African thought and intellectual traditions, the relationship between designation and power, including magical power, consecrates the importance and the non-gratuity of the name. It is not only this legitimization of the convergence of homology observed by Lévi-Strauss (1958) between the appellatives on the one hand and the source culture on the other. At another end, as Gervais Mendo Ze (2009, 2019) has shown, this trend can be reversed, by the use of surnames, from the virtual to the concrete, from the imaginary to the real. The real name carries within it the seeds of a hypoculture, of a referential framework, since it participates in the situation of the discourse and effectively informs the circumstances of its creation – even in the simplest cases where, by recognizing a significant event, the surname can contribute to identifying its date via the age of the person who bears it.

Moreover, the name and the designation describe the animic personality and thus seal the destiny, the life orientation, the cosmic place of the named being or object. The name evokes the being, projects it, somehow circumscribes it. The act of naming is then an expression, a manifestation, a cause and an effect of power all at the same time. We will not go as far as the implications of the thesis of the development of Africans' nominalisms developed by Théophile Obenga (2001) and exemplified with the Dogon tradition dating back to Egyptian-Nubian antiquity. However, among Egyptians, as among most black people in Africa, the name is a concept and an image representing or corresponding to a concrete reality. It is one of the forms of the soul and the distinctive sign of personality. Therefore, to bestow a name in Black Africa is to call into existence, so that a being without a name would be non-existent.

Through the performativity of designating language, which implies the capacity to make things happen by calling them forth, the designation actualizes the act of language in all its fullness – in the sense of a *speech act* as conceptualized by John Austin (1962) and John Searle (1969) following Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (2005 [1956]). It is also the communicational, invocatory and performative power of *nommo* that Molefi Kete Asante (1987, 1988, 1990) deals with. *Nommo* in Dogon refers to the generative and productive power of spoken language, which, by properly

naming things, gives them an essence, takes them out of a latent or passive existence and brings them to their most dynamic manifestations.

This power of the act of creating by speaking, of naming something to make it exist in a certain way, is already activated in a scene immortalized in the sixteenth century by Jan van der Straet. In his engraving *Allegory of America* (1589), Amerigo Vespucci meets a native Indian woman on the beach and names her and her homeland 'America'. Thus, he acquires and possesses, for himself and for Europe, if not ownership, at least some power on this continent, which will henceforth be deemed to have come into existence only through Europe. The 'discovery' and the right of designation thus go hand in hand.

When applying these general considerations to what we could call 'continentonymy' – the rational study of the names of continents – we arrive at the same conclusion. Europe named itself from within, and it named the other continents in a way that became universal. At the same time, and as if by coincidence, it was Europe that dominated the other continents, and not the other way around, to the point of dominating knowledge about the world. As John Henrik Clarke (1994) already pointed out: 'Europeans not only colonized most of the world, they colonized information about the world. They developed monopoly control over concepts and images'. Whether others can or have been able to name Europe before or after does not really matter, in view of the one-dimensional character of this hegemony during the Christian era, which has only found a convincing, concentrated counter-discourse since the last century.

German cartographer Martin Waldseemüller's world map, *Universalis Cosmographia* (Universal Cosmography) (1507), is a leading achievement of this movement to get a hold on these places, bringing them to the fore through the desire to name them and submit them to the fine tradition of codification, with the intention of becoming 'like masters and owners of nature'. In one fell swoop, his cartography, devoid of any continents other than Europe, interprets and in fact permits Europe's capture of these other continents, and thus their dismemberment, fragmentation, subdivision and domination over them.

Of course, we can and must temper Europe's hegemonic power in time and space, and not judge it solely by what it has done to the world since it conquered most of it, as well as the information and knowledge about it, or even all the world's trade. Not only is this process and state of affairs in significant decline, but it is also relatively new in the history of the world and of conquests. From the perspective of history, it would be interesting if a heuristic assessment could review how other worlds, the great empires and powers of long history and the contemporary world have designated and are designating Europe and Europeans.

However, as has been said, this would not alter the facts of modern history, which is, globally, if not entirely, Eurocentric. So European self-designation, European autonomy, European supremacy, European submission to an alterity by Europe, named and configured: this was the world order throughout globalizing modernity until recently. Indeed, we are now well on the way to breaking with this *status quo ante*. Asia has found independence without necessarily changing its heteronomous name. Africa, in contrast, has been shaken to the very core of its soul, its self-esteem and spiritual substance manifesting itself through the medium of identification. Disoriented to such an extent that its human status has been called into question, this Africa cannot avoid reflection and the debate on the links fostering its heteronomous name, or its truth as decided and stated by others. It is justified and crucial that it makes the effort to re-autonomize and exercise its own exclusive hegemony.

We shall address this issue in three stages, using devices borrowed from Foucault's archaeology in particular. First, we must revisit the controversial etymology of the name Africa. We will reconsider its most established uses within the framework of heteronomous allocation to consider the trajectories, possibilities and challenges of an autonomous re-appropriation, or possibly an endogenous assumption of universal scope. Of course, given the enormity of the task, and given what is at stake, it is more a question of revealing a few small examples to prepare the way for a more detailed exploration.

Heteronomous designation

As we have said, Africa was so named by other peoples and as a result of the actions of individuals from elsewhere, notably the two main forces in its domination and exploitation: Europeans and Arabs. It is important to retrace contentious versions of this etymology before attempting to minimize the controversy. With this in mind, let us consider the first eight volumes of UNESCO's *General History of Africa* and Editor Joseph Ki-Zerbo who, in his general introduction, addressed the matter in a note.

He remarked that the origin of the word *Africa* had, thus far, been difficult to elucidate.

> It became the accepted term from Roman times onwards in the form "Africa", replacing the originally Greek or Egyptian word "Libya", the land of the Lebu or the Lubins in Genesis. From designating the North African coast, the word "Africa" came to be applied to the whole continent from the end of the first century before our era (Ki-Zervo, 1980).

The ultimate origin of the name nevertheless remains difficult to pin down. There are several hypotheses. The word *Africa* may come from the word *Afrig*, which refers to the Berbers south of Carthage, with *Afriga* or *Africa* being used to indicate their country. Another etymology is derived from two Phoenician words, one meaning cob, the region's fertility symbol, and the other, *Pharikia,* land of fruit. Elsewhere, the word is thought to derive from the Latin *aprica* (sunny) or Greek *apriké* (free from cold). Another possibility is the Phoenician root *faraqa*, which expresses the idea of separation in the sense of the diaspora, a root found in certain African languages, such as Bambara.

In Sanskrit and Hindu, the root *apara* or *africa* describes that which, geographically, is situated 'after', i.e. the West. Africa is described, in relation to the Indian subcontinent and its Eurasian prolongations, as the western continent. According to a historical tradition taken up by Leo Africanus, a Yemenite chief named *Africus* invaded North Africa around 2000 BCE and founded a city called *Afrikyah*. However, according to Ki-Zerbo, 'it is more likely that the Arabic term *Ifriqiya* is the Arabic transliteration of the word *Africa*'. In his conclusion, he highlights the apparently fanciful character of some hypotheses, indicating that 'one version even suggests that Afer was a grandson of Abraham and a companion of Hercules!' (Ki-Zerbo, 1980, pp. 21-22).

More recent research, nevertheless, tends to credit the Leo Africanus version. The name Africa would therefore originate from the king of Arabia Felix (today's Yemen), who was called Melec (king) '*Ifriqui*'. In the distant past, he headed a group of peoples to confront troops from High Ethiopia (today's Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia) on the banks of the Nile. Defeated, Ifriqui and his troops took refuge in the Libyan desert before continuing their adventure towards the north-west of the continent or Western Barbary. Having discovered new fertile lands suitable for agriculture and animal husbandry, they settled and named their new home 'Ifriqui', after their king. Over the course of history, this name took on different forms, ending up as Africa, which first described what is now the city of Tunis, then the Kingdom of Tunisia and then gradually, through successive expansions, the entire continent.[1] The question we should really ask is: how has

1 For this attempt at disambiguation, see Ibn Raquic (undated manuscript); Luis del Marmol Carvajal (1573); Manoel de Faria y Sousa (1681); and Bernardo Jose Aldrete (1614). They lead to the conclusion that the name Africa could not really have originated with the Romans who, upon their arrival in Mauritania (today's Morocco and Algeria), found the Ifriqui, who already occupied the region. Hispanic authors who had already had contact with the Arab-Muslim civilization all quote the genealogical tree of Ibn Raquic, the key Ifriqui historian. As Ngo Minlend's investigations (2008, 2015) show, they are better respected among today's historiographers, who attempt to guide research beyond the Roman and Greek eras. Joseph Ki-Zerbo and his colleagues had obviously not had access to these sources at the time of writing the *General History of Africa.*

this irreducibly heteronomous designation been used and, above all, how can it be retained to Africa's advantage? It is important to begin with its prejudicial uses to better understand and find ways to overcome them.

Prejudicial usage of the designation Africa

The anti-African usage of the designation 'Africa' or 'African(s)', often used coextensively to refer to all Blacks, largely dominates Judeo-Christian era history. It illustrates the theoretical and paradigmatic analyses carried out by Michel Foucault in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences* (1966) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) on the power of naming, its underlying knowledge regimes and the actual consequences of the resulting power to dominate.

We can examine the challenges of orientalist discourse, in which Africanist discourse had been subsumed (as its most extreme version), as brought to light by Edward Said. This follower of Foucault (as already stated) and, to a large extent, Antonio Gramsci, set out the problem as follows, summarised by Todorov:

To say to someone: 'I possess the truth about you' provides information about the nature of my knowledge, but also establishes a relationship in which 'I' dominates and the other is dominated. To comprehend means 'to interpret' and also 'to include', and for good reason. Whether in its passive form (understanding) or active form (representation), comprehension always allows those who possess it to manipulate others; the master of discourse shall simply become the master. Is it by chance if, on the one hand, there is an orientalist discourse in the West yet no 'Occidentalist' discourse in the East and, on the other hand, it is precisely the West that has dominated the East? (Todorov, 2000, pp. 8-9).

Of course, one must recognize some of Said's systematic excesses and relativize the restitution of Todorov, who is not exactly an orientalist. There has been a Westernist discourse since the nineteenth century. It originates in the Eurasian world, with the geopolitical debate between Slavophiles and Westernizers in Tsarist Russia. This debate – which is ongoing – has polarized Russian thinkers since the first quarter of the nineteenth century. It pits the proponents of a unique path to development based on Slavic specificities – systematized from the work *Russian Philosophy* of Archimandrite Gavriil (Vassili Voskresensky), published in 1840 in Kazan – against those of a development and a modernization of Russia on the model of Western Europe (occidentalists), of which the precursor was Pyotr Yakovlevitch Chaadayev, with his *Philosophical Letters* (1939).

Moreover, encounters with the West, especially meetings between Christian missionaries and philosophers in China or Japan, have given rise to delineations of a 'Westernist' discourse that can be seen to emerge with *Dialogue between a Christian Philosopher and a Chinese Philosopher on the Existence and Nature of God* of Nicolas Malebranche (1707), and later in the work of François Jullien and Pierre Legendre's research on Japan, especially *Ce que l'Occident ne voit pas de l'Occident : conférences au Japon* (What the West Doesn't See of the West: Lectures in Japan) (2004). This discourse is not necessarily the other side of orientalism as described by Edward Said. The latter tendency appeared in 1991, with the *Muqaddimah fi'Ilm al-Istighrab* (Introduction to the Science of Occidentalism) by Hassan Hanafi. Important literature has followed since then, with the work of Alastair Bonnett (2004), James Carrier (1995), Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit (2004), Xiaomei Chen (2002), Nick Cohen (2007), Daniel König (2015) and many others.[2]

For the sake of brevity, we will attempt to illustrate the pejorative and prejudicial usage of targeted denomination through five modalities that follow a particular order to create a certain deficient Africa: myth, servitude, normativity, centrifugation and (more or less paradoxical) annihilation.

The first modality takes shape in one of the oldest documented forms, penned by the first-century Roman author Pliny the Elder (23-79 CE). In book XXVIII of his *Natural History* (Pline l'Ancien, 2013), relating to medicines of animal origin, he wrote: 'And now that I am speaking of the scorpion, I recall to mind that in Africa no one ever undertakes any matter without prefacing with the word Africa' (V, 2). Objectively, Pliny could not have had any ulterior motive; perhaps he just wanted to record real events or information given to him. Little matter: such a statement, within the framework of universal research on medicine – i.e. material solutions to human afflictions with the widest possible reach – distinguishes Africa as offering only spells or, at best, basing everything on superstitious incantations. The myth of Dark Africa, which would be constantly repeated, was thus off to a flying start. This was to weigh heavily

2 See Hassan Hanafi, *Muqaddimah fi 'Ilm al-Istighrab*, Cairo, Madbuli, 1991; James Carrier, *Occidentalism: Images of the West*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995; Teotonio R. de Souza, 'Orientalism, Occidentosis and Other Viral Strains: Historical Objectivity and Social Responsibilities', in Pius Malekandathil and Jamal Mohammed (eds), *The Portuguese, Indian Ocean and European Bridgeheads, Festschrift in Honour of Prof. K.S. Mathew*, Fundação Oriente, India, 2001; Alastair Bonnett, *The Idea of the West: Culture, Politics and History*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004; Ian Buruma et Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: A Short History of Anti-Westernism*, Atlantic Books, London, 2004; Xiaomei Chen, *Occidentalism: A Theory Of Counter-Discourse in Post-Mao China*, second ed., rev. and expanded, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002; Nick Cohen, *What's Left?: How the Left Lost its Way*, New York, Harper Perennial, 2007; Daniel König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West: Tracing the Emergence of Medieval Europe*, Oxford, OUP, 2015.

on the relationship between 'Africa' as a reference and the norms of freedom through reason (held up as universal).

The anathema which functions in infinite regression may not start from a proven belief of Pliny in these incantations, and a too-severe judgement of his position could be anachronistic. However, the knowledge/power mechanism put in place in the constituencies of the heteronomous designation and the annihilating representations of the heart of darkness, engaging a dynamic of multiplication of power for Europe and a correlative multiplication of vulnerability for Africa, will nonetheless have oriented the said anathema in the direction we know.

From the point of view of *normativity*, the second modality of extreme referential prejudice, the perception of Africa, its designation and characterization, as exemplified by Pliny, are (as Lévi-Strauss remarked on the subject of ethnological discourse) not only mythomorphic, but mythopoetic. This ability to create and perpetually disseminate myths ended up hypostasizing Africa. It is this phenomenon that ultimately, more than any other variable, was the most responsible for Africa's expulsion from the Kingdom of Reason. Thereafter, it was difficult to have any kind of rational discourse on Africa.

Ultimately, as Achille Mbembe notes when examining the proliferation of anti-African mythopoetics, Africa became the unconscious and the reference, in negative terms, against which the dominating order would compare its own norms of progress. An Africa of incurable dark nights (to use the Heideggerian expression) was thus created – the Africa forgotten by those who had named it, through their own truncated cognitive operations, which, by this very fact, became trapped in illogical reasoning from which it was very difficult to escape. It would take a long time for a certain reflexivity on the order of the dominant discourse to arrive at this self-elucidation, which is therefore very recent.

Despite this, and all the more so because of it, Africa remained in a certain position, which lasted for over a millennium, and several centuries more. It needed to shake off this state to break free from *servitude*, our third modality. Africa – and Blacks as the very examples of what one should avoid when thinking of or seeking freedom – was to be cemented into another discourse that claimed to be universal. This is affirmed by Ibn Khaldun in his *Muqaddimah*, written in 1377, fourteen centuries after Pliny: 'The only people who accept slavery are the Negroes, owing to their low degree of humanity and proximity to the animal stage'.

To bring out the systemicity of this construction-representation and its determinants, it is necessary to return to the origins of the name 'Africa'. The framework within which the arrogance of the Arab Khaldun is justified then

becomes clear. It is engrained in a certain illogical way of thinking that is just as extreme as orientalism yet also characteristic of 'razzia' ('raid for plunder'). It is almost with desolation that Ibn Khaldun states that Africa was named by an Arab conqueror (Melec Ifriqui) whom she did not reject. Going so far as to accept those who torture her as human, Africa really is the continent of hospitality, even towards extremely violent invading conquerors and slave-drivers.

Africa, the continent of humanity taken by others, accepts this in the eyes of the historian. Ibn Khaldun bears testimony to this, as reflected in the Treaty of Baqt, which sanctioned the war between Arab conquerors and Nubians from the Kingdom of Makuria. Although the Nubians had won the battle and inflicted 2,000 deaths on Arab troops, they consented to signing a treaty to cease hostilities due to the Arabs' military superiority and the prospect of a punitive expedition. The Christians of Nubia agreed to deliver 360 slaves per year to the Arabs, ipso facto officializing the first instance of the slave trade, only a few years after the death of the prophet of Islam.

So began what, due to its reoccurrence, Edouard Glissant referred to as the horrible and interminable holocaust of the slave trade. Haiti's debt of independence conceded to a defeated France could be looked at along the same lines as the episode above. We are no longer, however, within the realm of the Arab historian's misinterpretation of acceptance but, rather, that of struggle. In this instance, the struggle was against the second, transatlantic wave of slavery, along with its substitute, colonization.

The tropism of Africa's land and 'men, stolen by others' (Mbembe, 2013), had nevertheless been confirmed. European colonizers would publicize this no end to persuade Africans that the villains and beasts among them were the ones who wished to chase the benevolent colonizers away. The main reality resulting from this is one of the principal factors that have jeopardized Africa's strategic relevance since the times of slavery and colonial penetration: division.

The fourth, representational and practical, modality of cognitive prejudice is indeed the division of Africa, often instigated by external masters and characterized by broad human diversity. Taken together, these two factors result in a true *centrifugation* of the social fabric. The lack of cohesion that ensues reinforces the perverse effects of the three preceding modalities, placing Africa in the much-publicized stereotypes of the depths of darkness and fratricidal horror. This is how Africa has come to signify the kingdom of tribes and tribalism, the impossibility of nationhood, of the State, of unity, power and peace.

It is from this angle that the vivid description summarized by Achille Mbembe (2000) from an accumulation of clichés can be understood: a headless

figure threatened by madness, Africa depicted as a dark cave in which any notion of order and centre would disappear. Even today, Africa is still perceived to be a place where everything occurs 'under the sign of crashing, hollowness and primordial chaos'.

This brings us to the fifth modality, *annihilation*. According to Mbembe, the representational subordination exemplified by Pliny and Ibn Khaldun crystallized into a discourse that emphasized Africa's absolute alterity, uniquely distinguishing Africans from other human types and races. Its differentiation from the third modality's baseline normative image of mankind meant that Africa only moved away from alterity to oscillate between non-being (not being), animality (being beasts) and oblivion (being nothing). In line with this obliterating, or at the very least nihilistic perspective, it is remarkable that China seems also to hypostatize Africa by representing it with a Chinese character meaning the void (非洲 Fēizhōu). Africa's being perceived as the continent (洲, zhou) of the negation or void (非, fei) by its new and, moreover, anticolonial partner is hardly insignificant.

Through these modalities and others, the denominative concept of Africa functions as a means of domination, both passive (through a declared comprehension) and active (through a systematic limitative representation in practice, and in modes of practice). This device reduces the spatial object of Africa and the subjects who inhabit it – Blacks – to divisions, the function of which is to make them appear as we think they should. We thus absolve ourselves from blame for treating them as we like, or as we have already decided to treat them (with a greater or lesser degree of certainty).

Praxeology having no other scope than to generate supporting concepts through a continuous to-ing and fro-ing between them, there begins a multiplying sequence of the effects of power and submission, an order that artefacts and mentifacts reproduce and consolidate, including by Africans themselves. This order tends to become permanent, reaching as far as social forces and structures (both cognitive and identitarian), and influencing alternative praxeological regimes that have gained ground. Hence, the endogenous possibilities that we can consider.

Endogenous reappropriation, challenges and strategic operations

Faced with the devastating effects of the heteronomous assignation of its name, Africa (and in particular its driving forces) has often, among other measures of reappropriation, envisaged rejecting any denomination of foreign origin. However, as indicated in the introduction, there is now reason to demonstrate that this approach does not yield maximum autonomy. From our perspective, it is, rather, endogenous reappropriation that swings an ambivalent heritage back in our favour. As with any identitarian dynamic, 'Africanness' can henceforth be forged only through what is borrowed and endogenous, as long as the syncretism is steered towards well-understood sovereign interests.

As stated by Cameroonian poetess Werewere Liking in her book *La Mémoire amputée* (Amputated Memory, 2005), which addresses the critical issues of usefully directed memorial selectivity, it would appear that 'Africa is the continent of all of humanity's possibilities'. At the cost of such an understanding (when, let us repeat, strategically directed), it becomes possible to seize upon the imposed designation, upending and beneficially endogenizing it. The multiple ambiguities and ambivalences throw everything wide open in this respect.

To take just one of these possibilities, the Chinese character previously mentioned is of particular interest. In effect, if Africa, especially when seen through the prism of China's current mining and commercial policy, appears to be a void in the sense of a colonialist tabula rasa, there are other possibilities of direction and action. These can be considered in the light of the cumulative meanings allowed by Chinese formal logic, from which the third party is not excluded, and which transcends oppositions by accumulating seemingly irreconcilable meanings in Western formal logic.

For example, and this is a trait that quantum physics, compatible with Indian or African thought since antiquity, has gradually imposed on world scientific thought, including Western thought: matter is as empty as the substantial (if not indeed more empty) – especially with regard to the composition of the atom whose total volume is less occupied by the elementary particles than by the empty space between them. The *fei*'s void obeys this cumulative and conciliatory polysemy of opposites, not just in China but in the epistemic continuum of the three greatest oriental civilizations (India, China, Japan) with ideographic writing. This is more systematized in China, as the thirteenth-century Japanese scholarly monk Nichiren (1994) teaches us.

In this tradition, Shakyamuni (India) was the master of Laozi (China) and Confucius (China), whose principles of social order led to the foundation of the spirit of discipline of the samurai (Japan). The sunyata logical principle (sunyata = emptiness) postulates that if two principles oppose each other, both may be true, which includes the third principle excluded in Western formal logic. This allows us to understand one of the most fundamental principles of the universe, the *Ku*, which means, at the same time, non-substantiality, emptiness, latency, absolute potential – the universe itself being neither substantial nor empty, and the ultimate reality of life encompassing and transcending being, non-being and the union of being and non-being.

In the light of this complex system, the 'African void' not only includes poverty, along with the lack and non-optimization of resources, which justifies their mining and the dumping of industry surpluses of more or less dubious value. More important are the derivatives (both in terms of meaning and actions) that can be extracted from these Asian and African concepts of the cumulative void, creator, negator and conciliator of differences.

In Bambara cosmogony, to take just one example, life is brought forth from the void, as are matter and knowledge. The primordial void, *Fu*, brought forth knowledge, *Gla gla zo*. Knowledge and the void constitute the creative force of the universe, from which a mystical process of liberated and retracted energy is formed. This process results in the formation of the human consciousness, the principle of the universe. Then follows *Glan*, the original void, wrapping itself into two spirals spinning in opposite directions. This results in the formation of four worlds. A heavy mass falls, and this becomes Earth. A light segment rises and becomes the sky, which, by spreading over the Earth in the form of water, allows life to form. Grass and aquatic animals then appear.

In Chinese philosophy, the void is both the supreme state of Origin and the central element in the cogs of the material world. For Taoists, the void comes before the Heavens and Earth. Two terms describe this notion: *wu* and *xu*. *Wu* means 'not to have' or 'none', and *xu* means 'void'. Lao Zi, in Chapter XL of *Tao Te King,* affirms that 'All things in the world are born out of being. Being is born out of nothing (*wu*)'. In the interpretation of his disciple Zhuang Zi, 'Whoever achieves their primitive virtue identifies with the origins of the Universe, and therefore the Void (*xu*)'. Not to have, or none, (*wu*) is the origin of all things, whereas the *xu* (void) is at the heart of everything.

In summary, it is hardly difficult to see the African continent as the origin and supreme potential of the manifestation of being and existing, provided that the necessary creativity is exercised to this effect. Strategic thinking must, to this end, be

part of an uncompromising critical perspective, aiming towards an appropriating reconstruction that neutralizes the five modalities of cognitive-praxeological prejudice examined previously. To counter anti-African mythopoetic power, break the bonds of servitude, reconfigure normativity, apply long-lasting and integrative sutures to the centrifugation of social fabric, and stem nihilistic and obliterating dynamics, it is necessary to begin by establishing a new relationship between Africa's space and its perception, as well as the actions that steer and exercise the power of Africans within this space and its resources.

In other words, it is a question of re-examining, with more pertinence than in the past, three ways to strategically approach the relationship between geography and politics. The first relates to the link between territoriality and sovereignty, which must be reconfigured to achieve the goals of maximalist Pan-Africanism. The only sovereignty in Africa would therefore be that of a State of continental dimensions. From an academic disciplinary perspective, this first interpretation would involve new and future international relations to be restructured.

The second interpretation, the devices of which go as far back as Sun Tzu and beyond, prompts the geographical space to be framed as the theatre of operations (notably military, but not exclusively, as they are first and foremost cultural), to train and deploy new Africans as soldiers of the Renaissance. Tactical and strategic success requires certain appropriate schematizations of the African space to allow for their efficient deployment.

The third approach to this relationship between space and politics concerns the issue of duration, theorized by Fernand Braudel in particular. It is a question of taking control of the knowledge and management of three types of duration as regards African socio-cultures, both within their own space and (in a discriminating manner due, for example, to diasporic challenges and concentrations) the global arena. It is necessary to get a grip on the long term, at the most perennial level, that of the quasi-immobility of structures and traditions, with the cumbersome action of the cosmos, geography, biology and collective psychology and sociology. This will provide the reference matrix most likely to serve as the foundations for any sustainable construction.

On this basis, it is necessary to work in the medium term, that of conjunctions and cycles (the length of which varies, but covers at least two generations), as with postcolonial states. Duration is important due to its power to connect structural and conjunctural phenomenality. Actions that must influence the short term make sense and achieve momentum at this level, within the domain of immediate events where actions, explosions, clichés, noise and confusion tend

to have only a temporary and passing impact, oriented by prospective minds in reference to affirmed or just desired trends.

Such a geostrategic approach highlights the differential advantages of the framework of appropriation linked to Africa as a point of reference. Contrary to the appropriation *Kemet* or *Kama* ('black' in ancient Egyptian), with which some would like to replace it, the name *Africa* unites Blacks, who are in the majority in Africa, and other African races. The origin of the name Africa, and the role that Arabs play in it, is important, in the logic of the counter centrifugation of Africa's unique social fabric, to overcome the Saharan obstacle, which, in racial geopolitics, separates whites and blacks.

Together with Ifriki, Ifrikiyah, Ifren, Afer, etc., Africa thus has the potential to claim, affirm and re-establish its great traditions, notably that of unconditional hospitality, which transcends hostility. Admittedly, the first people named by any form of the root Africa were Arab-Berber. The first map of Africa, which appeared in Julius Honorius' *Cosmographia*, the first written work to be considered credible, dating back to late antiquity (fourth century), only shows the Mediterranean coast. Its deconstructive usage resulted in infinite regression. However, by strategically considering these peoples and spaces as metonyms of Africa as a whole, we can positively channel the adjustments towards a no-less-strategic response to a certain number of essential questions: What is Africa? Who is African? Are there one or more Africas? How can these problems of unity and difference be solved?

The logic of integrative sutures – inherent to the designation of Africa going back to the Arab-Berber metonym – is also a device for resolving one of the axial crises that conditions the culture-peace-security-development-unity continuum in post-Gaddafi Africa. Africa's unity and uniqueness can be found through solutions and integrative sutures to the problems of the Berbers and Islamist trans-Saharan terrorism. From this point of view, the CERDOTOLA[3] is proud to be among the first relevant poles to have proposed that it is not just the art of war that must be endogenized to end security crises with cumbersome identitarian features.

The last element that must be mentioned is the universality of the reference 'Africa', of the name of Africa, which is at the same time both established and overused. Considering Africa's unique status as the cradle of humanity,

3 *Centre international de recherche et de documentation sur les traditions et les langues africaines*. Inter-State Institution for Scientific and Cultural Cooperation, established in 1977, with headquarters in Yaoundé, Cameroon. email: contacts@cerdotola.org; website: www.cerdotola.org.

it becomes impossible to carve it up. However, it is certain that we can move beyond not only inter-African differences, but differentiations, including those that remain catalysts of war due to their influence over the five prejudicial modalities between Africans and non-Africans.

Homo sapiens were born in Africa 200,000 to 300,000 years ago. It was, however, only over the course of the last eight to ten thousand years that Africans who migrated to other continents lost their melanin pigmentation, permitting differences between human races or, more precisely, complexions, to take root. All human beings, with the advanced intelligence they possess, could therefore be considered African, or at least descendants of Africans. Drawing upon its unique designation, Africa thus unites itself and unites humanity. The fact that Africa has been the main theatre of traumas affecting our universal conscience puts it in a favourable position to become the unequalled centre of developing standards and cosmopolitic inducements.

Conclusion

With the hope of convincing us all of this, I will conclude with the following remark. No other continent has historically produced as many people from different continents who identify themselves with it to the point of taking its name. With the exception of Leo Africanus, who was an Arab, this phenomenon occurred through the adoption of the Latin cognomen *afer* which, derived from the Berber tribe of the Afer, refers to Africa and expresses, on behalf of those who took the name, the desire to be known as 'African'. The following can be cited from among many others:

- Publius Terentius Afer, known as Terence, the Roman playwright who died in the year 159 BCE
- Publius Aelius Hadrianus Afer, father of Hadrian, the Roman Emperor
- Domitius Afer, Roman orator and rhetorician, who died in the year 60
- Gaius Marius Victorinus Afer, fourth century Roman grammarian
- Arnobius Afer, Roman rhetorician who died in the fourth century
- Finally, the most important, Antonius Guillermus Amo Afer (1703-1759), eighteenth-century Germano-Ghanaian philosopher.

The latter, a Black man born in Ghana who identified himself as African, was a professor at the universities of Halle, Jena and elsewhere. He defended the rights of Moors and Blacks, notably in his *Dissertatio inauguralis de jure maurorum*

in Europa, presented at the University of Halle in 1729. By placing African inter-racial unity at the heart of the Enlightenment, in contrast to obscurantism, the devastation of which would earmark the certain failure of modernity at Auschwitz, Amo Afer's doctoral thesis and actions would guide the heritage of the Enlightenment, as well as the great narrative of universal emancipation, towards new trains of thought and inclusive emancipating actions.

The world is in dire need of these today, and Africa – yes, *Africa*, has them at its disposal. To do this and to maximize such humanist exploitation, we return to the initial epistemological issues, with, here, implications for historical disciplinarity or its suspension, based on the *tropism of the sankofa*. Indeed, the *sankofa*, an African pictogram depicting a walking bird turning its head backwards with a shining eye, is a concept that says that 'it is not forbidden to look back' to move forward.

As a representative sign of history, it is both the dynamics of becoming and the analeptic moment in becoming, its construction and restitution that are highlighted. Obedience to the injunction 'turn around and take!', understood as 'learning from the past', represented by the head turned back, is nothing more than the capture of a fertile moment of becoming, represented by the body of the bird thrown forward in its entirety.

Finally, this is also an African epistemological trait and dimension which, by not conceiving of history as an interrogation of the past alone, makes an epistemological break with the mainstream, the dominant historiography. The *sankofa* invites us to a new history as a science of the collective future of societies based on historical encounters, from which arise new possibilities of naming and bringing into existence a more than desirable common existence in the world.

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CHAPTER 9

ORALITY AND THE WRITING OF AFRICAN HISTORY

Towards a New Epistemology

Bonaventure Mve Ondo

Introduction

The writing of history, insofar as it is at once an ontology of the possible and the product of a process of objectification, depends, first and foremost, on a phenomenology of memory – that is, on preservation and on the capacity of memories to reappear in the present (Ricœur, 2004, p. 3; Le Goff and Nora, 1985). This work is particularly difficult when it comes to the history of Africa as it involves taking into account the very conception of history and of historical time in African oral traditions, and thus the legitimacy of differences in historical vision. But such an exercise also opens up several methodological and epistemological questions: How is this history written? How does it differ from fiction? Is there an 'objective' truth here or only the setting out of various points of view? How should oral sources be treated, and what meaning should we attribute to them? And, more broadly, what are the legitimacy and the epistemology on which this history is founded?

The first epistemological reversal and its consequences

It is always difficult to ponder and to write history. This difficulty was long rejected by historians themselves, so much so that the discipline was, during the

nineteenth century and long after, the model for all the humanities and social sciences and, simultaneously, the narrative of one civilization's domination over all the others. According to this conception, the historiographical operation (de Certeau, 1988) consisted in extracting historical facts from the quarry of written archives and in arranging them in accordance with the well-established laws of Western history, deemed the ultimate reference, to chart the course of the world – past, present and future.

However, from the end of the nineteenth century, philosophers,[1] sociologists and, in particular, other historians[2] began to demonstrate that the objectivity of facts was neither obvious nor logical – that all the laws of development based on progress, and all the other notions that had hitherto been held as obvious and that formed the basis of history's pretensions to objectivity, were, in reality, nothing but illusions. History – even with a capital 'H' – was, in fact, merely an intellectual construct from which African societies were excluded: it was based on a deliberate choice made from among available sources, or rather those considered as such, these sources being ordered and used based on implicit ideological presuppositions (Nora, 1996). Thus, it was that, in the absence of written documents, Africa was excluded. As the Malian historian Doulaye Konaté has rightly noted, '[t]hat which was accepted in the case of ancient Greece, namely, the use of *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad* (oral oeuvres par excellence) as historical sources, was refused to Africa, whose oral traditions were scorned' (Konaté, n.d.).

Following this initial critique came the first epistemological reversal that accompanied the various Black emancipation movements and those of the struggle for African independence. Black intellectuals of the time drew lessons from the fact that Western-centric historians, blinded by their own illusions, were mere forgers of the popular myth of an 'Africa, immutable and ahistorical'. These intellectuals sought to rewrite the history of the continent and its diasporas by returning, in the first instance, to the written sources that the colonizers had produced. Furthermore, and crucially, they sought to restore full meaning to oral testimonies and to the oral memory of Africans themselves.

Such an enterprise was neither simple nor routine, however, particularly in the face of the difficulties associated with the constitution of this new discipline – difficulties concerning the delimitation of its field, the reorganization of its sources, the rendering explicit of its methodology, and even the elaboration of

1 To think of history is to think about change and, hence, difference. It is an enterprise of political desacralization (Bloch, 2011, pp. 3-15).

2 As Charles Seignobos states, '[h]istory is not a science, it is merely a process of knowledge' (2014).

its epistemology. The rewriting of the history of Africa thus became problematic (Gayibor, Juhé-Beaulaton and Gomgnimbou, 2013). How could one identify the 'specificity' (Veyne, 1984) and not the singularity of facts in a territory this vast and with populations so diverse? How could one determine what makes sense 'to us', and what has meaning for all? How could one find, within the diversity of 'oral sources',[3] the primary plots that enabled the dramatization of the major events staged therein, and write a history that gives to Africans of today and tomorrow greater knowledge of their local, even national, histories and of their world history?

Writing history

A product of memory and of all that refers to it, history as it is recounted is, first and foremost, the present representation of an absent past. But a narrative delivered by a storyteller cannot be liberated from the vagaries of life, from their impressions, ideological presuppositions or capacity to reconstitute that which they are supposed to have lived through, seen or heard. Moreover, it is based on the myth constituted by a set of genealogical discourses – theogony, cosmogony, anthropogony – that are of the 'catalogue' type – that is, etymologically like a discourse that deploys a succession of elements.[4] This is why it appeared more important than ever to historians to consider, certainly, the primacy of memory, but also to take into account the conditions of production of that memory. Given that the history that was presented as being that of a continent could, in fact, only be a history perverted and translated by the colonial historian, it was clearly urgent to rewrite the history of the continent. Beginning in the 1950s, the new historians of the continent established their new research object, towards reconstituting the recognized memory of events, meaning, of what had actually happened. Furthermore, they established a new methodology that would be capable of combining the recapitulation of an African cultural identity with the desire to make sense within a process of intellectual liberation. For them, the question was not one of a return to origins that the 'oral sources' seemed to invoke, but rather one of marking the beginning of a history to be written, particularly, in its double function of reconciliation with self and with world history.[5]

3 These include not only myths, tales, legends and proverbs, but also songs, epic narratives like testimonies, and other vestiges concerning contemporary history.

4 The word 'catalogue' comes from the Greek *katalegein*, meaning 'to say one thing after another'.

5 See Ricœur's analysis of Plato's *Phaedrus* (2004, p. 138 et seq.).

To carry out truly historical research, these historians first distanced themselves from the written sources so as to better critique them: they sought to reject the colonial prejudices contained in the monographs, chronicles or amateur descriptions that had been published based on sources that originated, essentially, from the archives of missionaries and colonial administrators. This reconstruction of African history took place in three stages. First, the historians tried to exalt the specificity of the continent and to confer on this new discipline its own analytical and methodological tools.[6] The project, which legitimized the return to oral sources,[7] was conducted in direct opposition to the implicit postulate of colonial domination – that is, of an immobile and ahistorical Africa. But this first stance, marked by local specificities, of what Florence Bernault terms 'random and contested States' (2001, p. 137), could not lead to abandoning the trajectory that Western leadership imposed – an Africa that lagged behind and was forever condemned to catching up.

The second stage emerged in the 1990s, with the beginning of detailed analyses of an African reality, thenceforth rid of colonial ideological and political paradigms. Following the emblematic work of Jean-François Bayart (2009) on the Cameroonian State and what he terms the 'politics of the belly', and of Achille Mbembe (2021) on the necessary deconstruction of the continent's history, it was a matter of coming 'out of the dark night' and nothingness and, crucially, starting with a hermeneutic and pedagogical tool that would make it possible to shed light on the continent's specificity and, therefore, on its new history. However, this view, critical though it was, still did not enable a consideration of the enormous reconfiguration that the continent had undergone over several decades.

And that was when the third stage began. Since the time of independence, the continent has undergone a shift as important as the transition, on the scale of humanity, from the Palaeolithic to the Neolithic. Indeed, we are witnessing the transition of a continent from one that, at the end of the Second World War, still seemed to exist on the margins of the world, to one that is today completely dominated politically and economically by, and trapped within, the precipitous formation of nation states that are, thus, artificial. It is a continent that is being transformed by the massive invasion of new religious and cultural references (examples of the latter including schools, the media, and so forth).

6 This is the *General History of Africa* redaction project, adopted by UNESCO in 1964, which has been an institution since then.

7 This tradition was inaugurated by Jan Vansina and taken up and followed by Y. Person, R. Mauny, D. Hénige, C.-H. Perrot, J.-P. Chrétien, P. Curtin and others (see Gayibor et al., 2013, p. 5).

The consequence is that present-day postcolonial Africa has remained a sort of very poorly understood agglomeration, in whose illumination our teachers and researchers are little invested, apart from a few exceptions like Valentin Mudimbe (1988), Mbembe (2021), Joseph Tonda (2020) and Felwine Sarr (2016). All of this may be summed up by citing the words of Monique Hirschorn, written in 2010, about African sociologists (in a volume she co-edited with Moustapha Tamba on Francophone sociology in Africa), though applying them here to historians:

> African [historians] will not be able to confront globalization unless they are capable of offering the African continent a new vision of its future, and they will not be able to do so unless they accept fully the responsibility of the construction of their discipline, unless they develop, finally, a [history] that is emancipated from the prism of 'Eurocentrism' and freed from both 'Afro-pessimism' and 'Afro-optimism' (Hirschorn and Tamba, 2010, p. 14).

Faced with this situation, researchers in the social sciences, which is what historians of Africa are, who have become conscious of the singularity of their act of writing, should, more than ever, ask themselves what their role is in the training of citizens of today and tomorrow. Towards this, they should, from a reflexive perspective, ask themselves the following questions: For whom, in whose name and, above all, why do they write history? How can they take into account the ambiguity of oral sources and, above all, be capable of rethinking these sources and fitting them into a project that will enable a departure from the provincialism and the nationalisms that remain the predominant characteristics of Africa's factual history? How do they leave behind the piecemeal approach to history or a particular geohistory (Dosse, 1994, pp. 128-38)? In short, how can a new epistemology of oral traditions be produced, one capable of comprehending the logical and epistemic dynamics that would legitimize the writing of another history of Africa?

Oral sources and the second epistemological rupture

It is well known that oral traditions as a historical source were not accepted until the 1950s, the work of Jan Vansina (1965) being particularly noteworthy. From then on, historians of the continent have tried to take into account oral sources. Most often their content has been presented as oral tradition – that is, the set of representations common to a human group that are expressed in the form of images, concepts or problems, but that also refer to a style of life, a hierarchy of values and, more profoundly, a certain style of shared sensibility.

Now, the problem is that this content is not fixed but is in flux (Jewsiewicki and N'Sanda Buleli, 2008). Certainly, tradition intimately ties individuals to what has preceded them, and what is, therefore, the past of our present and a reminder of contingency. More fundamentally, however, tradition exceeds the strict boundaries of memory because it refers to the possibility of its own transgression. Thinking about oral traditions cannot simply consist in describing them but should also, perhaps, involve questioning the specific framework of their production and going beyond them, to where they seem to fade away. For they are, first and foremost, the fruit of history before being its source. Furthermore, the return to thinking about these oral traditions is not a simple, self-evident act: it is a major act of intellectual re-creation.

Until the 1950s, the sources used by historians of Africa were mainly the writings left by the principal actors of the colonial powers – missionaries, colonial administrators, soldiers, researchers and explorers of all kinds (geographers, anthropologists, historians, political scientists). It was after this that the study of oral traditions began to establish these traditions as complementary to written and archaeological sources. But, very quickly, the difficulty of working on 'oral texts' began to be noticed, insofar as these are both historical productions belonging to a particular culture, and productions marked by the social conditions of the present and the storyteller's own capacity for inventiveness.

Orality and all the 'texts' that come from it constitute a field that is immense on account of both the heterogeneity of their content and the nature, genre and form of the texts. There are long and short narratives that are inspired by and relate facts, ritual chants, tales, legends, epics, songs, myths, proverbs, poems and all kinds of firsthand accounts. These 'texts' as a whole constitute the raw material for social scientists who seek raw or decoded information, impossible to obtain by other means, on societies past or present.

The oral narrative, in its first sense as testimony, even before it tells a story, is an image: it teaches a process and describes facts or things that are no more. The product of an individual's memory (that of the narrator) and the memory of a people (who crystallized it in myths and epics), the oral narrative employs specific strategies, not only on that which it transmits, but also on the manner in which it does so. It is, therefore, more than an image: it is a process and an intellectual operation, potentially unending, of construction and reconstruction,[8] well summarized by the expression 'oral reason' that the Senegalese philosopher

8 History is understood here as critical work, as a vast 'heterology' and a journey following the 'traces of the other' (Certeau, 1973, p. 173; 1988).

Mamoussé Diagne proposed. This is, therefore, not a simple matter of a recorded oral archive. It is, rather, a matter of traces that have to be rendered explicit, decolonialized and rethought because, as Diagne has argued so well, they carry within themselves not only the staging of the principal dramas of the history of a people[9] but, crucially, a specific ontomythology (Mve Ondo, 2013).

Whether it concerns the more historical epics of the peoples of West Africa or the more imagination-based epics of the peoples of Central Africa, the process is the same. Furthermore, the 'oral text' does not merely recount adventures, real or fictive, but also – in an oblique or indirect manner, through the process of dramatization – conveys the specific staging of facts or ancient events that one wishes to remember. And even if these facts or events as recounted in these narratives are not ordered in a chronological manner, it is nevertheless certain that the story thus recounted does bring out a certain strategic goal. What myth, epic, proverb or any other oral narrative reveals is the desire to link past and present, but also, and perhaps crucially, the capacity to heal the wounds of the past and the present, and to learn to think.

The historian's paradox

The question of history carries with it the need for epistemological and intellectual sovereignty. But the achievement of the latter is difficult to realize for several reasons. For one thing, humans are thinking, speaking and judging beings who are forever inscribed in a space (a territory) and in a time. Thus, when the objects of thought that are their own pertain to the past and to the very meaning (the signification, the orientation) of their oral sources of the past, one cannot but glimpse the paradoxical difficulty that results: How, based on these 'oral traditions', may one simultaneously grasp what has been and establish what must really have been? Should historians, whose role is to seek that which makes sense and, therefore, to judge, submit their judgment to the traces of the past, or submit these traces to their judgment? Ultimately, who are they to know what nobody knows? Where do they speak from? Where do they get their knowledge? In other words, if the true aim of the discipline of history is to be an objective, or better yet a just, study of the past, how should it proceed? Should it be receptive or creative, passive or active, observant or legislative?

9 Diagne studies in particular 'the dialectic of the verb in orality' (phenomenology), 'the epistemology of history in the mode of orality' (the analysis of the staging), and 'the hermeneutic of the historical condition' (the relation with transcendence) with regard to humans (Diagne, 2005, p. 5).

How can the historian, in particular the historian of Africa, claim to deal relevantly with the oral traces proffered by Africans themselves if he or she receives these without prior research, without a critical evaluation, without a focus on, and even beyond, the object in question? It is a necessity of the first order for every historian to know how to pay heed to these traces, about which he or she wishes to assert something, and to the manner in which these traces have been constituted, taken up and transmitted. To 'do' history is to begin with a methodological stance of attentive and critical listening before such objects (Gayibor, 2013, p. 41). But from another point of view, if it is merely about absorbing that which is recounted regarding the past, the work of the historian is not simply to record, but also to think – that is, to reject the stance of submission to the given and to seek beyond it, beyond the appearance of sources and facts. It does not truly begin except by an 'epistemicide', meaning, by the destruction of the modalities of access to an episteme different from that of the West.

Towards a new epistemology of orality

If, therefore, history is 'a discipline of traces', then to do African history is naturally to return to the complex network of rules and constraints that organize the oral tradition and mark its irreducible fragility in its causal assignations. More than ever, the researcher who wants to invest himself or herself in the writing of the history of Africa should consider the set of these rules as epistemological problems that the oral genre contains. But he or she should also consider the colonial writing of this history and go beyond it. Because, more than ever, for an encounter with the Other that is not mutually destructive, one must first reconquer as one's own Self.

Vansina was the first to formulate the main theoretical rules on the value of oral testimonies, as mentioned above. He was also responsible for underscoring the main problems involved. These relate just as much to interpretation (there being no guarantee that the initial message was not modified), to the impossible chronology (in the absence of objective dating) and to the absence of quantification (there being no numbers cited) as they do to credibility (the impossibility of comparing the original narrative of others) and the incapacity to proffer any kind of guarantee (given the spatial and temporal limits). The Belgian scholar was also the first to propose that exit from the traditional epistemological impasse that consists in opposing writing and orality, these being, in fact, merely two complementary perspectives of human reason.

We must therefore now go beyond and identify the rules of another methodological epistemology induced by field research, the deconstruction of Western epistemological diktats and, above all, dialogic theory. This means that the researcher should, henceforth, be more careful than ever not to make oral traditions say what they are not actually saying but rather must listen to them differently. Doing history in the case of a continent whose primary mode of preserving its memories is not writing is no easy thing. It is perhaps even the most difficult of tasks because such an enterprise requires a rethinking and reconsideration of the three successive phases of the work of any historian; namely, the collection of documents, the use of the documents and, finally, representation. But also, and above all, and therefore, such an enterprise requires a rethinking and reconsideration of the epistemological conditions of the production of its knowledge.

First, the work of documentation: this can no longer be a simple recollection of memories, a banal questioning of the 'catalogues' of the libraries of memories but must, perhaps, first question what they hide. Indeed, the historian of Africa can no longer be content with taking up oral sources without deconstructing them. More than ever, they must compare various types of evidence that will ensure the credibility and validity of their historical narrative. The historian should be particularly critical and vigilant before any oral text because the text has surely been marked and deformed time and again, and thus rendered indistinct for us, both by the traumas and wounds (whether conscious or unconscious) of the storyteller, and by all forms of ideological manipulation and instrumentalization of which the group that proffered it was itself a victim. This is why the work of the African historian will never be a long, calm river (Ekanza, 2013, pp. 182-86).

Second, the work of explication, comprehension, interpretation, or the hermeneutic phase, is an invitation to leave externally centred histories to return to more local histories. More than ever, it is about learning to decipher the enigmas of the past and to set aside ready-made ideas, all the while remaining present. Oral sources appear to us thus as images that offer themselves as the presence of a past that is no more and that are marked by what came before. These are thus imprints that are difficult to decipher and that preserve an irreducible fragility in their causal assignations. To interpret them is to depart from the European paradigm, born in the seventeenth century and consolidated in the eighteenth, according to which economic growth guides the evolution of societies in the history of humanity.

The third and final phase of the work of a historian, including that of the historian of Africa, is that of scriptural and literary representation, which

cannot be reduced to writing. Because while history is writing through and through – from the archives to the books published by the historian – it cannot be forgotten that it is, above all, a narrative, or rather, a narrative of narratives. Between history and epic fiction, what differs is the intention. In the epic, by contrast, we are dealing with an ontomythology; that is, knowledge through a non-substantial and non-absolute object, but relative to a formal possibility.

For example, in the narratives of the Mvet or the epic of Sunjata, what one observes is that the universe of signification is not an empty principle but a field or a horizon that renders present all things by situating them, one with respect to the other, and that, crucially, precedes and explains any narrative and is structurally related to it (Mve Ondo, 2013). In history, by contrast, what matters is the epistemology of the presentation or the 'presentification' – that is, the capacity not to 'say' the meaning but rather to show it (Lepetit, 1995, p. 296). Because the present, and singularly the present of Africa, is torn between a bygone past that one does not wish to reproduce and a future that is completely opaque, we historians should, aided by hermeneutics, as Ricœur stated, '[m]ake our expectations more determinate and our experience less so' (Ricœur, 1988, p. 216).

To the sources of oral reason

Such a work of deconstruction and reconstruction requires a fresh re-reading of oral sources in terms of what constitutes them – namely, oral reason. Subsequent to the first, more political, epistemological rupture initiated by Vansina, it is the initiation of a new epistemology of this type of source that we are increasingly witnessing, with the work of Ruth Finnegan and Stephen Belcher, but also that of Nicoué Gayibor, Mamoussé Diagne, Shahid Rahman and Gildas Nzokou, among others. This rupture has occurred along three principal lines. The first, which invites a reconsideration of the diversity of genres of orality and the unsuitability of extant descriptive models, is more methodological and philosophical. The second, which stems from the analysis of the dialectical relationship between storyteller and subject, is of an anthropo-socio-historical order. The third, which takes into account the dialogic theory and its consequences, is of a logico-mathematical orientation. It is in this sense that we must read the important works by Diagne (2005), Finnegan (2007), Belcher (1999), Gayibor (2013), and Redman, et al. (2016).

Firstly, since orality is a true phenomenon of thought, as revealed by the expressions in which it occurs – orality, oral cultures, verbal arts, orature, auriture,

oraliture, verbalization and oral language – it is also a form of action, art and reflection, calling us to go beyond words and the evanescent character of the instant to access the complex multiplicity that characterizes that instant. To achieve this, Finnegan insists on the relations and interactions that the narrative has with the storyteller and on their performance. Belcher, starting from an immense corpus of epics, having established a sort of synthesis of common traits and local particularities of epic works in Africa, defines the evolutive process that their creation obeys, based on a historico-mythological complex, thus identifying the lines of a completely different modality of knowledge.

That said, since true work on oral sources requires that one find a rule that permits the taking into account of the diversity of their materials (tales, myths, epics, proverbs, sayings and so forth) and their complexity (each narrative being unique and no classification of these being satisfactory), it is truly important to identify a socio-anthropo-historical throughline. This is what Gayibor and his colleagues propose. Having taken stock of the research on oral sources, and having revisited 'the methodological approaches depending on field conditions, comparative analyses, the implementation of interdisciplinarity', it is henceforth a matter of 'discerning new domains that can be studied or [of] studying in depth certain fields that have been little or poorly studied' (Gayibor et al., 2013, pp. 9-10). Thus, it is that, analysing a Soninke proverb, Monique Chastenet shows very rightly, having compared oral and written sources, 'how a proverb can play, despite itself, the role of memorial and become a source of history' (Chastenet, 2013, p. 447).

Nevertheless, it is no longer a simple matter of knowing how to collect oral sources, but of submitting them to the methodologies of academic fields that deal with argumentation. This approach is what logician and philosopher Nzokou proposed, following Shahid Rahman. For Nzokou, argumentation in oral traditions fits neither within a general axiomatic system nor within semantics based on the external articulation of sign and world. Oral traditions (proverbs, for example) take on meaning, from a logical point of view, based on the inferential structure of their arguments. Their interpretation obeys, therefore, the non-monotonic principle of reasoning recently highlighted by experts of legal reasoning, who show that laws should contain certain terms that are vague so as to distance them from particular cases. It is the logical analysis of the argumentation of a proverb that can help legitimize its historical content. The strength of the proverb is now its imprecision. Now, it is this imprecision itself that has to be questioned, to rethink and, above all, 'break out' of baseline interpretation.

History: a reflexive discipline?

What this new epistemology of orality proposes is to operate a semantic reversal starting from a truly radical critique of the universes of signification from which oral sources originate, and which have taken them up and established them. The writing of history is then only possible when based on a vast work, focusing not only on the history of the metamorphoses of oral reason, but also on the repertory of actions and modalities of cognition that have aided in the denial of certain forms of knowledge and have thus played a key role throughout history. Because, as Diagne (2005, p. 573) astutely points out, '[t]o understand the relation that contemporary African societies have with their past', it is important to deconstruct and reconstruct their systems of representation and their links with Western epistemology. Because the search for new pathways of historical truth is not a simple exercise in writing, it requires the prior epistemicide of the Western writing of history and subsequently a true intellectual conversion. The new history should become, more than ever, interrogative and reflexive.

Consequently, to write history is not to try to elaborate a baseline narrative, a sort of 'inspired' narrative, nor one that is moved by some sort of transcendence that would sacralize an immemorial past. Nor is it the writing of an authoritative narrative. It is, above all, a return to the old matters of true and false, of sense and nonsense, and, above all, of the perpetual questioning of the facts, the oral narratives, in light of dialogic theory and decolonial epistemologies. This questioning should, henceforth, become permanent, because it is no longer a matter of revealing the interior distance of those who dwell in the past and their relationship to their time, to things and beings, but rather of escaping from essentialism. Everything happens in the background, as if one were situated in a sort of epistemological circle between history (the object) and Africa (its subject), history not being knowable except through the modalities exercised on it by the actions of Africa, while the continent never becomes aware of itself except on the occasion of transformations that history provokes in its actions.

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CHAPTER 10

ORAL TRADITIONS – SOURCES OF AN UPDATED AFRICAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Assessment and Perspectives

Théodore Nicoué Gayibor

A mixed assessment

Half a century ago,[1] Belgian historian and anthropologist Jan Vansina published his now classic work *Oral Tradition* (1961). It posed quite a challenge in the face of certainty from Western historians and humanists regarding the superiority of written sources over oral ones. The methodology outlined by Vansina would soon be taken up, refined and completed by other pioneers, including Y. Person, R. Mauny, D. Henige, C.-H. Perrot, J.-P. Chrétien, P. Curtin and many others. The quality of the works produced since then has conquered the scepticism of the late 1950s and, despite the continued mistrust of some groups, oral sources have finally been recognized in academic circles as primary sources for the reconstruction of much of history, in the absence of written documents.

In Africa, a rational organization of research into oral traditions was first attempted as part of the project to write a general history of Africa, adopted by the 14th session of the UNESCO General Conference in 1964.[2] Conferences held in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), Niamy (Niger) and Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) during the years that followed established the need to create regional

1 This contribution is inspired by the conclusions of the Agbodrafo (Togo) Symposium, held in May 2011, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Vansina's work (Gayibor et al., 2013).

2 The name of Amadou Hampâté Bâ, who was a member of UNESCO's Executive Board (from 1962 to 1968), remains associated with this project.

centres for research into oral traditions to conduct field research in the regional cultural areas. The work of these various consultations was summarized in a book edited by D. Laya in 1972.

At the same time, in Western universities, sections or centres for African studies were opened to educate young historians and anthropologists eager to focus on this new branch of history which had hitherto been the preserve of colonial administrators. Many African and Africanist historians were therefore educated in the 1970s-1980s. They produced extensive monographs encompassing cultural areas that until then had been largely ignored by scientific studies. The history departments of African universities were also proud to teach this history, which they sometimes made their own at a national level, supplementing the often incomplete education received in Western universities and, for learners, sparking interest in this past that was increasingly included in national concerns. A little later, this same enthusiasm won over the successors of the old political structures, silenced by the new political order, who watched with surprise and pride as the history of their ancestors emerged from oblivion. In several countries[3] traditional leaders were also seen to ask professional historians for a written reconstruction of this past. They wished to know more about it to take it into account when creating development projects. Curiously, this movement barely affected the modern elites, particularly policy-makers who were concerned solely with the present, as if the past could be disregarded when addressing development problems.

French historian and Africanist Claude Perrot wrote in 2011:

> Initially, in Europe and America, until the late 1970s, there were many publications and articles based at least in part on oral sources. Researchers were seized with a sort of enthusiasm for the idea of exploring a still largely untapped field and helping to put together a history hitherto excluded from textbooks. Their work fulfilled an expectation and, in record time, was reflected in periodicals or in the kinds of encyclopaedias which, in both Africa and Europe, found their audience: The history prior to colonization finally emerged from the shadows (Gayibor, 2011, p. 11).

After 1980, everything changed, and the great momentum was lost. Field research was rare for various reasons. In Europe, after the end of the Cold War, Africa occupied only a limited place in research programmes and calls for tenders of scientific bodies. In Africa, economic difficulties and the absence of specific funding, reinforced by the obligation to finish a thesis in three years, did not encourage national researchers to leave the capital when oral interviews had

3 Examples exist that readers can access by consulting specialized works.

become long, costly and difficult to carry out in the field. Furthermore, most researchers of oral sources and older periods were driven away because, coupled with the appeal of the contemporary period, including colonial times, the written source remained highly attractive. There were also conceptual reasons, inspired by an invasive post-modernist trend from across the Atlantic. An almost systematic scepticism set in, going so far as to deny any reliability of oral traditions. These would barely provide information on the interests and conflicts played out in the present, which would be echoed by the 'traditionalists'. Thus, in the West, the chairs and centres of African history 'closed' one after another, under cover of administrative adjustments or on the retirement of their holders.

Significant advances

Fifty years after the publication of Vansina's work, the Agbodrafo Colloquium (Togo) produced an overwhelmingly positive assessment of research and scientific results based on oral sources. This demonstrated the many achievements in terms of consolidating the methodology advocated by the pioneers and the new fields open for exploration by researchers. Renewed research prospects from the oral corpus were already recognized (highlighting the pitfalls that the field historian needs to watch out for: the need to resort to disciplines other than history, the intervention of life stories to fill the large gaps in modern history, etc.).

The religious factor has proved to be fundamental for future research, particularly in precolonial history.[4] Thus, so-called traditional religion is seen to enter the historian's domain. In prospecting for new sources, it is important to note the key role given to endogenous religion, places of worship, mainly sacred trees and woods and their cultural environment (material objects, the nature of offerings, rituals, etc.)[5] which can be identified in space. They are likely to convey vital information for the reconstruction of local cultures, in the same way as the convents of medieval Europe, starting with the humanist trend which gave rise to the Renaissance. By examining the connections between history and religion, such an analysis reveals how the 'invisible' can provide information about the life and past of populations, helping to clarify the parts that were left in the shadows by the bearers of oral traditions more

4 To this term, French Africanists prefer that of ancient history. A peculiarity that leads to confusion, as the expression refers to a specific period in historical time. Is Africa outside of this movement?

5 Considered true repositories of human history, they are nonetheless overlooked by most historians due to the difficulty of accessing this type of information.

focused on glorifying the ancestors. Thus, instances of abandoning or adopting deities in response to certain events reveal hidden sides of the past (Perrot, 2013, p. 283-288). However, the impact of Christianity and Islam on so-called traditional religions also raises the question of their future and the knowledge associated with them. The passion and fundamentalism of evangelical groups and iconoclastic Muslims, which, with their false promises, attract people living in poverty, are in fact committing irreparable damage in this area by destroying all visible and psychological signs of such religious culture.

Genealogies and, from them, chronologies and temporality, are the priority: a detailed analysis of the various causes of degradation of these lists, and their manipulation by those who now issue them, as well as new strategies for approaching them, can therefore be developed, by taking into account the evolution of the fields of study, particularly with regard to the disappearance of certain categories of informants and, consequently, the 'desertification' of certain fields.

From the written word's interference to its encroachment on the oral, one can see instances of the distorting prism of educating the witnesses. The relationship between the written and oral, and especially the incursion of the written into the oral, provides a new angle for analysing the purported facts transmitted by a 'pure' tradition. The valuation of the written at the expense of orality has obscured the presence of the oral in the written. Several authors rightly insist on the interpenetration between the two source categories. Indeed, in reality, many written sources present transcriptions of oral traditions. This phenomenon, well-known to historians under the expression 'feedback', is manifested in the sometimes subtle but often crude use of the written to fill gaps in oral sources, where such documents exist and are available. One of the best-known cases, which became a classic of colonial literature, is that of the legend of Queen Pokou of the Baule of Côte d'Ivoire. This was reappraised by F. Vitti (2008, p. 205-2019), who described how the founding myth of the Baule, through the first version transcribed and set out by M. Delafosse in 1900, experienced unprecedented success to the extent that today it is found in countless widely circulated publications, including information and advertising brochures, literary works, theatre pieces, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, tourism guides such as the famous *Guide Bleu*, the media, school textbooks and even on the internet, making Queen Pokou the most high-profile person of Côte d'Ivoire. Such examples are found in several cultural areas and repeatedly demonstrate how often the written and oral come together, combine, intertwine, intermingle and feed off each other, thus maintaining close, then inseparable, links. Once recorded and fixed in the rigidity of the written word, oral testimony becomes a

written source, in turn feeding the oral tradition in so-called traditional societies, now affected by the written. The major challenge for the modern researcher is to know to track and detect these borrowings and analyse their propagation circuit to re-establish, where necessary, another historical truth.

Finally, the continuity of history from oral sources, combining the present and past, must not be forgotten. It is important to pay some attention to this aspect so that future research is based on this continuity, instead of reproducing a dichotomy between precolonial history and modern history, for which the same chronological division should be reviewed.

Renewed research prospects

The future of oral sources depends essentially on the research of new topics and historical periods for which they can be used. It all therefore depends on their availability and the wisdom and involvement of the researcher, as well as the interests at stake, in short, the researcher's empathy for their subject. Therefore, a significant expansion and great diversity in the range of non-written sources is seen, if there is a mind to give it adequate effort and resources. Depending on the circumstances and the resources used, earlier items already largely deployed are revisited, divided and better compartmentalized for improved analysis (e.g. narratives, toponyms, anthroponyms, ethnonyms, hydronyms, totems, proverbs, speeches, as well as ritual songs from monasteries, poems passed on through various channels such as landowners, priests of local religions, soothsayers, elders by lineage, and gestures – each category in its own field), and can once again be questioned using a renewed methodology.

Each of these categories may, in turn, prove to be multifaceted. Thus, different types of songs constitute a rich category that should be favoured by historians: songs of praise, hunting songs, forest songs, death songs, drinking songs, etc. – all provide elements of information that are interesting to researchers. The only limitation to this diversity remains the researcher's ability to immerse themselves completely in their field of research and innovate.

A few persistent inadequacies

Oral sources/oral tradition/oral history: the eternal debate. Despite the publications and articles on methodology, the terminology used in terms of orality is always fluctuating and depends on the users of these sources. Tradition,

in the singular or plural, the oral sources that encompass them (or not), the bearers, guardians, traditionalists, and so on. Fifty years on, there is still a lack of clarity and a need for definitions. At the very least, there should be an insistence on definitions for such expressions according to the experiences gained by researchers in the field.

It is also important to consider adopting terminology that is adapted to be as practical as possible, as well as the need to reflect the facts by using local terms with appropriate explanations; the use of linguistics proves to be unavoidable. A workshop on vocabulary in terms of oral sources could be a follow-up to these questions.

Finally, it is necessary to mention the expression *oral history,* which, in modern historiography, is used to describe the current trend of an increasing number of Western historians to base several major contemporary events on the oral testimonies of those involved, to study phenomena dating back several decades. These include the two world wars of the twentieth century and social movements such as the Great Depression of 1929, the Popular Front in France, or even the socio-political movements of May 1968 across the world. This trend, still modest in France (it is much older and widespread in the United States and Canada), nevertheless seems set to continue as one of the major historical trends of the twenty-first century (Descamps, 2006).

What prospects does the use of oral sources offer to historians today?

The facts speak for themselves. In 2015, the situation was no longer as it was at the time of independence. The urgency then was to collect the oral sources, the wealth of which was of no doubt to anyone, as quickly and effectively as possible. Fifty years later, the bitter truth is obvious: how can we respond, not only to the drying up of sources in the face of the 'programmed extinction of traditionalists', but also to the deterioration of what remains?

The phenomenon is neither new nor specific to a given land. It is general: all societies dependent on orality are affected by the unavoidable disappearance of witnesses likely to pass on oral sources. Consequently, there is an urgent need to promote an appropriate strategy to protect as much of this past as possible.

One of the potential solutions may be a vast project[6] of systematically collecting and preserving oral sources using all modern means, especially

6 Such a project is currently being carried out with the support of CELHTO in Niamey.

electronic, as well as the creation of information centres within major libraries, with curators who would be specially trained in handling sound archives.

At the same time, this would comprise a directory of known traditionalists still alive, to establish not only their biographies, but also the sum of all their knowledge. Researchers would therefore find, as in the past, material to continue their research, but with a methodology more appropriate to the consultation of these now frozen archives.

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CHAPTER 11

TANTARA

Madagascar's African Historical Tradition

Manassé Esoavelomandroso

Introduction

Tantara are oral narratives conveying the history of lineages and kingdoms from the sixteenth century to the colonial conquest (late nineteenth to early twentieth century). They contain ethnographic notations and testimonies on major events. They are the historical narrative of a group delivered solely to a select and restricted audience, as well as something we experience and use in everyday life.

Aside from the Antemoro people, who recorded their historical traditions in Sorbian manuscripts written in Arabic characters, in 1658 the French governor of Madagascar, Etienne de Flacourt, was the first to collect, transcribe, translate and publish *tantara* on Madagascar, principally the Anosy region (Flacourt, 1995). In the nineteenth century (for Imerina) and the twentieth century (for the rest of the country), some of these *tantara* were transcribed by French Catholic and British and Norwegian Protestant missionaries, as well as Malagasy pastors or evangelists, later joined by colonial officials.

Two types of *tantara* are recognized today. The first have been transcribed and sometimes published, such as those of the formerly evangelized areas, Imerina and Betsileo. The second type are those that remained in oral form, in the rest of the country and, more particularly, its rural areas. Each lineage or kingdom has its own *tantara*.

Indeed, *tantara* act as foundations for the identity of the members of a lineage, defining their place in society and determining or guiding their relations with other groups. This is why a good understanding and, above all, the judicious use of these *tantara*, can contribute to facilitating and consolidating the building of our nation.

Tantara: history and oral sources

When drawn upon in various ways by citizens and researchers, *tantara* – both ancient and modern – can be used to write the history of Madagascar.

Tantara's *dual nature*

For the populace, *tantara* represent the traditional historical knowledge that connects the living to their ancestors, reminding the former of the exploits of the latter – experiences from which many lessons can be learned. They are also used to educate young people and to reinforce the cohesion of lineage groups. These 'connoisseurs of tradition' thus play an important role in society. In contrast, researchers draw upon *tantara* as oral materials from which to develop historians' knowledge. These oral documents, concerning families or lineages, are transmitted within these group. Those that concern the ancient kingdoms, which often turn out to be *tantara* of power rather than of the people, are preserved by descendants of the leaders of these political organizations.

Traditional and recent tantara

Tales that relate to the precolonial period can be classified as traditional *tantara*, whereas recent *tantara* are those that tell the story of colonization and the return to independence. Pre-nineteenth-century *tantara* are the most numerous and, paradoxically, the most precise. They tell the stories of the 'great ancestors', founders of lineages or dynasties, and their companions and successors. Their lists, recited during venerations, provide many elements that shed light on the chronology or development of the lives of their groups. They themselves were great organizers, victorious warriors, exemplary men. The *tantara* of this 'blessed period' tell the story of an enchanted world where ancestors became demi-gods, heroes mingle with the living. The history they contain is sometimes mythicized. Nineteenth-century *tantara* are dominated by the wars of unification led by the Merina Kingdom (Raison-Jourde, 1991; Larson, 2000). The historical accounts

of Imerina report the slow construction of the kingdom dominated by the strong personality of Andrianampoinimerina (1787–1810), who, once the Kingdom of Andriamasinavalona (around 1675–1710) had been restored and enlarged, launched into an expansion policy which included his neighbours. He left the unification of Madagascar to his son, Radama I (1810–1828), as a political legacy. The means through which this unification was achieved (wars and direct administration) were poorly understood and little appreciated by the vanquished populations. Forced upon them, they were experienced as invasion and exploitation enterprises. Two types of contrasting nineteenth-century *tantara* can be traced from this period, but both celebrate acts of bravery or heroic resistance, leaving prohibited episodes aside and consciously avoiding speaking about certain events. Twentieth-century *tantara* focus on the history of the resistance to colonization. At first, resistance to the colonial conquest was dispersed, as the French beat back political formations one after another. Insurrection movements against the French occupation were thus limited to certain areas at different times (Menalamba, Kotavy, Sadiavahe, 1947), but there was no general conflagration. Each population or area thus has its own *tantara* of colonization, hence the plurality of visions of twentieth-century events.

Tantara *and the writing of history*

Tantara have been collected since the nineteenth century. Some have been transcribed and sometimes published (Callet, 1908), and work continues to this day to collect and compile them in the context of university research. These *tantara* have been used by historians for critical studies and thematic syntheses (Delivre, 1974; Razafiarison, 2014). For some, there is great temptation to apply knowledge drawn from one specific area to a whole kingdom, or indeed to the whole of Madagascar. Hence the need for cross-cutting analysis to better understand the realities of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: internal and external perspectives that provide both intimate knowledge and perspective from a distance.

Tantara and socio-political organization

Lineage societies, clan confederations and kingdoms coexisted in Madagascar. Their *tantara* reflect their respective personalities.

Tantara *and territory*

The *tantara* of a group legitimizes its territory. It tells the story of the way a lineage was established within a certain space, with the creation or appropriation of the territory it sought to defend or enlarge. This territory was limited, marked by the clearings opened up by ancestors, the successive locations of their villages, pastures and oxen pens, their fields and, above all, their tombs. These are all marks of ownership. A lineage thus exists because it has a territory, its *tanindrazana* (land of the ancestors). Its *tantara* corresponds to a statement of tenure and, at the same time, a proof or guarantee of the group's very existence. Under these conditions, the history of a lineage is a collective or undivided asset. It also acts as a weapon used by the members of the lineage in disputes with their neighbours: the descendants of prestigious ancestors imposing themselves upon others. Royal dynasties engaged in wars or formed alliances to create their kingdoms, forcing the lineages they encountered into submission and appropriating their lands. Their new subjects remained on their land, reduced to mere usufructuaries. Those who fiercely resisted them were forced to flee (like many of the Vazimba), enslaved, or even declared pariahs (like the Antevolo under the Antemoro) (Tsaboto, 2003).

Tantara *and identity*

The *tantara* of both lineages and kingdoms maintain that ancestors and territories are the foundations of an identity. By reorganizing the society inside their territory, the kings forged historical or regional political identities (Merina, Sakalava, Betsileo, Betsimisaraka, etc.), wrongly referred to as tribes. In the kingdoms, *tantara* told the story of dynasties: it was as if everything started with them and revolved around them. The founding conquerors, as well as certain successors, bestowed titles of nobility on their relations, some of their companions or deserving subjects. This was an identity granted by the sovereigns. The vanquished and submissive populations who recognized the royal authority enlarged the ranks of their subjects. Their new identity was a function of the relationships they had with their masters and the duties they owed to them. *Tantara* of both dynasties and lineages emphasize the origin and evolution of these relations, reflecting their social importance.

Tantara *and one's place in society*

In both kingdoms and clan confederations, *tantara* reveal the existence of community societies in which individuals exist only as members of their

lineages. Lineage explains and justifies the place that each person occupies in society thanks to the ancestors and territories they have inherited.

The Andevo (slaves) are declared to have no ancestors or territories and therefore do not have a *tantara*. For them, the absence of a *tantara* explains the lack of identity which, even if it did once exist, was denied from the moment their ancestors were enslaved. Outcasts, such as the Antevolo in Antemoro territory, have their own *tantara* and therefore their own identity. These *tantara* have nevertheless been smothered, distorted or disguised by those in positions of power (both nobles and commoners).

Tantara of lineages emphasize the origin and exploits of their ancestors and reinforce their proximity to the sovereign. They thus provide information that is in the public domain and, if incorrect, will be contradicted or contested by 'outsiders' (members of other lineages).

Tantara of kings seek to supplant *tantara* of lineages, asserting that rulers and their families have God-given powers and places in society. Today, as in the past, the Malagasy are interested in *tantara* to learn about their history, whether embellished or disguised, fought for or denied, according to their social affiliation. They also draw upon these histories to assert their social position, protect their interests, claim privileges, and so on.

Tantara and nation-building

A knowledge of *tantara* is futile if it does not help us to understand the present and envisage the future. Used well, it can serve as a foundation for nation-building, a project which can be traced back to the early nineteenth century, when Andrianampoinimerina (1787-1810), king of an enlarged, secure and prosperous Imerina, instructed his son Radama I (1810-1828) to unify Madagascar. Assisted by the English, who recognized him as 'King of Madagascar' (treaty of 23 October 1817), the latter embarked upon the conquest of a large part of the country. The oligarchy that took power after his death transformed this unification project into an enterprise to dominate and exploit the subjected regions (Ayache, 1981).

What tantara *arose from the nineteenth century unification project?*

This unification project and what it achieved gave rise to two opposing types of *tantara*. The *tantara* of kings and those of princes often contradict each other. The royal tradition, for example, explains sixteenth-century King Ralambo's choice

of successor (his youngest son Andrianjaka, to the detriment of his eldest son Andriantompokoindrindra) by extolling the qualities of the former. In contrast, the descendants of the latter maintain that he voluntarily renounced power for political purposes (Domenichini, 1981). Frequently, the *tantara* conveyed by members of the oligarchy and their successors contradict those developed by their opponents. The leaders and the populations subjected to their rule produced two different versions of their coming together, one conflictual, the other peaceful.

These contradictory *tantara* (within Merina society, between the Merina and the subjected populations) show that not everyone approved of the project. They even exacerbated the oppositions between Merina social groups, as they maintained mistrust between the Merina, perceived as dominant conquerors, and the vanquished populations subjected to their rule. Sometimes, they encouraged members of the same society to take advantage of the Merina presence to challenge the old political order. (Among the Antemoro, the commoners revolted against the aristocrats and declared themselves their equals, taking the name of Ampanabaka and creating their own kingdoms; further south, in Antesaka territory, the Zafimananga, assisted by the Zafimahavaly, dislodged the Rabehava from their dominant position.) Thus, in 1895, the 'Kingdom of Madagascar' was an unfinished construction. In reality, the country was divided, and its people demonstrated an inability to join together in facing up to an enemy that nobody perceived as common.

Tantara *and Malagasy divisions during colonization*

Although the conquest of Antananarivo from Majunga was rapid, going on to control the whole of Madagascar proved slow and difficult. From 1895 to 1905, the French designed and implemented their *politique de la tache d'huile* (oil stain policy), first by subduing the Menalamba resistance, then by fighting with rival political formations one by one and subjecting them to their rule and, finally, by overcoming the Kotavy uprising in the south-east. Each population has its own *tantara* to communicate their individual struggles. The others do not talk about them, or when they acknowledge the existence of 'other people's struggles', they do not hesitate to minimize them.

Malagasy divisions persisted (from 1905 through 1947), despite the 'colonial peace' that facilitated the displacement of populations and increased internal migration. The wars of old (whether pitting two kingdoms against each other or caused by unification) were mulled over. Mistrust continued between social groups, whether in the new centres, where traders, civil servants, artisans and

evangelizers from different regions rubbed shoulders, or in the mines and plantations, where workers of different origins lived together. In each family or group, the *tantara* strengthened ties with those who remained in the village or *tanindrazana* and consolidated their identity. It was a matter of coexistence rather than a mixing of populations.

The great insurrection of 1947 did not escape this division. The opposition between the Democratic Movement for Malagasy Rejuvenation (MDRM) and the Party of the Disinherited of Madagascar (PADESM) (Randriamaro, 1997) was maintained and even distorted by the *tantara*, with accusations of agreements reached with the French to the detriment of the unbuilt nation.

Advocating a tantara *of the Malagasy nation*

This *tantara* of the nation cannot be a reframing of local or regional *tantara*. On the contrary, it must be the result of a common effort to look in the same direction, drawing upon a past that, despite the vicissitudes of history, can be regarded as a common heritage.

The necessary first step is to get a handle on the divisive, unspoken subjects that the *tantara* consider taboo, to explain them. The next step is to tackle the *tantara* of local specificities, keeping in mind that forming a nation is similar to creating a kingdom, putting in perspective war as a political tool. Instead of denying or ignoring the differences between societies, we must instead recognize them in order to better overcome them.

In this world dominated by orality, where the State has no publishing policy, it might be necessary to broadcast plays on historical subjects on radio or television that have a potentially unifying character. In the end it all boils down to one single, shared Malagasy culture, within which regional variants need to be recognized but not privileged. The policy would therefore be to promote unified diversity.

Tantara, which are both memory and history, evolve over time. They must be preserved so that no one comes empty-handed to the rendezvous with history. Since any conservation process is selective, it is important to pass on elements that make it easier for populations to come together. Reconciling our *tantara* is thus essential for consolidating the building of our nation and strengthening the unity of the Malagasy people.

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CHAPTER 12

COSMOGONIES, VISIONS OF THE WORLD, ANCIENT IMAGINARIES

Life Stories of the Peoples of Africa

Cheikh Moctar Ba

Introduction

Every human society has, at some point in its history, felt the need to establish its worldview based on shared endogenous references. African societies are no exception to this concern of knowing how, at various times, humans have viewed themselves as human beings. In the light of analysis of the relevance of the answers to that major question, and in view of how they influence the lives of human entities, there clearly is much to gain from regarding African cosmogonies as worldviews rooted in an imaginary world made real by a people's lived history.

To consider the status of those philosophies in Africa, one should therefore regard them, first and foremost, as worldview systems. They constitute organized, ordered bodies of theories providing a framework to interpret questions on the origin of the world, on 'being' in general, on the creation of the universe, its workings and the role and place of its various constituent elements, with due regard for their doctrine and consistency. With that in mind, this study sets out to discover the extent to which the cosmogonies reflect the worldviews that shed light on the existence and history of Africa. It is a matter first of all – after establishing the meaning of 'cosmogony' in light of answers to questions about the origin and creation of the world – of analysing how the cosmogonic narrative relates to the truth, to see how those philosophies have influenced efforts to gain an in-depth understanding of the real-life experience of African peoples.

African cosmogonies and truth

Cosmogonies, as systems that produce symbols and meaning, are key to the African experience of reality. Far from confusing the origin with the creation, they provide pointers with which to distinguish the various stages in the advent of the human being. There are two ways to consider them:

- First, as narratives on the principles, foundations or source, cosmogonies relate the initial stages in the emergence of reality, the actual presence of a pre-existing *something*, the existence of a primordial entity, even before the advent of any consideration for anything to do with history (particularly if the idea of 'history' owes its meaning to the emergence – the advent – of humanity). They depict a pre-temporal, pre-spatial period, a shapeless state, disarray as an abyss.[1] It is an enclosed entity that is self-contained, like an egg.[2] Such is the sense of the 'origin' theory as it applies to these philosophies.
- Secondly, cosmogonies extend that meaning by embracing the process of creating the gods, the first beings brought into existence through creative activity. It explores the creation of being and the advent of the first generation in the birth order of the gods. It introduces the ontological relations between the various divinities and seeks to understand and analyse the causal acts that amount to divine acts. This phase corresponds to the creation of the world, leading from the emergence from the origin phase to the formation of the world and its elements. African cosmogonies thus respond to the terrifying questions of the origin and creation of the world while, at the same time, establishing the principles of order. Does that not constitute relevant grounds for an analysis of how they relate to truth?

Truth of a narrative and/or a narrative on the truth of being[3] – this is one major preoccupation transcended by the African cosmogonies. As theories of primitive form

1 Nu, described by Cheikh Anta Diop as 'the indescribable', refers to an aqueous expanse of nonetheless observable inertness. It is perceived as consisting of fluvial waters, albeit with the distinctive characteristic of not being undifferentiated (Diop, 1991).

2 Amma's 'egg in a bubble' was enclosed yet consisted of four separate parts or 'clavicles' that were also egg-shaped and conjoined, as if fused together. It is also found in the Dogon conception of the primordial phase of existence, in the expression '*amma bummō*' or 'signs of Amma' (Griaule and Dieterlen, 1986), of which there are 266, including the 256 *aduno liga bummō* signs from which the world was created.

3 In our article entitled *L'être et le devenir dans l'Ontologie comparée* ('Being and becoming in comparative ontology') we argue the following: 'Our use of that idea transcends any particular connotations to embrace existence in general, i.e., *all that is*, *that will be* or *that is ever likely to be*, whether in itself (self-begetting or self-creation [Ba, 2007] – principle *in agente*) or through the action of another entity, that nevertheless forms part of the same existential process that comprises diversity. This approach is especially interesting from the point of view of general metaphysics, as it makes it possible to comprehend reality as a whole, with everything real forming part of a becoming that is subjacent to the diversity of manifestations or modes of being' (Ba, 2013).

and principles, they conceive of the Absolute in all its entirety. On the one hand, the status of the subject gives the narrative the ontological legitimacy to reveal *what is* and has yet to manifest itself as an awareness of being. Nu in ancient Egyptian philosophy, for instance, and Amma in the Dogon cosmogony are presented as having *been there*[4] before being revealed through discursive activity (narrative on the truth of being). On the other hand, the status of the narrator ensures that the narrative has ontological truth, such as when Ra reveals existence in an account of its manifestation within Nu. Is that not what is reflected in Ra's words in the 'Book of knowing the evolutions of Ra and of overthrowing [the serpent] Apep' in the Bremner-Rhind Papyrus? To wit: 'When I manifested myself into existence, existence existed' (Obenga, 1990). Ra's account of his own genesis is a sign of authenticity and truth. It is authentic in that it is the word of the Absolute, the first appearance of the divine word in the existential process, which renders it an ontological truth in keeping with the status of the being that is revealing himself. The revelation represents both an act of consciousness of his existence and an expression of the truth of being.

Further, the truth of the cosmogonic narrative can be understood both through the status of the narrator of reality and through that of the word in the order of *everything said*. Is that not what is reflected in the customary precautions taken by the elder and sage Ogotemmêli when it came to revealing the secret of the creation[5] to the anthropologist Marcel Griaule? Indeed, Griaule, at the very start of his *Conversations with Ogotemmêli*, provides the following details:

> The longest task of the first day was the choice of a place for the conversations. The space in front of the dwelling house, even if the aged Ogotemmêli remained indoors, and even if the white man bent his head towards him and spoke in low tones as if in the confessional, [might], according to Ogotemmêli…excite the eternal curiosity of the women. The minute courtyard on the other side of the building, on the other hand, which was exposed to all the winds from the north, might be watched by children hidden in the ruined granary. There remained the courtyard itself with its wretched dung-heap, its hollow stone, and its dilapidated wall with a gap in the middle of it just high enough for curious eyes to look through (Griaule, 1975, pp. 12–13).

The holy word is the province of a small circle of initiates qualified to receive it, and capable of safeguarding and ensuring its continued existence.[6]

4 As entities that have put themselves in place.

5 As the creation is a divine act, the process remains a secret.

6 "Ogotemmêli still hesitated; he had much to say about the inconvenience of the courtyard for the purpose of conversations between men of mature years. The European for his part did not open his mouth except to agree; he even stressed the indiscreet nature of walls and the stupidity of men, and naturally, the unconscionable curiosity of women and their insatiable thirst for novelties" (Griaule, 1965).

Regarding the order of discourse, the Dogon classify speech according to the ontological precedence of the object it denotes. Does it not follow, then, that the truth of the narrative correlates with the status of the word that represents it? Marcel Griaule and Germaine Dieterlen, delving more deeply into information provided by Ogotemmêli in *Conversations with Ogotemmêli*, noted that *The Pale Fox* was an 'interpretation of the facts seen from the point of view of the "clear word", *so dayi*, also called "good word", *so ezu*, the fourth word' of the Dogon language (Griaule and Dieterlen, 1986). Information is gathered from initiates, bearing in mind that the fourth word is the final state of knowledge, only acquired after the long years of application and perseverance ensured by the initiation that make it possible to gain insight into, and an understanding of, the mysteries. Hence African cosmogonies represent narratives on the truth of being as much as the truth of narratives on being.

Cosmogonies and social structures

As the first forms of a conscious approach to reality, cosmogonies represent the incontrovertible principle crucial to comprehending the lived history of the peoples of Africa. They are worldviews produced by the conscious imagination of the peoples in question. The fact is that in the most ancient traditional societies, the cosmogony, as described and interpreted through myths, represented the entire frame of reference without which neither knowledge nor social practices would have been substantiated, possible or acceptable. Cosmogonic systems provide answers to questions concerning certain forms of existence. They also justify certain attitudes noted on all sides with regard to various existential situations, and beings, with their respective characteristic features. It is in those theories that the collective imagination lays down and safeguards the system of reference that makes it possible to corroborate the peoples' experience, and to fit the existential trajectory into a continuum of successive contrasts whose rationale and internal consistency allow one to ascribe the divergences to diversity. Which elements constitute the referential impact of a cosmogony on the behaviour of human entities?

The rite,[7] in its various facets, represents the most compelling element for determining the influence of cosmogonies in the lives of the peoples concerned,

7 A rite is a practical action that contributes fully to the validity of the symbol that it is perpetuating. It constitutes what we refer to as the symbolic act, reflecting the means used for the symbol's expression. Rites can therefore be seen as an existential element, a constituent part of the existential process that is practical in nature, set in place by a society, human community or well-structured group of people, and whose practice reflects the functioning and effectiveness of the symbol firmly fixed in its collective imagination.

and confirming the fact that they are key to understanding the real-life experience of those peoples. For the rite, as an act of contact and means of communication, is an indicator of a cosmogony's referential function. Whether a matter of rites of initiation, enthronement or renewal, among others, those major bodies of observances each in turn express a need to turn to a cosmogony to understand and justify facts according to that frame of reference.

Initiation is a manifestation of the cunning of oral reason, with specific and highly original procedures, that not only permits access to secrets through the possession of knowledge but also enables it to be linked to life in society. The rite of enthronement, for its part, marks the advent of a new sovereign to serve as an intermediary between humanity and its preceding, higher, entities. It is an opportunity to recall the cosmogonic episodes of struggles for sovereignty. The enthroned sovereign is the personification of centrality[8] and becomes the symbol of the purification of, and establishment of order in, the world (Obenga, 1990). Rites of renewal represent the potential that human beings have created to update cosmogonic events[9] and maintain their direct relationship with the divine. The rite, then, is a means of gauging the social involvement of African cosmogonies.

Conclusion

Cosmogonic philosophies are crucial to understanding African peoples' experience of reality. They are worldviews deeply rooted in the collective imagination and serve as a frame of reference for social phenomena. Studying the place and function of cosmogonies therefore helps to determine how much space they take up in a society's life and, above all, how the established social order uses them as a means of self-validation. Does it not follow, then, that the central function of the cosmogonic myth is, as Eliade suggests in *Myth and Reality* (1963), to reveal exemplary models of all meaningful human activity and provide a frame of reference for human actions?

All such aspects find their way into these frames of reference by dint of their relationship with the truth, including their originality and their selection

8 When enthroning the Hogon of Arou, the Dogon of Mali utter the words '*aduṇọ viay*' or, literally, 'the world has arrived' (Griaule and Dieterlen, 1986).

9 The heliacal rising of Sirius – recalling the reuniting of the original two placentas – and the revolution of Po Tolo, attesting to the original grain that contained the universe, around [Sirius] will be associated with the conducting of the Sigui ceremonies that currently commemorate both the revealing of the word to humanity and the appearance of death on Earth. These ceremonies also represent a reminder of the story of the creation of the world by Amma (Griaule and Dieterlen, 1965, p. 476).

by adherents to the narrative. It follows from our analysis, therefore, that a rite is key to the validity of the existential process and an understanding of the experience of the peoples of Africa.

Consequently, the cosmogonies are either regarded as introducing the ideals in life towards which societies must strive, or as presenting a model form of behaviour – a frame of reference for the actions of individuals belonging to the societies in which they are considered and theorized. They constitute a people's essential expressions of life, the cultural characteristics that are indissociable from the very existence in which they are participating fully. No action in a people's experience can be understood apart from its origin, the founding myth embodied in the cosmogonic system of reference.

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CHAPTER 13

SYMBOLIC AFRICAN DANCES, DRUMMING, SONGS AND LANGUAGE, AND THE PRESERVATION OF THE PAST

Kofi Anyidoho

Introduction

In consonance with interactive, dialogic, call-and-response principles at the core of most African and African-heritage language and performance art traditions, I wish to use a partly narrative strategy in foregrounding symbolic African dances, drumming, songs and languages in the critical role these traditions play in the preservation of the ancestral past, in representations of contemporary reality and in projecting essential models of a future world in which African people are in control of their destiny. The narrative strategy locates important theoretical and methodological issues and concerns within the context of the lived experience, in part my own lived experience, and indeed the lived experience of other scholars and artists through their own personal testimonies and especially the lived experiences of communities of African people.

The church behind my house: its impact on ancestral values and performance tradition

There is a church behind my house, right next to my bedroom in my ancestral home. It is called the Global Evangelical Church and is a descendant of what was once the Bremen Mission, established in the then German Togoland

Colony by missionaries from the city of Bremen, Germany. After the Bremen missionaries had finished 'God's work' and handed the reins over to their first crop of 'native devotees' and gone back home, the mission was renamed the Ewe Presbyterian Church, then the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, or the E.P. Church for brevity.[1]

I am a product of the early E.P. Church and one of the many elementary schools it established in what was then Trans-Volta Togoland Territory. Our teachers applied themselves with admirable devotion to discipline, in the task of educating difficult African children, a task which often translated into a generous use of the cane. They taught us the 3R's – reading, writing, 'rithmetic; they taught us hygiene, nature study, and civic education; they taught us history and geography, mainly the history and geography of Europe. I could recite the names of all the kings and queens of England, and all the rivers and mountains of the British Isles. Above all, they taught us the Bible, the Holy *Bibla*. Our education was altogether a very dreary enterprise, occasionally relieved by the brief period set aside for storytelling, and those rare moments when the bigger girls and boys learned and staged biblical tales in the special kind of musical drama known as Cantata, where the performers all dressed in Jewish costumes. Cantatas always brought school and community together. On the whole, we had a great time playing the children of Israel and their miraculous escape from the devilish cruelty of the Pharaohs of Egypt in Africa.

There is no joy in captivity. We were expected to be happy and grateful for our deliverance from a satanic world. Somehow, however, the Mission School kept losing many of us to the songs, drums, dances and festivals of our people. The teachers beat us hard, but the songs of our people kept ringing in our ears, the rhythms of their drums kept drawing us into dances that poured fear into the souls of the pastors and the catechists. They even beat us and hanged a placard of shame around our necks for speaking our mother tongue at school. Still, they kept losing many of us to the performance traditions of our people.

Somehow, though, a quarrel broke out within the E.P. Church. It was alleged to be over the question of whether the ceremonies of worship should remain rigidly faithful to the orthodox traditions brought in from Europe or borrow a thing or two from forms of worship indigenous to African religious belief and practice. In time, the E.P. Church split into two. Those who opted for radical change towards African forms of worship broke away, and launched a new movement under a

1 For a good account of the history of 'German Togoland' and early work by the Bremen missionaries, cf. Spieth, 2011.

new name, the Global Evangelical Church. That is how I woke up one morning to find a church behind my house, right next to my bedroom, in my ancestral home. I have since then had to endure many a sleepless night and stressful Sunday morning, as the congregation of mostly young people make constant joyful and sometimes frightful noises unto their Lord.

It all started with ordinary hand clapping, not to well-known songs from the old E.P. Church Hymn Book known in Ewe as *Hadzigbale*, but to 'new old songs' in which traditional and popular African melodies are extracted from their original, sometimes sacred lyrics, to combine with biblical texts. The 'new old songs' soon brought in the drums, and with electronic amplification, hell is now in constant danger of breaking loose. The dancing often moves beyond the graceful poise of artistic control typical of traditional African forms, by taking on para-military tactical movements accompanied with cries of agony. The ultimate outcome is a new kind of tragicomic drama, performed at the highest level of energy and decibels, a drama in which the warrior worshipers engage alleged forces of darkness in full combat, leaving the mere spectator curious, sleepless, anxious and doubtful about the sanctity and sanity of it all.

There is enough reason here to consider such drama of worship as an act of deliberate provocation to the rest of the community, especially when we note the venom with which the worshiper performers denounce those who do not belong to their fold, whose only offence is that they choose to hold on to the religious and performance traditions of their ancestors. There may even be enough reason here to seek redress from the law, to appeal to the law to restrain these worshipers from keeping so many others from enjoying peaceful rest and sleep in the quiet of their ancestral homes. Beyond these considerations, however, there is an even greater reason for worry. The drummers, singers and dancer-actors among these worshipers are the very ones who have left many an African performance tradition searching, and waiting in vain, for the next generation of performers.

Globalization, Christian fundamentalism and African performance traditions

It is with insights provided, in part, by this lived experience that I now turn to the main theoretical and methodological import of this chapter. My focus is on two of the key factors that pose special challenges to the continued survival of many forms of African oral performance tradition: globalization

and its aggressive marketing of alien pop cultures, and the new Christian fundamentalism with its double-dealing tactic of constant denigration and blatant usurpation of African expressive culture. The new Christian churches are filled with tunes, drum rhythms, dances and various ritual performances directly taken from old African sacred texts and performance traditions, even as the preachers denounce African traditional belief and worship as the work of the devil. Today, at the funeral of many a community elder, instead of the old traditional drums and their classic songs, one is more likely to find so-called spinners with their heavy musical equipment blasting away Christian hymns or pop songs with often provocative and sometimes offensive lyrics.

The old familiar scene of folktales performed by the fireside at night to song, drum and dance is now a thing of the past in most communities, displaced by a family totally glued to a television set, watching *Sunset Beach* or some other out-of-date American, Mexican or Chinese soap opera. Wherever we care to look, it is very tempting, indeed easy, to conclude that many vital aspects of African performance tradition are under a real threat of extinction. Against this rather gloomy picture, however, there also emerges a more hopeful one, which suggests that even under severe conditions of stress, African performance tradition continues to flourish in various forms, often through creative adaptation to new contexts, in new performance spaces and to new audiences. Indeed, the challenges have sometimes led to exciting technical innovations in various genres, some of which we must keep our eye on as possibly subversive strategies of survival and resurgence. It is very likely that history is repeating itself here, but in reverse order. Developments in African-heritage traditions of song, drum and dance, along with resistance strategies in linguistic innovation that made it possible for African systems of worship to subvert and overwhelm Christian orthodox beliefs and practices all over the African Diaspora, may finally be returning home in a trans-Atlantic playback of cultural history.

Performance as aesthetic realization of a moral, social and aesthetic order

In the light of this development, we must call for a re-orientation in our understanding and study of what constitutes a total performance event. We must note that for many an African traditional performing group, their performance is no exercise in artistic excellence as a mere pastime; it is often a chance for renewal of individual and community harmony, the need for collaboration as

the best guarantee for individual and collective progress. The values that animate the artistic performance are indeed the same core values that underlie life itself, life understood as a constant striving to overcome challenges of the individual voice as we hold on to our most precious communal blessings. The artistic performance is not only a product of talent, skills, and practice; it is, above all, an aesthetic realization of a moral, social and spiritual order. And it is this order that has been and continues to be subverted by the Bremen Mission and its successive surrogates, and by the new forms of drama and performance brought in by the new technologies of film, television, video, and the now emergent social media platforms. The challenge of new directions in African performance tradition essentially lies in how to convert this subversive trend into something new, but with firm foundations in at least some of the core values that make life worth its pains.

The new generation of African performance artists needs to keep an eye on their past, even as they reach for stardom in the present and future. Given the fact that many of this new generation have grown up without the benefit of life lived in traditional African settings, there is need for our work to be guided by research and self-initiated personal encounters with aspects of the tradition that are still here with us. And there is a great deal that still survives and thrives, if only we care to look. We could learn from the lead provided by the Global Evangelical Church and the countless other churches of the 'charismatic' kind: using essential elements of African performance practice to give new life to a dying Christian mission.

The benefits of such research and personal search for enduring African traditions in performance have been demonstrated in the examples of pioneer figures, even in Western theatre such as Peter Brook, whose encounter with the Yoruba 'cult of possession' opened for him a new and profound understanding that was to guide much of his future work. Rather than dismiss performance practices associated with this tradition as something 'primitive' that must be repudiated, Brook, according to his own confession, found himself in the presence of 'a highly tolerant and appealing religion, which carries with it neither the guilt-complex of Christianity nor the intense self-sacrifice of the East. More than anything, perhaps, it's a cult that stresses the unity of life and the universe: harmony. Regardless of space or time, the past and myth are linked to life as lived. Myth, like the dead, is seen as part of a fuller reality. Reality becomes Whole'.[2] Contemporary Ghanaian dramatist and theatre director

2 Heilpern, J. 1977. *Conference of the Birds.* New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. p.61.

Mohammed ben-Abdallah cites the example of Brook and others as those from whom a future African theatre can draw much profit:

> What, then, is the advice to African artists implicit in the works of Artaud, Boal, Brook and others like them? It is that the ingredients for the truly essential and potentially successful modern African Theatre are to be found in our own backyards. What are these ingredients? They are the jealously guarded secrets of the griots, the priests, priestesses and medicine men, the blacksmiths, the carvers, the master drummers and the dancers. They are the secret essences that have vitalized and sustained our rituals, our festivals, our songs and dances from the beginnings of humanity. These ingredients are very alive today in the pulsating rhythm of daily life and at the deep core of our cults and secret societies (Ben-Abdallah, 2012, p. 1362).

Language, drum, dance, song, drama and the invocation of spiritual-psychic harmony

For the student and research scholar of African performance traditions, there is much outstanding work waiting to be done. We are yet to fully document and analyse various forms of our expressive culture, properly seen as dramatic enactments. I am speaking in particular of our countless festivals. Even our funeral celebrations have become elaborate dramatizations. In such cases as the festival and the funeral, we must understand that the drama is not contained in a single day, let alone a two-hour period of idealized performance, nor is it confined to one designated and well-marked space. Often, the distinction between performers and audience is blurred. Above all, some of the most intense moments of dramatic, aesthetic expression are entirely non-verbal, as a multiplicity of surrogates take over the primary function of speech. It may be the drums, defined as mankind's 'first alphabet of thought'[3] and emotion; or it may be dance, defined as poetry in motion.

Elsewhere, I have argued that there are unresolved challenges awaiting researchers into African history and culture. Among them is the challenge of developing a new kind of literacy, the ability and skills to read and interpret the drum and the dance. Even if we are able to read the drum language and the narrative of the dance movement, there is the other challenge of how to document, write and print these ancient modes of human communication

3 Osofisan, F. 2012. 'The Nostalgic Drum: Oral Literature and the Possibilities of Modern Poetry'. Helen Lauer and Kofi Anyidoho (eds)., *Reclaiming the Human Sciences and Humanities through African Perspectives, Volume II*. Accra, Sub-Saharan Publishers. p. 1263.

to facilitate analysis and full understanding and appreciation. In the study of African performance traditions, the researcher's challenge with the drum and the dance goes beyond the new kind of literacy suggested here. How do we account for the apparent connection between drum, dance and song/incantation on the one hand, and trance or possession on the other, testified to by the many instances in African performance when dramatic psychic transformation is demonstrably evoked by and through the drum, dance or the chant? Anyone who watches a good production/performance of Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* cannot miss the fact that it is the relentless rhythm of the drum and dance that holds the key to Elesin Oba's potential ability to 'commit death' or transport his corporeal self across the gulf of transition. Elesin's failure to 'commit death' may be explained, in part, by his wilful interruptions of the call of the drums and the driving rhythm of the dance.

We may also recall a production at the University of Ghana, of Zulu Sofala's *Wedlock of the Gods* in which Selorm Coffie, playing the role of Oguoma, goes into a real trance as she moves in response to the command to receive a potion and drink. The performance was brought to a sudden halt as panic-stricken members of the audience watched frantic attempts by her fellow performers to bring Selorm back to herself. Actor Ekow Blankson, playing Ogouma's fiance Iloko, testifies that in their embrace following Oguoma's apparent transformation, he could feel more than Selorm Coffie's human self. Two Nigerian colleagues have informed me that they know of similar incidents with this particular scene in other productions of *Wedlock of the Gods*. These testimonies seem to suggest that in the writing of this particular scene, Zulu Sofala must have tapped into an inexplicable dimension of African drama, a dimension in which the actor on stage achieves total fusion with spiritual essences, often evoked through the rhythmic force of the drum and the dance, or, in this case, the power of the human voice as a chant, as invocation.

For a final example, I must return, once more, to the Church behind my house, right next to my bedroom, in my ancestral home. On several occasions, as I lie sleepless in my bed, my thoughts disrupted by the joyful, frightful sounds of the worshippers, I cannot but notice that each time the drummers strike the special rhythm associated with the *Brekete* deity, a member of the congregation goes into a state of possession. It has happened often enough for me not to dismiss it as mere coincidence. We must wonder whether it is the biblical Holy Spirit or the spirit of *Brekete* that is at work here.

Some contemporary scholars and practitioners of African performance may find possible connections between the physical and the metaphysical a real

challenge to deal with. In reality, however, it is something that appears to be taken for granted in many performance traditions in Africa. In my own work as a student of African oral performance, one of the most significant forms of drama I have observed among the Anlo-Ewe is what I have described elsewhere as 'The Dramatic Search for the Souls of Poets'.[4] This is a signal event in the funeral rites for a great singer or master drummer. It is an event in which the performing group to which the deceased poet or drummer belonged, following intensive and elaborate preparation, undertakes an extended performance tour of neighbouring communities in search of the soul of the poet or drummer. There are elaborate protocols associated with each stop and each performance, with full collaboration from the host community. The event draws attention to itself as a dramatic enactment of the poetic fantasy, but it is much more than drama or poetry or fantasy:

> The fantasy is launched from a firm base of religious belief into the dream world of desire and hope and consolation. This poetic quest for a lost [creator] soul takes the main participants through familiar country where they trace life's journey backward, forward, and in circles, in hope to find clues to the mystery beyond death beyond life... I call this enactment a poetic search because it was all begun in full knowledge of how it would end: the soul of the poet would not be found and brought back to live again as an ordinary person. The essence of the quest is the imaginative fulfilment of desire acted out in a major [symbolic] event witnessed and supported by an approving and sympathetic audience. This poetic search may be a dream, but it is a dream followed by no regrets because it was begun with no illusions (Anyidoho, 1983, pp. 259-260).

In the end we may discover that the real motivation for this elaborate poetic drama is more than a celebration of an individual singer or master drummer. It is a guarantee that the tradition of song and drum shall survive the passing of even the greatest singer and drummer. That is why the drama will not begin until and unless the creative voices left behind by the deceased singer are able to compose many new songs, and younger drummers are able to play both old and new rhythms that are judged good enough to make the departed ones proud of their legacy.

So far, we may have been engaged in what could be termed a retrospective look at traditions of performance as a guide to new directions. Of equal, perhaps greater, significance is a prospective examination of key signposts of the contemporary

4 Kofi Anyidoho, Oral Poetics and Traditions of Verbal Art in Africa. PhD dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1983.

situation as a guide to a healthy future for African performance and language traditions. The character Babalawo Akinwumi, in Isidore Okpewho's novel *Call Me by My Rightful Name,* offers the following advice about language:

> It is alright for me to want to learn the language of this place. But I should remember that language does not exist by itself. Language is nourished by life, and in turn nourishes that life. So, to understand a language in all its dimensions and be able to speak it well, you must interact intimately with the life and the culture around it (Okpewho, 2004, p. 167).

This is an important statement of principle, a reliable guide to a meaningful engagement with studies in African language and the related traditions of song, drum and dance. I have argued above that even under severe conditions of stress, African oral performance tradition continues to flourish in various forms, often through creative adaptation to new contexts, in new performance spaces and to new audiences. Indeed, the challenges have sometimes led to exciting creative and technical developments in various genres. It would be worthwhile to pursue an examination of such new developments in contemporary African theatre and performance, looking at what I call representative forms of the new theatre with challenging but exciting technical developments.

We cannot write about 'Symbolic African dances, drumming, songs and language and the preservation of the past' only in terms of ancestral traditions. A whole chapter needs to be devoted to African dance, drum, song and language on the global stage, with much of it reserved for African-heritage traditions for which the 'Diaspora of slavery' is well known. No matter what some of the official records say of jazz as a uniquely American contribution to world musical heritage, we know that deep down, jazz is first and foremost one of the most precious African-heritage gifts to America and the world at large. From the endless wailing of the saxophone to the constant moaning of the trombone or harmonica, the anguished rumbling of the bass guitar and the regulated gurgling of the drums, we can always hear a trail of sorrow going back to the cane and cotton fields, the auction block, reaching back across the Middle Passage into the dungeons of the slave forts along the coastline of West Africa. We know too well the origins of the sweet sorrow of the Negro spiritual, even if today we find it traveling across and around the world in countless different voices yearning for a new kind of freedom. And if you have ever had the privilege of eavesdropping on B. B. King in dialogue with Lucile, his life-long companion guitar, you will have understood why music in the spiritual, blues and jazz tradition was, and still is, the ultimate companion and saviour to the enslaved African.

African performance arts as a contemporary cultural export

We must write briefly also of African song, drum, and dance as a cultural export to various parts of the contemporary world. Both ancestral and popular traditions have had great success in offering an aesthetically, socially and emotionally satisfying experience to audiences across the globe. The struggle against Apartheid found some of its most potent expression in music and dance; names of artists such as singer Miriam Makeba and jazz trumpeter Hugh Masakela became constant points of reference around the world. Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah's agenda for promoting the 'African Personality' through cultural grounding led to the establishment at the University of Ghana of the Ghana Dance Ensemble under Mawere Opoku, its pioneer artistic director, later succeeded by F. Nii-Yartey. In time, the ensemble was to become one of Africa's most important cultural ambassadors globally. Some foundation members of the ensemble eventually migrated into the new African diaspora and established their own ensembles, drawing in African and non-African devotees. Some examples are: the Ladzekpo Brothers at the University of California, Los Angeles; George Dzikunu and his Adzido ensemble in the United Kingdom; Mawere Opoku and his ensemble at University of New York, Brockport, following retirement from University of Ghana; and more recently Gideon Foli Alorwoyi at the University of North Texas, Denton. And there are many others from Ghana and other African countries.

On the popular music front, the spread of African rhythms and dance styles has been a major revolution staged across the globe by countless groups and superstars: Congolese/Zairean music and dance with such legendary masters as François Luambo Makiadi (aka Franco) and his OK Jazz, as well as Cameroonian saxophonist and keyboardist Manu Dibango and their followers, continue to animate many festivals and countless parties; Fela Anikulapo Kuti and his Afro Beat continue to leave a trail across the global cultural landscape; Juju Music, also from Nigeria, has known its own Maestros, such as King Sunny Ade, whose 1983 concert at Austin, Texas, left several thousand fans entranced, marvelling as his 17-piece band played non-stop for five hours, and compelling everyone in the audience to stand on their chairs and jump about in uncontrollable ecstasy. And from way down south, we can still hear the echoing voices of the Dark City Sisters rise into the skies, in the darkest days of Apartheid.

Conclusion

In sum, the story, once properly told, should lead us to one inevitable conclusion: that in the cultural history of the world, African and African-heritage traditions of language, song, drum, drama and dance have left a proud legacy that continues to enrich humanity. And this, in spite of the fact that these traditions were once defined by others as noise, as the barbarous gyrations of a people in a picturesque but irrelevant corner of the earth! We acknowledge and celebrate African performance arts as powerful symbolic encodings of past, present and future triumphs and travails of the African experience of life, in its countless manifestations.

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CHAPTER 14

DENOMINATIONS AND DISCIPLINARY STATUS OF AFRICAN LITERATURES IN EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

Luis Kandjimbo

Introduction

The history of the disciplinarization of African literatures can be addressed in light of a chronology comprising three periods: pre-disciplinary (1947-1962), disciplinary (1963-1980) and post-disciplinary (1981-2000). The pre-disciplinary period was marked by the following events: the foundation of the magazine *Présence Africaine*; the publication of the *Anthologie de la Nouvelle Poésie Nègre et Malgache de Langue Française* (Paris, 1948), organized by Leopold Sedar Senghor (Senegal, 1906-2001); the publication of the 'notebook' of *Poesia Negra de Expressão Portuguesa* (Lisbon, 1953), the first collective initiative to name the African literatures from Portuguese-speaking countries by Mário Pinto de Andrade (Angola, 1928-1990) and Francisco José Tenreiro (São Tomé, 1921-1963); the First Congress of Black Writers and Artists (Paris, 19-22 September 1956); the Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists (Rome, 26 March 1-April 1959); the Conference of English-speaking African Writers, held at Makerere University (Kampala, 1962); the creation of the Centre for Romance Literature of African Inspiration (CELRIA) at the Lovanium University of Leopoldville (1962); and the First International Congress of Africanists (Accra, 1962). The acts of naming African literatures make it possible to understand the process of their disciplinarization. However, during the twentieth century, denial of

the autonomy and disciplinary uniqueness of national literatures outside the continent gave rise to behaviours that translated into peculiar strategies of definition. Indeed, the process of questioning the meaning and properties of literary texts constituting African literatures began in the 1950s. Yet the most important reflexive moment for the community of African writers was the Makerere conference, where the question of what could be understood by African literatures was expressly asked. The accounts of three participants – Obiajunwa Wali (Olaniyan and Quayson, 2007, pp. 281-84), Chinua Achebe (1975, p. 55) and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986, pp. 4-33) – offer an understanding of the nature of the tensions that were at play during the conference and persist to this day.[1]

Black African literature

One milestone in the discipline-defining process was represented by the Congresses of Black Writers and Artists held in Paris and Rome, which introduced a new discourse about the literatures of Global Africa both on the African continent and among the diaspora. 'Black African literature' was a term that came to predominate; it was formulated in the text of the resolution drawn up by the Literature Commission of the Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists, in which the state of African literatures was assessed taking into account the need to defend oral literatures and the confrontation between traditional cultures and forms of Western culture in the context of the colonial situation, as well as considering the level of responsibility of the African writer to their audience and the development of indigenous languages. The atmosphere of the time meant that there was a high charge to the racial element of the terminological definition.

1 In an article published in the magazine *Transition* (1963, p. 10), Obiajunwa Wali expressed the state of mind of those who felt that their hopes had been dashed, when he assessed the speakers' contributions and the outcomes of the conference: 'What these examples clearly show is that African literature as now understood and practised, is merely a minor appendage in the mainstream of European literature. Both creative writers and literary critics read and devour European literature and critical methods…The consequence of this kind of literature is that it lacks any blood and stamina and has no means of self-enrichment. It is severely limited to the European-oriented few college graduates in the new Universities of Africa, steeped as they are in European literature and culture. The ordinary local audience with little or no education in the conventional European manner, and who constitute an overwhelming majority, has no chance of participating in this kind of literature' (Olaniyan and Quayson, 2007, p. 282).

African literature and the disciplinary period

A turning point occurred in 1962, with the creation of the CELRIA in the Faculty of Literature at Lovanium University in Kinshasa[2] and the holding of the Conference of English-speaking African Writers at Makerere University in Kampala. But the definitive start of the disciplinary period was marked by the Conference on African Literature in French, held at the University of Dakar (Dakar, 23-26 March 1963), and the Conference on African Literature and the University Curriculum, held at Fourah Bay College (Freetown, 3-8 April 1963). With regard to naming the discipline, these conferences gave primacy to the generic term 'African literature'. Thus, the African epistemic space of definitions, occupied by African writers, teachers, researchers and critics, emerged in universities, research centres and specialized journals in Africa.

In Makerere, the issue of language in African literature had been the dominant focus, which revealed the possible responses. Given the difficulties of the task, in 1963 the participants of the Fourah Bay College conference recommended establishing an instrumental definition, having agreed that the term 'African literature' should be understood to denote all literary texts emanating from an authentic creative work about the African landscape or entirely based on African experiences (Moore, 1965, p. 147). This formulation resulted from the areas of inquiry that at the time reflected the range of relevant problems of philosophical hermeneutics around which African writers, philosophers and literary critics were mobilized. The lively discussions prompted by the address that TRM Creighton gave at the Fourah Bay College conference clearly revealed the kind of questions that epistemological sovereignty could elicit in the context of the 1960s and 1970s, when debates about African philosophy were providing answers that could also be applied to African literary studies. Indeed, until the early 1980s, the discussion about the problem of the terminological definition of 'African literature' in the United States, for example, continued to gravitate around the issue of language and criteria such as 'race', geography and the content of literary works. The question 'What is African literature?' required the concept to be defined. To understand the scope of this question, it was necessary to develop a philosophical reflection on African literary institutions, which required reasoning based on the philosophy of literature. That did not occur in the twentieth century because the

2 The seminal moment of the disciplinary period occurred in Central Africa during the 1962-1963 academic year at the Lovanium University of Leopoldville, present-day Kinshasa, when a new subject was introduced in the literary studies syllabus of the Romance Philology Department of the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature. The subject was called 'Black African Literature in French'. It was led by Victor-Paul Bol, a Belgian expatriate professor, who took the initiative of setting up a research unit, the aforementioned Centre for Romance Literature of African Inspiration (CELRIA).

dominant theoretical currents and literary methodologies gave clear precedence to problems relating to the literatures of Europe and America.

The Dakar and Freetown conferences

The first phase of the disciplinary period was from 1963 to 1968. The conclusions of the Dakar Conference were systematized by four committees, whose reports contained recommendations in the following areas: research into African literature at universities; bibliographies; teaching syllabuses and the literary canon; and textbooks for use in schools. The first committee recommended that all universities support the building of the CELRIA at the Lovanium University of Leopoldville, present-day Kinshasa, which would also have the responsibility of publishing a regular newsletter. The second committee provided information on bibliographical works already completed and others in the process of being drawn up, namely: a bibliography of African literature organized by country, authored by Edouard Maunick; a bibliography of African authors writing in French organized by genre, published in the *Revue de Littérature Comparée* (Paris, 1974) by Roger Mercier; a bibliographical dictionary of African literary works published in all languages, by Janheinz Jahn; and a bibliography of African literature to be published at regular intervals by the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ibadan. The debate on the topic of the third committee, concerning the literary canon of university courses, led to the decision that this task should be the sole responsibility of each teacher. The fourth committee recommended that textbooks for use in secondary education should reproduce excerpts or short texts (short stories and poems) and should be accompanied by a teacher's handbook containing relevant information about African societies, their history and their cultures. The texts chosen should be appropriate to each level of education, illustrated by African artists, and produced at low cost and in large runs. At the Freetown Conference (Fourah Bay College), four main recommendations were also made: (1) to include African literatures in the syllabuses of all African universities and schools, and encourage research in all fields of literary activity as well as the recording and study of local oral literature; (2) to set up the Association for the Study of African Literature in English, with the option of inviting as associate members African universities from other African countries that had English departments; (3) to publish a four-monthly newsletter, under the responsibility of one of the universities represented, in order to provide information about the development of literary activity and the teaching of literature; and (4) to entrust to

the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ibadan the task of compiling bibliographies, with the aim of informing the members of the association about the development of literary and critical activities, if possible in the main languages of international communication.

The Nairobi debates and the discipline-defining process

The discipline-defining process lasted from 1969 to 1977. This second phase primarily took place in Africa. For around a decade, efforts to define African literatures intensified, higher-education institutions were consolidated, and the professional teaching of African literatures was established in all sub-regions of the African continent, except in countries still under colonial administration. The most expressive sign of change was produced in 1968, with the publication of a manifesto signed by three authors from East Africa, which called for the abolition of the English Department at the University of Nairobi and the creation of the Department of African Languages and Literatures (Thiong'o, 1982, pp. 145-50). This gave rise to two debates. The first concerned the need to abolish the English Department and the second concerned the place of oral literature in academia (Thiong'o, 1998, pp. 106-07).

The positions taken by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Taban lo Liyong in 1968, in the context of the first debate, were published in *Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics* (1972) and *Decolonizing the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature* (1985). They set out arguments in response to the speech given by the Head of the English Department at the University of Nairobi to the 42nd meeting of the Faculty of Arts on 20 September 1968. Said speech raised extremely important questions about exploring the relationship between the Faculty of Arts and the English Department, particularly as regards the place of modern languages like French, the emergence of the Department of Languages and Linguistics, and the role of the English Department and African languages, especially Swahili. The remote possibility of creating a Department of African Literatures or African Cultures and Literatures (Thiong'o, 1972, p. 145) was also considered. The arguments put forward by the two professors at the University of Nairobi were based on two central ideas: (a) doing away with the English Department and (b) creating the Department of African Languages and Literatures. The name of the new department was determined by the need to define the trends and perspectives that should be included in the study of cultures and literature at African universities. It was based on the premise that there were three vectors of influence. European literatures were not the only sources of

influence for African literatures written in English, French and Portuguese. Literatures written in Swahili and Arabic and Asian literatures were another important source, especially for the countries of East Africa. The third and most significant vector consisted of the African oral traditions that provided the foundations for the cultural take-off on a global scale (1972, p. 147). Hence, 'the study of oral traditions at university level should lead to a multidisciplinary perspective, encompassing literature, music, linguistics, sociology, anthropology, history, psychology, religion, philosophy' (1972, p. 148). For Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, it was not a simple change of name. The aim was to place the African continent at the centre of the department's attentions. Africa could not continue with the status of an appendage or satellite of other countries and literatures. Instead, it should be studied from an African perspective. In 1971, Taban lo Liyong published an Article in the journal *Research in African Literatures* in which he described the results of the then unfinished 'curriculum revolution' that took place over a period of three years to oust the 'ogres of Cambridge and Oxford' (1971, p. 168). Thereafter, Nairobi University would have two departments: a Department of Literatures, subdivided into two areas or sub-departments – 'English-based studies' and 'French-based studies' – and a Department of African Languages and Linguistics. The curriculum of the first department included the study of oral literature, poetry, the African novel and dramatic texts, as well as European, Afro-American and American, and Caribbean literatures (ibid., pp. 170-71). One of the main objectives of the second department was the promotion of African languages, which should occupy their rightful place in education and research (1971, p. 172).

During the post-disciplinary period, academic recognition of African literatures was consolidated at both the continental and national levels. African literatures ceased to be qualified based on the fallacious criterion. The common use of expressions such as 'Negro-African literature', 'neo-African literature' or simply 'Black literature' gradually became irrelevant. Then, from the 1970s and 1980s, the dominant trends of literary criticism referred to African literatures in the plural, confining them to national spaces. Studies and anthologies that reflected the notion of literary nationality began to be published.

For Adrien Huannou, refutation of the arguments put forward by critics obsessed with the 'fallacy of Négritude' underlying the general definitions was centred on the impossibility of contesting the existence of European national literatures (French literature, German literature, Italian literature, English literature, etc.). In opposition to this generalizing criticism, Adrien Huannou called for a history of African national literatures and, consequently, a critique of national literatures. His arguments pointed to a culture of specialized literary criticism, guaranteeing a practise based on knowledge of the realities

and cultural systems of each national space. After the essay on the 'question of national literatures', Adrien Huannou prepared an inventory of the criticism and teaching of African literatures in the United States, returning to the topic of literary nationality to defend the need to adopt criteria to affirm the existence of the nation as an entity that propagates distinctive features of the community to which it relates (Huannou, 1993, p. 155).

African literatures or African literature

Thus, African literatures or African literature were the names assigned to a discipline that, due to its inherently general nature, contradicted the logic of the nation-state that had given rise to the national philological paradigm on which the teaching of European literatures was based. Consequently, in many cases the research and teaching of the various national literatures of the African continent still relied on two incorrect hypotheses. Firstly, that the general term *African literature* or *African literatures* precluded the possibility of delving into an understanding of their specificities. Secondly, that the linguistic balkanization of states caused the marginalization of African literatures in the Portuguese language from African literary studies, whose disciplinary title (African Literatures of Portuguese expression) revealed the persistence of colonial paternalism.

Conclusion

At the dawn of the new millennium, the consecration of African literatures seemed unanimous, through names that effectively translated the isomorphism of the subject and the object thanks to a legitimizing sovereignty from which the epistemological and disciplinary status of these literatures derives. In an article published in *Research in African Literatures*, Biodun Jeyifo summarized the debates on the crucial issue of the 'emergence of African literatures as a discipline', noting that those debates were 'subtheorized or characterized as a discursive space that cannot be theorized from an ontological point of view, awash with mysteries that are supposedly found in the nature of things' (1990, p . 35). The 'nature of things' was an ironic expression of the tensions and an unequal relationship in terms of power and privileges within the disciplinary field. There was an implicit need to actualize what Abiola Irele called the 'global African experience' (Irele, 2004, p. xvi), based on which the unifying notion of Global African Literatures could be elaborated.

From a historical point of view, this covered the literatures produced both on the continent and in African diasporas, constituting a vast field of specialized studies around the world. For example, in the United States, it was not until twenty-seven years after the establishment of the African Studies Association (ASA) (in 1957) and four years after the creation of *Research in African Literatures* (1970), the only journal specialized in African literary studies, that a new association, the African Literature Association (ALA), was founded in December 1974. Until that time, the ASA had been dominated by American researchers of European origin who showed complete indifference to the problems experienced by Black communities in the United States. That led Africans, Afro-Caribbeans and African-Americans to distance themselves from the ASA. That was why, at the inaugural session of the ASA annual meeting in 1969 in Montreal, a group of Black American researchers had symbolically taken control of the stand, reiterating demands that the African Heritage Studies Association had made two years earlier. The research agendas of the ASA seemed to be dominated by interests that were disconnected from Africa and Africans. In that context, the first initiative of the ALA was to hold a colloquium dedicated to the teaching of African literatures, which took place at Northwestern University, Illinois, in 1976, which was followed by the inauguration of the African Literatures Division of the Modern Language Association (MLA).[3]

In this sense, the process of conceptual decolonization of Global African Literatures, which legitimizes the practice of a 'globalectic' reading (Thiong'o, 2012, p. 60),[4] is the highest expression of an epistemology of literary studies that acts as an instrument for mapping so-called 'world literature', where all literatures of the planet must occupy an equidistant epistemic place relative to an imaginary centre.

3 Among the speeches given in that section, it is important to note that of Bernth Lindfors, who particularly addressed the issue of conceptualizing the discipline of African literatures in North American universities. Lindfors began his reflection with a categorical assertion that in American universities 'African literature' was only a speciality; it could not be considered a discipline. Its status seemed unpredictable in the foreseeable future. It was an amorphous field that did not offer its devotees either a large corpus of literary works to study or established traditions for the development of research. Lindfors expressed deep resignation about the resistance he encountered in the dominant American academic circles in relation to accepting the disciplinary status of African literatures. He asserted that '[…] in certain branches of it – particularly the so-called "vernacular literatures" – even the most basic scholarly tools are lacking, and responsible research is difficult […] Until these deficiencies are remedied, African literature is not likely to gain recognition as a separate but equal humanistic discipline in American academia' (1995, p. 113). Cf. Bernth Lindfors, *Long Drums and Canons: Teaching and Researching African Literatures*, New Jersey, Africa World Press, 1995.

4 In the words of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 'Globalectics, derived from the shape of the globe, is the mutual containment of hereness and thereness in time and space, where time and space are also in each other […] Reading globalectically is a way of approaching any text from whatever times and places to allow its content and themes [to] form a free conversation with other texts of one's time and place, the better to make it yield its maximum to the human.' Cf. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Globalectics. Theory and the Politics of Knowing*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2012, p. 60.

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CHAPTER 15

ÌSÈSE L'ÀGBÀ

The Rite and Process of the Apotheosis of Initiates in Afro-Brazilian and Afro-Latin American Yorùbá Diaspora Traditions

Félix Ayoh'Omidire

Okun su nàre nàre	The sea was pregnant with waves,
Òsà sú lègbe-lègbe	The lagoon had its flanks filled to the brim.
Aráyé n'rayé omi abé ota	Humanoid became restless,
Alaasan nrasan, omi alè odo,	Each one invoking ancestral powers and forces.
Awon agba ìmòlé wo ìgbèyìn òrò,	The ancient ones looked into the future in awe,
Won ripe kò sunwòn món,	Fearing the world might end in disarray,
Won f'irun d'imun,	They marveled,
Won f'irungbòn d'íyà, pin-pìn-pin!	They worried,
A dia fún ìsèse, to sè wá,	Identifying behind it all the primordial oracle,
Èyí tii se olóri orò láyé	Oracle of the creation,
A bùn fún ìsèse, tíi se olóri orò lálede òrun	Isese, oracle of the origins,
Ìsèse èni ni baba eni tó bí ni nípìlè	Father of all rituals among earthlings,
Tori pé baba eni, àsèse ni,	Isese, origin of all rituals in the celestial realms.
Iyá eni, àsèse ni,	Isese is what we call one's progenitor,
Nje ori baba eni, ìsèse ni,	For one's progenitor is one's religion.
Orí ìyá eni ìsèse ni,	Isese is what we call one's mother,
Orí eni ìsèse ni,	Isese is the essence of one's ancestors,
Ikin eni ìsèse ni	One's sacred oracular nuts are Isese.
Olórun eni, ìsèse eni ni	One's creator is Isese.
Ìsèse laa kókó bo n'Ifè,	Isese it was that the ancient ones
Ká too bo ebora	Worshiped in the primordial
Nje ao bo ìsèse,	land of Ifè,
Isèsé láá bo n'Ifè ka too bo ebora	To which they gave the appellation of deities.
(Odù Ifá Ògúndá-Òwónrín aka Ògúndéèrín)	(culled from the Ifa Oracular text of Ogunda-Òwónrin a.k.a Ogundéèrín)

Introduction

Ìsèsè is an all-pervading concept in the epistemological formation of the Yoruba people of West Africa and their descendants in the Afro-Latin-American and Afro-Caribbean diasporas. Etymologically, *Ìsèsè* refers to the very essence of the people and their culture. Dominated by the verb *sè* (to emanate, to originate), *Ìsèsè* is associated with the very idea of being. This is evident in its apostrophic use when the Yorùbás mark the idea of their origin(ality) and antiquity with adjectival constructs like *ìsèdàle* and *Isèmbáyé*. It is noteworthy that both of these profound terms complement and complete the idea of 'essence' by adding the suffixes derivable from *ilè* (the earth) and *aiyé* (the world or human existence), thereby making *ìsèdàle* a denotational reference to the origin of the Yorùbá nation, while *Isèmbáyé* stands for the worldview that goes back to Yorùbá antiquity.

Ìsèsè can therefore be summed up as the notion of Yorùbá origin, essence, antiquity and worldview. This is what is portrayed in the above extract from the *Odù Ifá*[1] *Ògúndá-Òwónrín* (Salami, 2002, pp. 473-74), also known as *Ogúndéérín*, where the oracle affirms in the prophetic traditions of the Yoruba epistemological culture what constitutes the spiritual, moral, philosophical and aesthetical essence of the Yoruba individual, pointing out that the orí[2] (destiny, vital force, spiritual nexus) of one's progenitors – *ìyá eni* and *baba eni* – is the first level of *Ìsèsè.* This is followed by the individual's own personal *orí*, and then their personal oracular media *ikin* (the sixteen sacred palm nuts used in Ifá divination) and then, in the final instance, the tutelary and protective *orìsà* (deity), who occupies the rearguard to protect the individual from the vicissitudes of existence. It is also common to hear the Yorùbá utter incessantly the formula '*Ìsèsè l'àgbà*', i.e. '*Ìsèsè* is supreme'. *Ìsèse* is the most important of all spiritual and existentialist projects of any individual.[3]

1 *Odù Ifá* refers to origin, number, content, form, and more.

2 *Orí* is the Yoruba concept of personal identity, destiny, life-path, and so forth (origin, myth, liturgical cult, etc.).

3 Compare with religious titles like Àràbà Àgbáyé – Olú Ìsèsé, Odún Ìsèsé, i.e. Olójó, Obàtálá, Èsìndálè, Edì and the manifold religious festivals in Ilè-Ifè, the Sango Festival in Òyo, the Òsun Festival in Osogbo, the Ìgogo festival in Òwo, and more.

The connection between *Isèsé, Àse* and *Àsese… Orò Ituto* (*Ètùtù*)

As can be inferred from the foregoing, the term *Ìsèse* is a generic concept for the totality of the spiritual, cultural and ritual praxis of the Yorùbá people. It is thus intimately linked to another fundamental concept, *àse*, which has been defined as the essence of the life forces that move the Yoruba world.[4] The transmission and restitution of this *Àse* can be said to be at the very heart of every religio-spiritual liturgy of the Yorùbá people, irrespective of whether such an exercise is carried out at the individual or the collective level.

Àsèse as a dialectal rendering of the term *Ìsèse* could then be broken down in accordance with its lexical components as the acts or rituals of the transmission, transformation and eventual restitution of the Yorùbá *Àse*. However, in its characteristically metonymic fashion, the Yorùbá diaspora in the Americas – especially in major locales of primary diasporization such as Brazil, Cuba, Trinidad and, to some extent, Haiti – has teleologically encapsulated the concept of *Ìsèse/Àsèse*. Its overarching *Ase* has become generally associated with, and in some cases restricted to, the ultimate rite of passage of the initiated Yorùbá-diaspora subjects, i.e. the elaborate mortuary rituals to be performed as a symbolic restitution of the individual Àse of the defunct initiate to the generic mass or *àse* of the Yoruba collective spiritual psyche, where it will be made available for recycling through eventual reincarnations. This highly elaborate ritual, which is generally referred to as *orò òkú* in the Yoruba homeland, is what has been metonymically baptized as *axexê (àsese)* within the Brazilian Candomblé mortuary rites and *ìtutu*[5]among Cuban Lucumí *santeros*.

The antecedents of *axexê*: a review

As I have profusely discussed in many research publications, the preservation and conservation of the African ethos and praxis by descendants of enslaved Africans in the Latin American diasporas was an arduous but deliberately

4 For a full discussion of the concept, content, form and manifestations of *Ase,* see among others Abimbola, 1976, 1977; Elebuibon, 1994, 1999; and Elbein dos Santos, 1976.

5 Just as the Brazilian *axexè* derives from the Yorùbá *Ìsèse,* the *Itutu* ritual of the Cuban-Lucumi obviously derives from the Yoruba ètùtù, i.e. propitiatory sacrifices offered to the deities by Orisa devotees to either restore or fortify the àse (pronounced *ache* among Cuban santeros), at either the individual or collective level of the community of devotees within the *Regla de Ocha* (Orisa worship tradition) of the Yoruba-Lucumi people and their descendants in Cuba and their extensive diasporas in the Caribbean states and the USA.

and rigorously executed action as an elaborate and profound process of the recuperation of the very humanity of the enslaved population at both the individual and the communal levels. It was a profound process that essentially negated the annihilating process and praxis of captivity, slavery and servitude with all the attendant prejudice to the victims. The elaborate rituals of human captivity and enslavement sought to rob the victims of their humanity, denying and symbolically taking away their social and personal identity through the multifarious violations of their physical and psychical being, culminating in the famous rite of making the enslaved circle the mystic tree of forgetfulness a number of times (nine for men and seven for women), as the ultimate seal of their destiny before they were forcefully embarked on slave ships. This ritual was believed to seal and confirm their status as mere zombies, i.e. the walking dead who, as in the much-feared rites of *zombification* in the anti-social forms of Haitian Voodoo, would thenceforth become completely devoid of any personal will, thereby making of the enslaved individuals beings without a memory, without a past, incapable of remembering the least details of their social and individual identity. The enslaved would not even remember their personal name or lineage *oriki*.[6] Therefore, once in the New World, they were no longer a person, but a thing to be used at will by new masters who merely provided the rudiments of an identity through a new baptism to differentiate them from others who had similarly been *coisificado*.[7]

This entire process is what the enslaved populations and their descendants successfully negated by recuperating, reconstructing and, where necessary, even re-inventing, their original African identity within the elaborate social praxis of the Afro-Latin diasporas. The most complete of such a process is the recuperation of the *ebí* or the family structure within the religious and social contexts of the diaspora. The original African consanguineous family is reconstructed and re-invented through the ritual family of the Candomblé *terreiros* in Brazil and the Ile-temples of the Afro-Cuban (Lucumí) and Trinidadian Òrìsà sanctuaries. Within these new constructs, the enslaved Africans and their descendants repossessed their African identity, recuperating and reclaiming their African names and *orikis* via the ritual initiation to the different African deities, namely the *òrìsàs* within the Yorùbá religious tradition. Within this new reality,

6 *Oríkì* is a kind of personalized poetry with historic and epic references used to eulogize an individual, a lineage or even an entire town among the Yorùbás of West Africa.

7 The theory of the *coisificação* or la *chosification* (objectification) of the enslaved or colonized persons has been elaborately discussed by successive generations of writers and theorists such as Frantz Fanon (1962) and Enrique Dussel (1999).

constantly negotiated in order to guaranty their very survival, the Afro-Latin subjects underwent elaborate rituals to maintain the social and spiritual balance of their universe by engaging in frequent rites that relived the African rites of passage whose aims were to preserve the *àse* (spelled *axé* in Brazil, and *ache* in Cuba), the ultimate life-giving force of the Yorùbá spiritual ontology. This *àse* was constantly renewed and reinforced through the rites of initiation and the new name given by the *Orìsà* (spelled *Orixá* in Brazil and *Ochá* in Cuba) to the individual during the process of spiritual rebirth (referred to in Brazil as *runko*), the periodic rituals of fortification of this identity within the social community of *irmãos-de-santo* (god-brothers) and *irmãs-de-santo* (god-sisters) under the caring guidance of the *pai-de-santo/padrino* (god-father) or *mãe-de-santo/madrinha* (god-mother). This cycle was jealously guided and observed as a way of life in accordance with the will of the *orixás,* who had given back to the Afro-diaspora subject their identity and would then conduct their destiny from spiritual re-birth to death, conferring the same kind of existence and intimate relationship with the *ori* and the *Òrìsà* that characterized the life of their brothers and sisters on the other side of the Atlantic, i.e. in the African homeland. This is the linear connection between *àse* and *àsèse* as lived on both sides of what we have christened the Yoruba Atlantic, and it is essentially what is relived within the mortuary rites of the *adósù* (the initiate) in the Afro-Brazilian religious tradition otherwise referred to as *Candomblé*. As Juana Elbein dos Santos, foremost ethnologist and spouse of most notable Afro-Brazilian priest of the twenty-first century, Desocóredes Maximiliano dos Santo (Mestre Didi Alapini), righty affirmed in her 1984 thesis:

> The first chant (to bid farewell to the deceased), intoned by the Iyálòrìṣà, is a reverence to all Àsèsè who, as we have already mentioned, are the first ancestors of creation — the beginning and origin of the universe, of a lineage, of a family, of a "terreiro". The venerable deceased, the adósù who deserves this ceremony and is its focus, will also become an àsèsè (Santos, 1984, pp. 231–232).

There is no doubt that the Brazilian Candomblé *axexê* rites, as the ultimate process of restitution and apotheosis, is directly derived from the Yorùbá *Ìsèse* concept. This is clear from the research of various Latin American specialists and scholars, from the pioneers like Arthur Ramos and Edison Carneiro to notable Latin-Americanists like Roger Bastide, Pierre Verger and William Bascom, whose research sought to establish a direct link between Afro-Latin-American cultural spirituality and the Yoruba-African ontological worldview within the larger Herkovitsian project of *cultural continuum*.

Notwithstanding the important caution that every scholar must exercise against the temptation of ethnic or racial essentialism and the attendant dangers of oversimplification of otherwise very complex historic and cultural identity construction processes, it is still relatively safe to attempt a validation of the all-important ritual of *axexê* as one of the fundamental and foundational tenets of the Yorùbá-African heritage that continues to serve as a compass in the religio-cultural evolution of Afro-Brazilian *Candomblé* praxis, the importance of which can be attested to by the number of scholars who have written on this rite of passage within the past few decades.

Central to all the above-mentioned scholars was the quest for an ontological and hermeneutical analysis of the *axexê* ritual as a compulsory stage in the apotheosis of the initiated *olorixá,*[8] especially those who belonged to the highest hierarchy in the *Candomblé* tradition. This is the stage that will qualify and prepare them for the rank of ancestors – or *èsà,* as they are referred to – in the oldest *Candomblé* temples, as attested by Santos when she affirms that:

> The being who has successfully fulfilled the entirety of their destiny is ready for death. When they pass from the *aiyé* to the *òrun*, with the appropriate rituals having been celebrated, they automatically become an ancestor —respected and revered — and may even be invoked as an *Egún* (Santos, 1998, p. 222).

However, one cannot help but point out some misconceptions about the overall purpose and function of this all-important ritual as expressed by some of the researchers earlier mentioned. One case in point is the chapter by Reginaldo Prandi, published in one of the most significant books on the globalized presence of Yorùbá Orìsà spirituality in contemporary times and edited by Olupona and Rey (2008). Prandi is an anthropologist of respectable status based in the São Paulo region of Brazil, a region to which *Candomblé* historically spread in the period of the industrialization of Brazil through the migration of priests, priestesses and initiates from the north-eastern region of Bahia. Another important detail is the cohabitation of *Candomblé* in the Rio-São Paulo region with another Afro-Brazilian religious expression known as *Umbanda* which, although auto-professed as a 'near-white' Afro-Brazilian religion using models of Allan Kardec's spiritualism (espiritismo kardecista), borrows heavily from the African (Yorùbá) worldview via a liturgy predicated on the mediation of the diverse female avatars of *Exu-Elegbara,* especially *pomba gira* (spinning dove) and Maria Padilha (Castillo, 2015). Whether it was due to his prolonged relationship with the *umbanda*

8 Olorixá is a generic term used for adepts and initiates of the òrìsàs both in Yorùbá Africa and in the diaspora, especially in Brazil.

worldview or a mere quest to problematize what he considered the progressive loss and decline of *Candomblé* values in that region of Brazil, Prandi's chapter titled 'Axexê Funeral Rites in Brazil's Òrìsà Religion: Constitution, Significance, and Tendencies' in many respects comes across as a deliberate deviation from the usual discourse on *axexê* among Afro-Brazilian scholars. His avowed objective as stated at the beginning of the chapter is 'to explain certain changes and tendencies occurring in contemporary Candomblé, especially in the regions of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro *where the religion of* òrìsàs multiplied itself by thousands – thousands of houses of recent origin' (Prandi, 2008, p. 437). Prandi did indeed go further than that by engaging in an apparent theological analysis of the central religious concept of the physical and spiritual worlds of the Yorùbás that, contrary to the three worlds identified by Wole Soyinka in his now-classic essay *Myths, Literature and the African World* (1976), reduced these to two, affirming simply and authoritatively that 'there are two worlds in Yorùbá cosmology'. Such reductionist vaticinatory affirmations indeed characterize Prandi's discourse in the chapter with regard to various aspects of *Candomblé* rituals and praxis. For example, concerning the *egúngún* tradition (Yoruba concept of the masquerade tradition in honour of the ancestors), he agrees with Braga, who affirms:

> Although the *egúngún* cult survived in Bahia in a few specialized terreiros, the *egúngún* Candomblé of Itaparica Island (later present also in Salvador and São Paulo) is very distant from the daily practice of the òrìsà Candomblé and practically absent in the ordinary life of the society. In other words, the *egúngún* ancestor has completely lost its original African moral and social functions (Braga, 1995).

Prandi further capped this declaration by affirming that '[t]he Yorùbá religion in Brazil, throughout the òrìsà *terreiros*, was transformed into something strictly ritualistic and devoid of ethics' (Prandi, 2008, p. 438). Needless to say, these and other similar utterances represent grave pronunciations on the values of *Candomblé* to the average contemporary Brazilian eager to predicate their identity on a millennial tradition, all the more so as Prandi's paper ostensibly sets out to discuss the *axexê* ritual, the ultimate process of the apotheosis of initiates to the rank of ancestors, i.e. *egúngún,* as has been repeatedly pointed out by profound and ground-breaking Africanist and Brazilianist scholars.

A major concern in Prandi's paper for the average *candomblezeiro*[9] or the *olorisa* is the often dismissive ways in which he describes some of the ritual and liturgical

9 In general parlance, Candomblé adepts refer to themselves as *povo-de-axé* (àse people) but, for want of a collective name, some people refer to them as *candomblezeiro*, a name most *olorixá* resist because it sounds too close to *macumbeiro*, a pejorative name used by religiously intolerant groups within the recent wave of Christian neo-Pentecostalism in Brazil.

phenomena, such as *abiku* (ibid., pp. 438-39). As for the term *axexê* itself, Prandi insists that it is a derivation of *àjèjé*, citing mainly Abraham's 1962 work, in which the latter described the *ìrémojé* ritual of the hunters' guild as a rite celebrated for a deceased member whose *erù isipà,* called *àjèjé*, is deposited at the foot of a tree after the completion of the *orò ìsípà ode*. However, as discussed above and corroborated in Santo's 1984 work *Os Nâgô e a Morte*, the fundamental concept of *axexê* is wider and more universal within the Yorùbá ontology.

Perhaps it can be argued here that the centrality of the rites of *axexê* within the larger academic discourse on *Candomblé* in contemporary times is appropriately informed by the fact that the active generation of notable *Candomblé* priests and priestesses – who took the reins of most of the famous *terreiros* in the major regions of Brazil (Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, Recife, Maranhão, São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul) from the generation of the charismatic original founders such as Mãe Aninha Oba Biyi, Mãe Menininha do Gantois, Mãe Senhora, from about the 1950s onwards – have been passing away in rapid succession beginning in the early 2000s, thus necessitating the rise of new and younger but experienced initiates to rebuild the ranks of *Candomblé* leadership and constitute the intelligentsia that will carry on. The immediate test of capability of this new generation will invariably be the ability to execute in a liturgically competent manner the *axexê* of their predecessors, which will then become for them a paradoxical rite of passage to their new status as *ìyálaxés and babálaxés*.[10]

The pact with *Ilè-ògééré-afokoyeri* (Mother Earth) – rites and hermeneutics of restitution

As we have seen, Juana Elbein dos Santos's 1998 work is possibly the most complete essay on the *axexê* rite of passage in Brazil and, as of today, it is considered a classic on the subject both within and outside the country. The master's thesis

10 In essence, one can readily call to mind a long list of prominent candomblé priests, priestesses and initiates who have passed on within the last fifteen years, especially highly respected *iyálorixás* like Gaiakú Luisa (2005), Mãe Olga do Alaketu (2008), Dona Regina Sowzer (2009), Mestre Didi Asipá (2014), Iyá Detinha de Xangô (2012), Pai Alcides do Talabião (2014), Mãe Biu do Xambá (2014), Dona Irenea Sowzer de Xangô (2014), Mãe Kutu de Ogum (2015), Pai Augusto César de Logun Ede (2016), Pai Paulo Bras Ifatoogún (2016), Mãe Tieta de Iemanjá (2017), Mãe Beata de Yemanjá (2017), to mention just those of the highest hierarchy among so many others. I am grateful to my friend and colleague Lisa Earl Castillo, who has been doing serious research with and participating in the spiritual life of most Candomblé temples in Salvador, Bahia, for her assistance in completing this list (Castillo, Lisa Earl, personal communication, 27 June 2017).

of another initiate belonging to a Candomblé temple in the *baixada Fluminense* area of Rio de Janeiro, Robson Cruz (1995, p. 17 et seq.) is perhaps the most complete description of an *axexê* ceremony, covering both the rituals performed on the corpse of the defunct *iyálorixas Airadaquê* and the cycle of seven-day *axexê* celebrated at the temple of the defunct *adosù.* Yet another important work that followed in the direct footsteps of Santos is the graduate research by José Sant'Anna Sobrinho, one of the *òjès* of Ilê Asipá, an *egúngún* temple founded and run by Mestre Didi Alapinni, Santos's late husband and son of the late iyálorixá Maria Bibiana do Espírito Santos (Mãe Senhora Oxum Muiwá). The first chapter of the resulting book from the thesis, published posthumously, is perhaps one of the few full accounts of *axexê* as celebrated in Brazil among the *òjè,* who are the only ones qualified to ritually manipulate the dead and celebrate this important rite of passage for the *olorisas* and *egúngún* temples[11] in Brazil, as well as for all the lineage funerals in the Yorùbá-African context.[12]

In essence, it can be rigorously argued that the *àxexê* mortuary rites in the Afro-Brazilian religious diaspora fall within what I have earlier described as the metonymic representation of symbolic elements of the Yorùbá-African practices and traditions as definitive identity markers in the process of the recuperation and conquest of social, political and economic space by Afro-descendant populations in the Americas. One major characteristic of this arduous yet highly selective process is the transformation of everyday cultural traditions of the Yorùbá homeland into essentially religious traditions in the diaspora. This is true of virtually every aspect of the manifestation of Yorubanity in the Latin American diaspora, especially in Brazil. A good example can be deduced from the officially approved discourse on gastronomical delicacies like *acarajé*, *abará*, *èkuru, ìpèté, axoxô*, *àmàlà, egbo* (pronounced ebô in Brazil), everyday food in the Yorùbá homeland that became essentially *sacralized* in the diaspora, with consumption originally restricted exclusively to rituals to honour specific deities.[13] The same is true of the Yorùbá–African social dress code, which would become a sacralized mode of dressing in the diaspora, where the usual headgear (the female *gèlè* and the male *fìlà*) has assumed

11 Cf. Chapter 1, p. 67 et seq.

12 See Olabimtan 1986, pp. 211-39.

13 The late Afro-Brazilian anthropologist Vivaldo da Costa Lima once wrote on what he called the concept of *acaracentrismo* of Bahia, within which *acarajé* was officially *tombado,* i.e. declared a cultural patrimony by the Bahia State government in order to preserve its intrinsic characteristics as a 'ritual' repast whose mode of preparation, distribution and consumption must rigorously respect the precepts of the original Candomblé priestesses and initiates of Oya-Iansã, whose erstwhile practice of ritual preparation and distribution of the famous *acarajé* gave rise to the now ubiquitous personality of the *baiana de acarajé*, as a major protagonist in the projection of Bahia as the *Roma Negra* (Black Rome) of the Americas.

ritual and liturgical dimensions, making it possible to 'read' and decipher a lot of hermeneutic information concerning the *terreiro*, lineage or *nação* of the wearer, and the initiation age or hierarchy and gender of the *orixá* unto whom the individual is consecrated (Cruz 1995, pp. 68-69).[14]

In this same mode, the *axexê* rites, as celebrated within the Brazilian *Candomblé* tradition are, to a large extent, celebrated in the contemporary Yorùbá homeland as simply the general funeral and mortuary tradition for all classes and qualities of individuals who die after a long, fruitful existence, leaving behind a sizeable family of direct and indirect descendants. Conversely, in the sacralized *Candomblé* tradition it is exclusively practiced as a special honour reserved only for the highest hierarchy of initiates, especially the *iyálorixá, babalorixás, adosùs* and other high-ranking members of the *Candomblé* community (Cruz, 1995, p. 17 et seq.; Manzochi, 1995, p. 261; Oliveira, 2012, p. 264 et seq;[15] Prandi, 2008, p. 440; Sant'Anna Sobrinho, 2015, p. 67; Santos, 1998, pp. 220-35).

Da porteira para dentro, da porteira para fora: axexê and the theory of *exù* hermeneutics in Bahia

Generally, the vast literature on *axexê* as documented in Brazil since the time of Raimundo Nina Rodrigues all emphasize the fact that *axexê* in Brazil is essentially a secret rite whose participation is open only to the initiates. This invariably raises the question of the credibility of the description and analysis of the rite by non-initiates in the Brazilian *Candomblé*. There are indeed back-and-forth arguments on the authenticity of anthropological and sociological studies published on various aspects of *Candomblé* by those who have not subjected themselves to the rigorous rites of orixá initiation.

One of the earliest Candomblé intellectuals to theorize on this most delicate subject was Mãe Senhora Oxum Muiwá (the Ialorixá of Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá, and biological mother of Mestre Didi Asipá). The peak of her career in the 1950s was highly eventful in Brazilian social and political history. That was when Brazil

14 It is, however, important to mention that such a collective behaviourial interpretation of social etiquette is also observable in the African homeland. In fact, research has shown that virtually all aspects of social behaviour that today constitute the collective *àsà* '*ibílè*' (traditional culture and customs) were originally invented and evolved by the different religious cults and professional guilds such as the *awo, ìsòrò, ode,* and more.

15 It is interesting to note that the *axexê* ritual described by Oliveira actually belongs to the *Batuque* tradition, an offshoot of the Bahian Candomblé and the *Xangô* cult of Recife, which was exported into the southernmost tip of Brazil in the cold mountainous regions of Rio Grande do Sul, especially Pelotas, by second-generation priests and priestesses from the north-eastern region.

was under the popular dictatorship of Getúlio Vargas. It was a period when Afro-Brazilian cultural resistance, as championed by the great movements consolidating the tradition of the great temples and their historic founders such as Eugênia Ana dos Santos (Mãe Aninha Oba Biyi), on the one hand, and the artistic Black militancy of the likes of Abdias Nascimento and his historic Teatro Experimental do Negro, on the other, entered into a holy alliance with the Communist aspirations for a better society for all. That was the period when the Axê Opô Afonjá temple in São Gonçalo do Retiro, a quiet suburb of Salvador, was transformed into a regular rendezvous of budding and already world-famous intellectuals such as the Brazilian novelist Jorge Amado, filmmaker Glauba Rocha and musician Dorival Caymmi; the Argentinian-born painter Carybé; the French ethnographer and photographer Pierre Verger; and their illustrious foreign visitors such as Jean-Paul Sartre and his feminist partner Simone Beauvoir.

At a time when Candomblé rituals gained a special appeal across the nation, especially with middle-class Brazilians (mostly of European descent), and there was an explosion of literature on what went on in the *camarins* and *barracões* of *Candomblé* terreiros, Mãe Senhora tried to impose some respect and decorum on writings about *Candomblé* phenomena. Her concept and precept became known as *da porteira para dentro, da porteira para fora*, 'Behind the farm gate, beyond the farm gate': Afro-Brazilian theory on the threshold of Candomblé Terreiro, controlled by the Orisa Exú in the anthropological and ethnological discourses of *Candomblé*. The overriding vision of this concept, according to the *iyálorixá,* was that those who wish to write and discuss the world of the *Candomblé* must arm themselves with the hermeneutic virtues and knowledge of the initiates, regardless of their condition in life or racial or social orientation. Her injunction was actually a veiled invitation for scholars, intellectuals and other categories of middle-class Brazilians to get closer to the world of the *orixás* before they wrote or made pronouncements on the realities of the *povo-de-axé,* as *Candomblé* adepts generally preferred to call themselves. The *porteira* being referenced is actually the shrine of *Exú*, the Yorùbá deity of the crossroads and the ubiquitous and all-powerful intermediary between humans and the *orixás,* as well as between the different orixás themselves. In every Yorùbá orixá or Ifá temple, the shrine of this *orixá* is always located right at the entrance, i.e. the *porteira,* so that he alone may oversee who or what goes in and out of the premises. By inference, therefore, anyone interested in writing about the world of *Candomblé* must necessarily make him/herself an intimate of this deity so that the resulting text will bear the mark of authenticity of an insider.

As in most anthropological and sociological studies, the issue of familiarity with the object of study is always central to the claims of authenticity that validates such studies as empirical documents. Nowhere was this more vehemently debated and contested

than in the literatures on Afro-religious expressions in the Americas. Owing especially to its significance as the ultimate rite of passage for the initiate and other notable personalities of Afro-Brazilian religion, the *axexê* is thus particularly conceived of as a phenomenon that requires a distinct mark of identification and association for anyone venturing to write about its process, symbols and significations. This view has been vehemently defended by most of the second-generation Brazilian scholars who have dedicated their scholarship to *Candomblé* rituals in general. For example, Elbein dos Santos was quoted by Cruz (1995) as declaring, inter alia, that 'in order to collect data on *Candomblé* rituals and interpret them correctly and competently, the ethnologist must be initiated into the religion of the *orixás*, given the fact that a significant part of the rites and rituals are secret'.

Indeed, with the exception of Raimundo Nina Rodrigues's 1932 work and a few of the foreign Brazilianist scholars likes Roger Bastide (1973), Protasius Frikel (1945), Alfred Métraux and H.G. Clouzot 1951) cited by Cruz (1995, p. 16). Candomblé initiates have undertaken the bulk of the literature on the *axexê* ritual. This is borne out by the fact that each and every scholar who has written on the subject of *axexê* always relates the overt prohibition of the non-initiate to witness the rituals of this all-important rite of passage of an initiate.[16]

Axexê: the link between the family, *egúngún* and the quest for immortality

In this segment, I would like to discuss some of the principal elements of the *axexê* ritual, commenting briefly on the similarities and divergences between the Afro-Brazilian rite and the *orò ìsìnkú* (funeral and mortuary) rites in the traditional Yorùbá homeland. The intention is to not 'judge' what is 'done rightly or wrongly' in order not to leave the reader with the kind of judgemental and condemnatory assertions that have been detected and denounced in Reginaldo Prandi's paper (2008) on the subject.[17] Rather, my intention is to demonstrate

16 In the African homeland, this is a common practice too. Whenever members of an esoteric cult like the *ogboni* or other *awo* want to conduct the *oro* on the corpse of a defunct member, it is done behind closed doors and all the proceedings are meant strictly for those initiated in the same cult as the defunct. However, an exception is often made for the deceased's eldest male child, who, even though not a member, would be allowed to witness at least some parts, if not all the rituals being performed on his late father.

17 The average reader cannot help but be chagrined by some poignant judgemental statements in moments when Prandi vaticinates about what he considers the impending extinction of *axexê* in Brazilian Candomblé practice owing to a combination of inexorable circumstances such as 'the lack of interest by relatives, who many times do not themselves practice Candomblé, because of economic limitations of such expensive ceremonies, or because of the ineptitude of terreiro leaders' (Prandi, 2008, p. 444).

the centrality of *axexê* within the process of the Yorùbá quest for immortality as a shared heritage between the homeland and the diaspora.

Perhaps the most fundamental semiology of the *axexê* is the quest for immortality that underlies this very elaborate ritual of the Yorùbás, both in the African homeland and in the diaspora. There is a direct correlation between many Yorùbá idioms and the belief in immortality as a status that is essential for the human person. These are seen, for instance, in expressions like 'omo ni oògùn iku" (one's offspring are the only medicine against death) and "òkú olómo kìí sùn' (the spirit of a deceased person who has left behind living descendants cannot sleep, i.e. shut himself or herself out of what is going on in the world of the living). Such idioms underline the centrality of the *ebí* (family and descendants) in the process of the apotheosis of a deceased Yorùbá person, where the *axexê* is considered the only veritable passport of the deceased to the world and rank of the venerable ancestors. Like most other African ethnic groups, the Yorùbás possess a sophisticated philosophy about death that is completely at variance with the Christian or Islamic epistemologies of life, death and the hereafter. The *tibi-tire* ontology, which rejects the exclusivity or predominance of either good or bad in individuals or in the three worlds Soyinka (1976) described as making up the Yorùbá physical and mystic universe – i.e. the world of the living (*ayé*), the world of the dead *(the other or underworld)* and the world of those yet to be born – is projected further within the Yorùbá ontology to refute completely the idea of either paradise or hellfire as the absolute destination of departed souls. Innumerous are the works of notable scholars who have discussed this fundamental theological position of the Yorùbá in great profundity. There is therefore no need to revisit this belief in the present essay.

Obviously, the same belief continues to nurture the existential aspirations of Yorùbá-African descendants on the other side of the Black Atlantic. This is borne out by numerous practices that characterized the enslaved Africans in the New World, especially during the dark period of captivity as chattel slavery, when many enslaved individuals were documented as having preferred to commit suicide as a way of releasing their soul to float back to Africa when they discovered there was no hope of getting out of bondage. Many are the instances documented in the relevant literatures when enslaved individuals, in their desperation to ensure the return of their soul to the African homeland, would scoop raw sand into their mouth as a way of carrying the sacred sand of Africa with them as they were being herded through the symbolic and fearful door of no return, so that it would lead them back home someday, spiritually at least, if a physical return became impossible. Essentially, for the Yorùbá as well as many other African

groups, the imperative of their body to be buried 'inside' the precinct of their ancestral home was a *sine qua non* to immortality. This is evinced by the fact that, until well into the colonial period when the colonial authorities prohibited such customary practices purportedly for reasons of public health, the Yorùbás would not readily inter a dead parent anywhere other than inside their home. In most cases, the sepulcher was dug in the living room or bedroom of the deceased so that their offspring would have unrestricted access and be able to 'sit' with them to have a heart-to-heart talk at any time. This was what informed the popular mockery by Yorùbá traditionalists even today, who deride the burial rites of the two contending foreign religions in the land, i.e. Christianity and Islam, when they sing: 'Babaláwo á sunlé, Onímàlé á sùnta, Ìgbàgbó kò ríbisùn, ó di inú igbó!' (the Babalawo is buried inside his home, the Muslim is buried outside, while the Christian, for want of a decent resting place, is buried in the bush, i.e. in the church cemetery) (Olabimtan, 1986, p. 218).

Returning to the belief in immortality and the Yorùbá philosophy on death, the Yorùbá descendants in the Latin American diasporas, be they the Nagô of Brazil, the Lucumí of Cuba, or the Yarriba of Trinidad, also firmly subscribe to it, as can be deduced from their cultural and religious discourse on death and the elaborate mortuary rites of *axexê* and *ìtùtù*. This belief is eloquently summarized in two succinct but dense paragraphs by Juana Elbein dos Santos:

> We must once again emphasize that, for the Nàgô people, death does not in any way mean a total extinction nor an annihilation [of the self] – concepts that truly terrify them. To die is a change of state, a change from one existential plane and status to another. It is part of the system's dynamic, evidently including social dynamics as well. Every Nagô person is conscious of the fact that death is a debt he has to pay, because through the physical death, Ikú (the death deity) must restitute to Mother Earth (ìyá-nlá), the symbolic portion of earth which gave origin to each individual; on the other hand, the Nagô believe that at birth, every being is endowed with an individual essence (orí): their destiny. Therefore, the whole essence of life to the Nagô is to fulfil that destiny. This same principle is applicable to every being within the organic cycle (individual, family or religious community, etc.), as well as to the entire gamut of the Nagô system of existence. Immortality, i.e. the principle of eternal rebirth, which involves moving from one existential plane to another, must be respected and fulfilled (Santos, 1998, p. 221).

Perhaps it is better to begin the comparative analysis of the manifestation of the Yorùbá ontological discourse on immortality from the above quotation from Santos. Whereas, in the perception of the Yorùbá homeland, the discourse about *orí* and the need to fulfill the apportioned destiny within the life cycle is conceived of as an

individual assignment, the same imperative is depicted in Santos's account as being 'valid as well for the community, i.e. the òrixá extensive family otherwise referred to as the *família-de-santo* which makes up a *terreiro,* comprised of individuals of both sexes, not necessarily, and in most cases not, related through consanguinity, but rather through initiation rites done under the same *pai-* or *mãe-de-santo*'.[18]

This said, we should now turn our attention to a brief analysis of the *axexê ritual* itself on both sides of the Yorùbá Atlantic. For lack of space, I shall summarize the main features as follows.

Òkú wíwè, the ritualized mortuary ablutions

On both sides of the Yorùbá Atlantic, the ritual of dressing the corpse is an important aspect of the ritual bath for the deceased person, *orò òkú.* The Yorùbá believe that 'baa ti rìn làá koni' (the way one is dressed so that others, especially strangers, will meet the person), thus a person has to be well dressed and presentable at all times because one never knows whom one could encounter. The major aim of *òkú wíwè* is, therefore, to make the deceased highly presentable to those whom they will eventually meet on the journey to the other worlds. In the diaspora, it is during this dressing that the *povo-de-axé* usually carry out the obligatory reversal of the initial rite of passage, which consecrates the individual and links them to the *orixás*. This is mainly done by 'undoing' or 'removing' the *òsù*, the mystic mound that is the entry point of the *orixá* into the *orí* of the initiate whenever the orixá wants to 'mount' his 'cavalo' (horse), i.e. incorporate in the initiate in order to become present within the human community, as is usually the case in *Candomblé* and *Santería* ceremonies when the initiates go into a trance and take on the person of their votive *orixá,* who is then able to mingle with the community of the living, blessing and giving them the much-needed *axé* for a better, happier, healthier and longer life. The removal of this *òsù* must then be performed in order to relieve the deceased of their obligations to the *orixás* since they are now embarking on the journey to join the ranks of those to be worshipped as *egúngún* and looked up to for the distribution of the same *axé* to the ones they are leaving behind on this plane of existence. Again, we can turn to Juana Elbein for a succinct explanation of this important and delicate ritual as executed in *Candomblé*:

18 This is understandable because, as discussed earlier in this essay, the ritual family and lineage was the major substitution for the biological family and lineage in the Latin-American diaspora, while the *terreiro* temples replace the extensive family compounds and lineage household of the African continent.

> Upon the death of an *olórìṣà*, regardless of their hierarchical position, a procedure must be carried out to remove their *osù* through which the individualization and birth of the *adósù* were precisely made possible. A highly trained father of saints [priest] will handle their head in such a way as to extract the hair from a spot where the osù was implanted. This hair, along with other appropriate substances applied to that spot, will form a substance that is carefully wrapped in cotton (a symbol of generic existence). The cotton will be placed in a location previously consulted so that *Èṣù Elérù* can take it away (Santos, 1998).

It is only after this important ritual of the removal of the *òsù* that the corpse of the deceased *olórìsà* can be taken away for interment.

Adìe ìrànà, màrìwò, ìgbá fifó and *ohun isinku* – rituals and iconography of funerals

Also common within the funeral and mortuary rites on both sides of the Yorùbá Atlantic is the use of *eranko abìyè* (winged animals) as symbolic emissaries to lead the deceased on their journey to the ancestral world. In the Yorùbá homeland, the semiotics of the *adìe ìrànà* (literally, the hen-that-is-used-to-buy-the-passage) are an indispensable element in the mortuary rites. That is why the Yorùbá proverbial affirmation categorically declares that '*adìe ìrànà kìí se ohun àjegbé*'. This is a subtle reminder to all mortals that death is a certainty. On the other hand, the use of *màrìwò* (fresh palm leaves) during the handling of the corpse, as recorded on both sides of the Yorùbá Atlantic, is simultaneously a reverence for the new status of the deceased as a potential *ebora* and a marker of the mystic boundaries of the different planes of existence to which the two groups of actors in the mortuary drama belong, since *màrìwò* is usually used to demarcate an otherwise profane space in order to sacralize it. Finally, the elaborate and often expensive food to be provided during the funeral and mortuary rites is a sign of *regozijo,* as feasting is expected at every birth in the Yorùbá-African tradition. It must be borne in mind that the deceased's transition is considered a birth into the other world, the world of the ancestors. That is why a usual expression that accompanies the congratulatory greetings proffered to the *omo-olókù* (the children and family members of the deceased) is the declaration that 'bàbá yin ti di *ebora*, o ti di eégún, ko nií sèrù bayin o!' ('Your father is now a spirit, an egúngún; may he not scare or castigate you').

Ikota, ikoje, ikotadinlogun funeral rites, and the cyclic celebration of *axexê*

Contrary to Prandi's supposition that the tradition of repeating all or elements of the *axexê* rituals in Brazilian *terreiros* after a month, a year or seven years was an influence of the 'Catholic ritual, which repeats its funeral masses in regular intervals' (p. 444), the Yorùbá *ìsìnkú* is by nature a cyclical event. Not only is it considered incomplete if the cycle of *ìkóta, ìkóje and ìkotàdínlógún* is not celebrated with the traditional pomp and solemnity at the established intervals of three, seven and seventeen days after the *ìkúnlè òkú* (Olabimtan, 1986, pp. 211-30), but also the *omo-òkú* would usually repeat the entire process whenever they felt the need to 'turn-over' the side on which their beloved dead parent has been resting. This is why a typical song that *dùndún* drummers repeat on their talking drums during an *ìsìnkú* ceremony is the trope: 'òkú olówó, osù méje; òkú òtòsì, osù méfà; òkú olómo, àsensetán ni!' (the *axexê* of a rich person will last for seven months, that of a pauper will take six months, but any deceased individual blessed with good offspring will have his *axexê* celebrated incessantly).[19]

Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion on the all-important rite of passage for a deceased Yorùbá person, be it within the funeral and mortuary traditions of the African homeland known as *orò ìsìnkú* or within the *axexê* and *itutú* traditions of the Afro-Latin-American religious expressions, it is clear that, contrary to what is generally professed and accepted by most casual or uninformed observers, the overall purpose of the ritual is not to summarily remove the deceased from the community and do away with all their belongings as a measure of severing all ties with the erstwhile family and community. Rather, the ritual represents a release of the essence of this individual to make it easy for them to ascend to the next plane of existence, where they can then become the giver and mover of *àse* to bless those they left behind. This idea of the necessity of *axexê* rites to release the spirit of the deceased is certainly what is at stake in

19 In fact, through the various mediums by which the dead communicate with the living in Yorùbá culture (*ifá* oracle, dreams or even via *àrìnnákò*, when the deceased will take on borrowed human forms to speak directly to the living), a deceased parent may decide to request that their descendants and surviving children celebrate their *axexê* at any time in order for them to have the opportunity of returning to bless the family.

the ultimate *orò òkú* that must be celebrated during the funeral and mortuary rites of a Yorùbá king, as esthetically and expertly documented by Wole Soyinka in his masterpiece *Death and the Kings Horseman* (1975), which necessitates, as important and indispensable aspects, the ritual sacrifice of the deceased king's three most faithful companions: his dog, his horse and his right-hand man, otherwise called *Olókùn Esin*. In his typically erudite and profound style, Soyinka repeatedly made clear in the play that these sacrifices are necessary for the final release of the soul of the deceased *Aláàfin* and his effective apotheosis. Failure to execute this ritual – as aptly described in the words of the *ìyálojà,* the leader of the womenfolk, among whom *Olókùn Esin* decided to revel and spend his last moments before willingly joining his *ìmùlè* king-friend to lead the latter's triumphant entry into the other world – would be a deliberate act of plunging the world of the living into indescribable darkness.

There is no doubt, then, that the *axexê* ritual continues to be central to the Yorùbá conception about life, death and immortality. Again, it is to Juana Elbein dos Santos (1998, p. 235) that we turn to see how she aptly closes her important work on the centrality of *axexê* in the social and spiritual life of the *Candomblé* community of Brazil, and by extension, that of other Yorùbá diaspora communities in the Americas, with the following concise declaration:

> Without *Àsèse*, there is no beginning, no existence. *Àsèse* is the origin and at the same time it is death — the transition from the individual *aiyé* existence to the generic *òrun* existence — the *Égún*. There is a social consensus, a collective acceptance that allows the *Nàgô cultural reality* to be transferred, represented, and materialised into a complete symbolic system, affirming the simultaneous existence of *aiyé* and *òrun*, of life and death. The *àse*, integrated by the three symbols of life principles and conveyed through the individual life principle, keeps the complex system in motion and, through ritual action, it propels successive transformations and eternal rebirth (Santos, 1998, p. 235).

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CHAPTER 16

CONCEPTS IN AFRICAN RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITIONS

Sanya Osha

This chapter examines the primary concepts and features of orisha worship, a prominent tradition of spirituality largely found in West Africa and the Black diaspora. Orisha spirituality is replete with important philosophical concepts such as being and nothingness, God and god, monotheism and polytheism, faith and truth. Powerful parallels exist between orisha spirituality and the sangoma cult of Southern Africa, as well as other indigenous religious practices in other parts of the continent. Therefore, orisha worship could be considered to be representative of a large proportion of indigenous African religious practices and their attendant philosophical implications and concepts.

Religious and philosophical concepts in precolonial Africa were often interconnected. These concepts include those of being and nothingness, the nature and meaning of existence, metaphysics and the afterlife. By exploring these foundational concepts, one can see how related themes of God and gods, monotheism and polytheism, fetishism, conversion and modernity become imbued with distinctly African features that often depart from Eurocentric connotations.

In order to discuss these concepts and related themes it would be helpful to delve into the religious and philosophical traditions of the Yoruba, a prominent ethnic group in West Africa. The choice of Yoruba orisha spirituality, in particular, as a subject through which to explore indigenous African existential concepts is due to the reach and resilience of the culture, which is to be found primarily

in south-western Nigeria and parts of the Republic of Benin and Togo. The Atlantic slave trade brought Yoruba culture to Cuba, Dominica, Haiti, Colombia, Puerto Rico, Argentina, parts of the Southern United States and Brazil, where it continues to thrive in inventive ways.

The Yoruba pantheon of deities requires a few words. Olorun, who resembles the Nyan-kupon of the Tshis, the Mawu of the Ewes, and the Nyonmo of the Gas, is the embodiment of the sky. As the counterpart of the Eygptian god Pet, he is viewed as being too removed from the affairs of ordinary humans to be directly consulted by them. As such, he has no priests or shrines to his name, which is only invoked when lesser gods are unable to intercede on behalf of mortals.

Obatala, who was conceived by Olorun, stands in place for Olorun in overseeing the affairs of heaven and earth. He is also believed to be a sky god with human endowments, and can be seen as the counterpart of the Egyptian god Ptah. Since he is a judge of human beings, he is also deemed to have qualities that match another Egyptian god, Osiris. Odudua, Obatala's spouse, bears similarities to Isis, the Egyptian goddess, but as she promotes the ethos of love, she is akin to the Egyptian god Hathor. Odudua gave birth to a male child, Aganju, and a daughter, Yemaja. Aganju represents land (earth) while Yemaja is a water goddess. The children of Obatala and Odudua married, bearing a son named Orungun, who proceeds to sire the following children with his mother:

> Dada, a vegetable god (WOOD); Shango, lightning god (FIRE?); Ogun god of iron (METAL) and war; Olokun, sea-god; Olosa, lagoon god; Oya, Niger god (*sic*): Oshun, river-god; Oba river-god; Orisha Oko, god of agriculture; Oshosi, god of hunters; Oke, god of mountains; Aje Shaluga, god of wealth; Shankpanna, small-pox god; Orun, the Sun (FIRE?); and Oshu, the [M]oon. Oshumare, the rainbow, is a servant of Shango, and his messenger Ara is the thunderclap; his slave is Biri, the darkness [CHAOS]. Shango hanged himself but did not die, for he went into the earth and there became a god (*orisha*) Ifa, god of divination, who causes pregnancy, and presides over births. Elegba, a phallic divinity; his symbol is a short knobbed club, which was originally intended to be a representation of the phallus. Circumcision and excision are connected to his worship. Ogun, the war-god. The priests of Ogun take out the hearts of human victims, dry and powder them, mix them with rum, and sell them to people who wish to acquire great courage (van Binsbergen, 2012, p. 124).

In spite of this elaborate pantheon of gods, certain fourfold features – bearing similarities to four-element cosmology or reflecting the accepted quadripartite separation of the cosmos – are noticeable in the Yoruba context in the form of the 'four estates, four winds, four days of the week, four walls of the Yoruba kingdom and a divine foursome Shango/Oya/Oba and Oshun' (ibid., p. 125).

In other parts of Africa and its environs, traces of the four-element system can be found in Madagascar, which earlier scholars had attributed to an Indonesian influence, but which van Binsbergen ascribes to a broader Sunda incursion into Africa through South-East Asia.

Apart from the four-element system, other practices and objects which point to Sunda transmission into Africa are thought to include the xylophone, the gong and breast harp, ancient Roman coins, cowry shells, geomancy, kingship rituals, and activities of ecstatic cults. These products and practices are most likely to have traveled via the Indian Ocean through the Cape of Good Hope and then entered into Africa. Heliopolitan cosmogony is also an attestation of the four-element system, in which instances of transformation comprising destruction and regeneration are frequent.

Shamanism is also a common feature in many African spiritualities. In orisha spirituality, Orunmila, Esu, Sango, Osanyin and a good number of *babalawos* evidently possess shamanic attributes. Shamans are understood to be special individuals gifted with powers of healing and who are able to move along the celestial axis and within the underworld in search of medicine and information to heal needy and afflicted individuals and communities. Within the classical Greek tradition, they are usually distinguished by a strange and bewildering disposition, and, apart from Empedocles, such shamans (the healer-sage, *iatromantis*) are believed to include: Pythagoras, Parmenides, Abaris, Orpheus, Aristeas, Epimenides and Hermotimus. The lives of these historical figures were typically marked by life-transforming journeys to retrieve lost souls, as in the case of Pythagoras, who ventured into the underworld to fetch the soul of Hermotimus, or Empedocles, who claimed to be able to not only control the weather but also to rescue lost souls from Hades. Most of these figures were usually multi-talented, combining the roles of magician and naturalist, poet and philosopher, preacher, healer, and public counsel.

There are a number of distinguishing features and traits associated with shamanism, such as the elongated tooth shape and particularly circle and dot incisions, which are common in most regions of the world, most notably in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, Madagascar, ancient West Asia, and the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions of North America. Circle and dot incisions are associated with tremendous personal power and are prevalent usually where leopard-skin symbolism exists. Pardivested shamans (donning leopard skins) existed in ancient Egypt and ancient Mesopotamia, and some scholars have ascribed a West Asian origin to the practice of pardivestiture. This practice also became common throughout sub-Saharan Africa, most notably in Southern Africa.

In the Empedoclean corpus, some of whose elements can be found in African cosmological systems, it was believed that the four elements that constituted the system completed a transformation cycle and this rendering was adopted by both Plato and Aristotle. Those who came after them, on the other hand, believed that the four elements consisted of four distinct, separate, immutable ontological substances, which, accordingly, privileged the concept of *rhizomata* over the contrary Empedoclean understanding and articulation of *effluvia* (the elements that enter through the sense organs).

Importantly, Yoruba religious culture, orisha in particular, has not been disseminated through the employment of force and violence, and it would seem its essentially non-aggressive character is a principal part of its unexpectedly widespread appeal. By contrast, the world religions of Christianity and Islam have won converts via wars, crusades, massive indoctrination and a concerted stifling of dissent and otherness. In addition, the consolidation of these established religions has been aided by proliferation of mosques, churches and other signs of material power and accumulation. On the contrary, the Yoruba orisha (deities) wend their way into the hearts of followers in the most unobtrusive way imaginable: the unthreatening beckoning of their presence.

Consciousness in the African conceptual understanding is defined by other categories including, but also beyond, the self. Consciousness in Africa entails much broader parameters involving the ancestors, the living and the unborn, linked by channels of communication to form Universal Consciousness, thus exhibiting undoubtedly deeper levels of holism in African thought.

The Okebadan Festival, held annually in March by the indigenes of Ibadan, is a carnival of reproduction, fertility and excess. During the one-day festival, bawdy sex songs are sung and nothing is held to be sacred. Sex becomes a metaphor for rain and agricultural plenitude. Human beings, nature and deity are conjoined in a collective celebration to mark their communion and the attainment of Universal Consciousness.

In a way, the Southern African concept of *ubuntu* strives towards the realization of the ultimate state of consciousness through its broad humanism in which the self seeks existential validation in the Other. In this manner, consciousness is communal, rather than individuated.

Consciousness is informed by holism, and vice versa. Western dialectical thought abandoned holism by enforcing the mind/body dichotomy, while African holism transcends mind/body unity to include even the realms of the ancestors and the unborn.

Similarly, an African conception of ontology involves a tripartite form of reality incorporating the spheres of the ancestor, the living and the unborn with a variety of religious and social practices to ensure continuity in the chains of reality.

If the worlds of the living, plus the unborn, plus the ancestors, constitute Being, its conceptual opposite, Nothingness, has an even more metaphysical cast, as it signifies Primal Chaos. Concomitantly, this *problematique* is related to that of the universe of God versus god.

Primal Chaos, which equates to Nothingness, is simply the absence of the existential connection between deity/ancestor, the unborn and *eniyan* (human being). The absence or dissolution of this link necessarily abolishes meaning.

The Hegelian opposition of monotheism to polytheism, in which the former is illogically privileged over the latter as a supreme index of finer conceptual development can be taken with a fair dose of skepticism.

As mentioned earlier, orisha spirituality recognizes Olodumare as the Ultimate Godhead along with an established pantheon of lesser gods, thus espousing both monotheism and polytheism. Some of these lesser deities include Obatala (arch-divinity, deputy to Olodumare and god of perfection), Orunmila (god of wisdom and divination), Esu (god of the crossroads), Sango (god of lightning and electricity), Ogun (god of metallurgy and war), Osanyin (the one-legged god of the plant kingdom), Osun (the river goddess) and Oya, wife of Sango and goddess of the Niger River. Orisha spirituality, in avoiding any form of doctrinal extremism, is therefore based on a different order of faith than Christianity and Islam, which in their evangelizing zeal are quick to denounce perceived doubters, heretics, apostates and infidels. Faith is circumscribed by an us–versus-them mentality in order to actualize itself. In orisha worship, on the other hand, faith is realized through a resolution of the opposition between absolutes. This entails a malleability of belief and a pursuit of an all-encompassing humanism.

Indeed, humanism is the goal of orisha. So rather than demonize and ostracize its detractors, it humanizes them. Orisha's inherent humanism and its unfaltering sacralization of the human subject are underscored by the fact it has undertaken no wars or jihadist crusades to compel the faithful. By contrast, Christianity enforced its will through ruthless policies of conversion. Conversion is the colonization of the body and consciousness of the convert. It is about the invention of a new ethnic and historical memory for the convert in order to create a new being. The project of conversion is intimately tied to 'the civilizing mission' of colonialism and its secular arm of modernization. In francophone Africa, the native had to be transformed into the *évolué* which signified the invention of a new historical memory according to the imperatives

of European civilization and modernity. Nothing could be more intrusive and degrading for an independent human subject.

In creating a new human subject, the dominant religion of Christianity demonized the spiritual observances and religious practices of the convert as signs of fetishism, heathenism, superstition, Satanism and cultism. Cultism, which emerged in modern times partly as an admixture of indigenous African spiritual resources, often fought back as the material realization of the very fetishism the Christian missionary initiative sought to stifle. While it is impossible for religions to flourish without a deity, cultism may indeed thrive without one. Cultism manifests as secretive sects to advance causes such as female empowerment, decolonization and equitable political representation and opposition to tyrannical power. Some examples are the *oro* cult in south-western Nigeria, which is exclusive to men, the *gelede*, also of western Nigeria, and the *iya a mi* cult, which is largely female-dominated and operates mainly within the Republic of Benin.

According to the Western mind, fetishism, animism, ancestor worship, spirit worship and voodoo are all degraded forms of paganism. And yet they are integral to the form of African spirituality under discussion. As noted, Hegel had denied the African subject of the capacity to conceive of a unified Godhead or a pure monotheistic culture. Bolaji Idowu, in his famous book *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*, had perhaps unwittingly supported Hegel's erroneous view in defining monotheism in Yoruba culture by employing antithetical Christian theology. Conversion was not the sole preserve of the colonizer, even within a space as dogmatic as religion. Conversion, when it meets with resistant alterity, is largely an artificial, or at least an uneven process, because it could only proceed based on the negation of the convert's ethnic memory.

As such, this occluded memory resurfaced and effected a liberation of itself from a false history and reality. Within the Christian fold, a re-conversion of the convert occurred by which the convert asserted his/her agency through a somewhat rebellious Africanization of Christianity. Even under harsh slave conditions, Africans in Brazil were able to recontextualize Catholic saints in a manner that suited their original spirituality. Accordingly, St Lazarus is designated Sopona (god of smallpox/diseases), St Anthony is named Ogun (god of metallurgy and the lyric arts), Our Lady of the Candles is called Osun (goddess of the river), and Baron Samedi is named Esu (god of the crossroads). Christianity, therefore, assumed a different history, value and purpose in a way the European missionary might not have imagined it. By the re-enactment of so-called fetishism, African spirituality merged with Christianity to create a

spiritual hybrid that even when inflected by both, managed to transcend them. Conversion in many African contexts also implied a demonization of African spirituality. For instance, as there is no conceptual equivalent of Satan in orisha spirituality, Christianity created one in Esu, the god of the crossroads, who acts as an emissary between all deities and humans.

Egungun (masquerade), the symbolic physical manifestation of dead ancestral beings, would also exemplify the Eurocentric definition of fetishism. However, *egungun* in orisha spirituality is a revered figure of transition, ancestral worship and re-incarnation.

African spirituality existed before Islam and Christianity and yet hegemonic modern thought prefers to ignore or demonize it, thereby disregarding its multiple offshoots and variants all over the New World. Voodoo (vodun) spirituality as practised in the Republic of Benin (formerly Dahomey), Togo and eastern Ghana among the Fon and Ewe-speaking peoples and which was eventually transported to Haiti, is heavily influenced by orisha spirituality.

Orisha has been termed one of the 'invisible' religions of Africa due to its pronounced pacifism. Orisha entails unfettered continuity between the universe, ancestors and the human subject. Unlike Christianity and Islam, which enforce strict injunctions for human conduct, orisha is more concerned with establishing balance between the human subject and the universe and, needless to say, arriving at this unquestionably problematic formula requires a great deal of conceptual and spiritual flexibility. Ifa, the divination corpus, a compendium of over 256 foundational verses (*odu*), reflects this flexibility and the avoidance of dogma. Yet orisha is very active in advancing traditional modes of healing and pharmacology. Indeed, healing in all its ramifications is integral to the worship of orisha as it seeks the re-alignment of the patient with a prior trajectory of well-being that includes culture and community, the realm of the ancestors and his/her disturbed subjectivity. In invoking these elemental categories, the *babalawo* (traditional healer and priest of Ifa) recites verses of Ifa to ensure and increase potency.

In order to undertake a successful healing process, Orunmila, god of wisdom and divination, and Orisa-oko, god of the plant world, need to be invoked. The Yoruba logos, *Ase,* is a powerful term of invocation that unites the vegetal world, the healer and nurturer, as well as the supplicant in the quest for healing. Its rough translation is 'so shall it be.' The concepts of *ori, ayanmo* and *kadara* (destiny, or the more philosophical 'determinism') are also vital in orisha worship. A *babalawo*, priest of divination, may determine a child's fate by consulting Ifa and thus ascertain the deity to which the child belongs. It may so happen that the deity

which the child falls under is not traditionally worshipped within the family and so a new deity is introduced into the household. Such a reality stretches the concept of tolerance and also touches upon the question of spiritual and epistemological Truth. Accordingly, *there are a number of valid paths to Truth* is an axiom enshrined in orisha worship. Additionally, Truth is a goal and not an end; a perpetual inquiry and not the imposition of dogma. Similarly, there is multiplicity in singularity and vice versa. If the North Atlantic intellectual tradition valorizes the extreme materialization of knowledge and its concomitant de-spiritualization, a return to valid orisha worship would seek to bridge such a profound conceptual schism. This has far-reaching implications for modern epistemology, which under the current intellectual climate has been pursued by erecting a seemingly irresolvable division between mind and body. On the other hand, orisha worship, by virtue of its innate pacifism, humanism and tolerance, serves to strengthen and extend the communal bond; it seeks to nourish and replenish community in which the balance among the realm of deities, the living and the unborn is maintained.

Conclusion

There are numerous instances attesting to the resilience of African cultures, beliefs and worldviews in spite of often violent colonial intrusions and disruptive waves of transition. Indeed, strong pockets of Africanity exist in the New World that continue to nourish and inspire peoples of African descent far from the original homeland. This chapter reflected on the continuities in terms of spiritual orientations between the Old and New Worlds, sundered yet linked, by the experience of slavery. Orisha spirituality, thus, becomes a central focus of attention.

Orisha is lauded precisely because it is devoid of the taint of violence, bigotry, fundamentalism and divisiveness that plague the world religions. World religions are generally motivated by an unbridled quest for power – a power that is rapacious in the acquisition of monumental material possessions, prescribing the public and private conduct of individuals, gaining total control over peoples' bodies and states of consciousness and decreeing an arbitrary abrogation of the distinction between the secular and the sacred.

Moreover, world religions entrench themselves primarily through inordinate murder, mayhem and bloodshed directed against heretics, unbelievers, pagans, apostates and infidels. Orisha, on the other hand, is concerned with the unceasing quest to humanize the individual and community through tolerance, accommodation and release from unnecessary and constricting dogma.

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CHAPTER 17

AFRICAN WRITTEN FORMS

Facts, Re-evaluations and an Epistemological Break with the Past Towards a Semiotic and Discursive Approach

Mlaïli Condro

Introduction

To provide some historical context for this epistemological reflection on writing in Africa, it is important to note that, between the late 1950s and 1980, the place of African societies and cultures within the European writing space, along with the social and cultural data of the colonial situation, had led to some paradoxical questioning in Europe. This was a completely new re-examination of the place and role of writing in 'the Western world, which prides itself on having long enjoyed its state of civilization and the writing indispensable to it', to quote M. Détienne. Africa, and colonized societies in general, subjected to the Latin alphabet, would naturally constitute the field of research to determine the social and cultural transformations that 'may have been produced by this move to writing' (Détienne, 2000, p. 4).

The new characterization of Africa's place in the European writing space merged with, or perhaps was permitted by, another cultural characterization of the African continent, that of a continent 'without writing' and, correlatively, that of the continent of oral tradition.

This ethnocentric denial was accompanied by an overvaluation of African orality in a formidable movement of contradiction encapsulated by the famous proverb 'In Africa, when an old man dies, a library burns', which effectively

remains, in the last instance, an affirmation of the value of the written word. The ethnocentric denial was also reflected in the ignorance or minimization of the existence and importance of graphic systems born of or coming from outside the continent, on the one hand, and the arbitrary cultural separation of Egypt, Ethiopia, North Africa and the Sahara from what is known as 'Black Africa', on the other. 'So, for Africa to enter the categories of certain Westerners, it is necessary to impose new arbitrary boundaries and multiply the barriers and hierarchies. These four regions, arbitrarily removed from Africa, have had writing systems since ancient times' (Battestini, 1997, p. 85). While the epistemological and conceptual bases of the image of Black Africa 'without writing' are now obsolete, their echo still reverberates tenaciously through the mentalities of both laypersons and certain specialists, well after evidence has been provided showing the existence and practice of writing.

Thus, in agreement with S. Battestini, '[i]t seems obvious that there is an epistemological problem here'.[1] We share P. Ngandu Nkashama's recognition that 'this distorted view of material reality [Africa as a continent "without writing"] must first be understood and interpreted, before any analysis of the repertory of African writings' (Ngandu Nkashama, 1992, p. 45). From this perspective, the epistemological reflection provides an opportunity to deconstruct the concept of writing in order to move towards a more positive, non-controversial conception, and to liberate Africa from the weight and burden of dualistic and ethnocentric epistemologies. In other words, and to reiterate V. Y. Mudimbe's premise, '[o]ne can extract from each experience its own norms of intelligibility, without the need for instruments or categories identified through another experience to intervene' (1973).

In this perspective, we are opting for a semiotic and discursive approach, which, for African graphic systems, immediately sets forth the presumption of semioticity: African writings as human and cultural productions with their own autonomous signification. The purpose here is not so much to deny actual cultural influences and re-establish the true image of Africa, or to affirm its ability to invent, write, progress, create or participate in the universal, as to re-examine the data on writing in Africa in a different, more positive, manner. As part of the same movement, this epistemological and methodological choice must be able to bring out the epistemic indigence of the African scriptural reality referred to by the interpretative framework instituted by the great sharing.

1 S. Battestini. 2006. 'Préface. De l'inscription du sens et de l'écrit à l'oralité en Afrique', S. Battestini (ed.), *De l'écrit africain à l'oral. Le phénomène graphique africain*. Paris, L'Harmattan, p. 9.

A distorted view of the material reality of the repertory of African writings:[2] analysis

The point of view of the great epistemological sharing

The birth of the human sciences in the nineteenth century was catalyzed and organized by what Détienne calls 'the great epistemological sharing' between 'societies for historians' and 'societies for ethnologists'. The former were familiar with writing – which we should understand as phonological writing – while the latter were unaware of writing or 'without writing'. Thus, as Battestini writes, '[t]he expression "without writing" is commonly used to describe African peoples' (1997, p. 70). In the nineteenth century – the era of European conquest in Africa, along with the emergence of positivist and evolutionary theories, historical and comparative studies – the European written arena was cementing its tendentious presentation or negative representation of Africa's relationship to writing based on previous written sources.

This certainty would be translated into an institution and prescription: anthropology, the discipline that studies 'primitive societies'; that is, 'societies without writing'. The colonial situation or European domination, without being epistemologically necessary, was the context in which it was practiced and flourished. Writing as an African social and cultural fact thus became a matter of methodology and systematic organization, in which scientific interest and ideological interest were closely intertwined.

Africa, thus defined based on its 'scriptural lack', was held up as precarious in everything it expressed: organizations, reports, experiences and values. With regard to the problem of knowledge and scriptural experience, 'indigenous Africa' or 'Black Africa' defined itself, or rather was defined, as a non-subject or a quasi-subject with no power, since it had no writing. In a context where Western scholarly and ethnological thought and discourse historically reigned supreme, it was positioned as a signifier waiting for signification and the written word, while the colonial institutions were tasked with educating it and making it literate.

Epistemological sharing, thus instituted, accounts for the problem of writing in Africa in terms of symbolic and cultural issues, on the one hand, and domination and manipulation by writing, on the other.

Let us continue this preliminary examination of the 'distorted view of the material reality of the repertory of African writings' to shed more light

2 P. Ngandu Nkashama, 1992. In French: 'regard faussé sur la réalité matérielle du répertoire des écritures africaines'.

on our overall discursive and semiotic approach and bring out its originality. To this end, it is important to conduct a comparative and panoramic overview to establish the limits of the other approaches it simultaneously opposes and completes: deterministic (J. Goody), functionalist (C. Lévi-Strauss) and linguistic (J. Février, I. J. Gelb).

The dualistic point of view: limits and insufficiencies

The deterministic approach of British anthropologist J. Goody considers writing as a technical and transparent object that evolves independently, the practice of which has specific and well-defined cognitive and social implications. He sees writing as promoting abstract – decontextualized – thought, along with the centralized and depersonalized organization of social links, regardless of the choice and will of its users or the context in which it appears and is practiced. That said, in light of M. Cole and S. Scribner's critique of Goody's approach (1981), there cannot be an intrinsic and independent 'graphic reason' at work in writing technology. It is, from the outset, preceded by a decision to write, controlled by a selection of values and a semiotic intentionality that affects the choice and organization of the scriptural configuration.

Nor can writing be a technical object with the primary function of promoting servile obedience, as C. Lévi-Strauss argues (1955, p. 356). This functionalist approach was forged through an intuitive method, putting forward an essential or primary ideological function of writing and insisting on the interactive dimension of its social practice, thus leaving aside its cultural and formal dimension (Condro, 2008).

Finally, owing to the restricted definition they give of writing and the type of units and relations they retain, linguistic approaches have the disadvantage of excluding any concern about the problems of contextualization of scriptural facts.

In summary, these deterministic, functionalist and linguistic approaches remove the question of the overall functioning and social efficiency of the practice of writing. They leave out the cultural selection and semiotic formulation made by human subjects, in this case Africans involved in the production and reception of scriptural forms and thus disposed to an ideological investment.

Towards a semiotic and discursive approach

For our semiotic and discursive approach, we share Ngandu Nkashama's viewpoint that the issue of African writings now concerns the consciousness that individuals and particular societies have had of their own cultural and political will, organizing their communication systems, for example by producing works that can carry their memory beyond time (Ngandu Nkashama, 1992, p. 54). The presumption of semioticity mentioned above can thus be put forward in relation to African scriptural productions and practices.

This implies fostering another discourse on African writings, one that would not be perverted by the 'preliminaries of peoples without culture' (Ngandu Nkashama, p. 53), 'peoples without writing'. The discourse would access and take account of the positive aspect mentioned, which is primarily concerned with meaning and not with the hierarchy of contemporary civilizations and evolution (ibid., p. 54).

The semiotic and discursive approach adopted here thus refuses to reduce the subject or phenomenon of writing solely to graphic manifestations and the linguistic dimension (which is decisive for the purpose of distinguishing it from other graphic phenomena). From this perspective, writing is apprehended, to use the apt words of J.-M. Floch, as 'a datum, a phenomenon, the definition, determination and especially status of which are the result of cultural, and therefore historical and relative, divisions' (1985, p. 11). It can thus readily be accepted as a cultural and social configuration and be presented as a unitary combination of goals, causes and chance, means and forms relating to a semiotic and social activity (Ricœur, 1983, p. 128).

It would appear that we are echoing the perspective that Battestini adopted and developed when he addresses writing in the African context. He speaks of 'semiotic salvation' to refer to this view, starting from material and historical reality, which is attentive to the framework of discursive (or textual) exchange and symbolic mediations, to reveal intentions, choices and strategies of communication as a framework in which writing is conceived and develops. Thus, to quote Battestini, '[a] writing system is a finite set of elements and their possibilities of articulation, produced by a choice of signs, accepted and used collectively (= script), to form these traces that conserve and communicate a text' (1997, p. 21).

This broader definition of the notion of writing aims to do justice to the scriptural materiality and experience of Africa: Africa, indeed, also writes in

one way or another. We also share his understanding that writing is not 'a given, inscribed in the future of all peoples' (ibid., 1997, p. 37), a 'reason in history' (Hegel, 1837. French version, 1986), 'graphic reason' (Goody). In other words, it seems that writing is primarily a choice of symbolic mediation of the relationships between human beings and the semiotic modality of thought or speech (or text). This, according to Battestini, leads us to consider that 'writing, texts and society form a whole so solidary that the theory of the first can only include the study of the other two. The study of a system of signs, in itself and isolated from its context, is necessary and useful but will teach us nothing more than phonetics, for example, in relation to communication' (1997, p. 37).

So, to go further, in agreement with B. Street, we can already say that writing or 'literacy' is more than the graphic signs to which we like to reduce it, more than a simple system of notation, consisting of 'a series of marks that serve to write' (Harris, 1993, pp. 36-37) or providing 'the units necessary for the production of a text'. No material characteristic alone is enough to define it (Street, 1984). Writing is more of a 'texture'; that is, to understand its full manifestation, it must be placed, to use the words of P. Ricœur, within 'the set of conventions, beliefs and institutions that form the symbolic network of culture' (1983, p. 114).

In addition to what we have just explained, however, should we not be able to draw upon the long and rich human experience of writing to affirm that writing, or the practice of writing, does not equate to a unilateral and exclusive way of passing from one culture to another, from one society to another, from one historical context to another? (Ngandu Nkashama, 1992, p. 63).

From a methodological point of view, therefore, writing will be understood, in a relevant and effective way, as a set of material forms that are discursive and analysable. These account for not only a system of graphic signs (or notation) but also a discursive form testifying to a semiotic activity. This distinguishes between different levels of discourse (semiological and epistemic, hermeneutical and symbolic, pragmatic) (Glassner, 2000), as well as bearing witness to an enunciative activity. At the same time, in terms of meaning and value, all these activities (semiotic, enunciative) will affect the act of creating writing, along with the scriptural product, conferring a status of historical and cultural reality upon them (Fontanille, 1998, pp. 108-09). J. J. Glassner (2000, p. 279) translates this into a different manner, saying that 'the invention of writing is a cultural act in which an entire society invests itself'.

The implications of this semiotic and discursive approach are important: analysing the existence of a semiotic subject is essential. Society as a whole is thus definitively in the position of knowing (cognitive skills) and wanting

(representations and values), if only because the inventor-society of writing has skills that enable it to grasp the relationship that can bind it to writing. It is also fundamental to pin down the material and discursive forms constituting the scriptural body, on the one hand, along with the scriptural subject – the actants of scriptural creation – on the other (Fontanille, 1998, p. 109). The act of creation indeed occurs within a given spatio-temporal context, while the writing subject and discourse unfold within a space of specific representations and values.

Overview of the repertory of African writings

For deconstructive purposes, let us keep in mind the (persistent) prejudice according to which, as L.-J. Calvet puts it, '[i]n fact, the African continent has seen the birth of only one form of writing: Egyptian writing, its only endogenous system that, as we know, has not been used for a long time' (1996, p. 217). From the perspective of our chosen semiotic and discursive approach, and the definition we have come to develop and retain from writing as a script and historical, social and cultural configuration, Africa is indeed familiar with the various known modes of writing. It must be emphasized that the issue is no longer whether the writings that have existed and still exist on the continent were Black African, indigenous or of Asian or European origin. Indeed, from the Egyptian hieroglyphics to the writings invented in the nineteenth century, with all the Ethiopian (Bekerie, p. 1997) and Libyan-Berber (Chaker, 2002) writings in between, along with the appropriation or adaptation of Arabic and Latin script, Africa has undoubtedly participated in the 'adventure of writing'[3] and, through its many and varied scriptural productions and practices, has contributed and continues to contribute to the knowledge of one of the most important cultural phenomena in human history.

We begin this glimpse of the repertory of African writings with Meroitic script,[4] from the Kingdom of Meroe,[5] in Sudan, in the third millennium BCE. The idea is to consider African scriptural history without interruption or sharing between an ancient, civilized (supposedly non-Black) Africa north of the Sahara, and a (supposedly Black) Africa south of the Sahara 'without writing'. Indeed, the Egyptologist C. Anta Diop (1965, p. 223) corroborated this historical and

3 Title of an exhibition at the National Library of France 'L'aventure de l'écriture'. See http://classes.bnf.fr/ecritures/

4 Deciphered in 1911.

5 Referred to by the Egyptians using the general name of 'Kush'.

cultural continuity by writing, for example, that 'Nubia appears to be closely related to both Egypt and the rest of Black Africa. It would appear to be the starting point of one [Egyptian] and the other [Meroitic] civilisation'. Putting forward a hypothesis that would, for a long time, have been unimaginable, contemporary Egyptologist and linguist Claude Rilly unambiguously relates the Meroitic language to a family of languages rooted in the heart of the African continent: the eastern Sudanese group of the family of Nilo-Saharan languages. Meroitic is thus not, as some people have thought, an isolated language or an Afro-Asian language – a parent of Arabic, Hebrew, Berber or Coptic.

There were two forms of Meroitic writing that coexisted: hieroglyphic and cursive.

> The hieroglyphic signs were used only in a very particular context, namely the sovereigns' worship of the gods. This royal writing was drawn upon in particular for the captions accompanying reliefs in dynastic temples (Naga, Amara, Meroe), as well as certain objects linked to the burial of sovereigns, such as tables of offerings. Other types of inscriptions, particularly those by private individuals, were written in cursive form, and constitute the vast majority of the known corpus. The use of the cursive script extended to official texts such as stelae commemorating the military campaigns of the kings and queens of Meroe (Rilly, 2010, p. 6).

Both types of writing remained in use until the end of the Meroe Kingdom (circa 350 CE) and apparently a little beyond.

As part of the movement of this idea of historical and cultural continuity, it is significant that the historian A. Bekerie (1997, p. 9) links the Ethiopian writing system to Meroitic writing, referring to it as 'the work of an African people', 'that can be analysed and understood in the context of the Altabara-Blue Nile Complex in particular, and African cultures in general'.

The 182-character syllabary is made up of 26 basic characters. It is written both from right to left and from left to right. It transcribes languages: Ge'ez, Amharic, Tigrinya, Tigre and others. The oldest documents (coins and inscriptions) date from the fourth century CE. Bekerie nevertheless notes that 'inscriptions on monuments in northern Ethiopia suggest that the system is at least 3,000 years old' (1997, p. 11).

Today's Ethiopia has millennia-old literary productions written in Ge'ez and Amharic (Ngandu Kkashama, 1992, pp. 75-94) – the famous *Glorious Victories of Amda Seyon* is often quoted, and the Ge'ez language and its writing conveyed an abundance of Christian literature.

This historical depth in the knowledge and practice of writing is also corroborated by the Latin written testimonies that grew in number towards

the middle of the first century CE, with the Roman expeditions towards the Libyan interior and Ethiopia. The testimonies are nevertheless often imbued with Greek reminiscences, as E. Mveng notes (1972, p. 55). During the European Renaissance, in the geographical and cultural region of Liberia and Sierra Leone (which had seen the emergence of many writing systems [Mande, Kpelle, Vai, etc.]), salt shakers and ivory artefacts included Latin and Portuguese inscriptions in Gothic letters (Battestini, 1997, p. 267).

Note that 'some Africanists (Monteil, 1951) also believe that the powerful empires of Ghana and Mali, which encompassed this Guinean region, had writing for their administrations before the arrival of Islamist clerics and the Arabic script – and modern-day Vai' (Battestini, loc. cit.*)*. Although it is not currently possible to prove the continuity between this suspected written form and recent African writings (of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), we can nevertheless put forward testimonies that place African writing systems within a continuity, at least in relation to endogenous graphic traditions.

Moreover, from the ninth to the fifteenth century, Arab historians and geographers were writing about Western Sudan and Swahili, the eastern coast of Africa and the many exchanges that took place between Mediterranean Africa and the Sudan, as well as these regions and the Arab-Muslim world. Such scholars include al-Bakri, al-Idrisi, al-Umari, Ibn Battuta and Leo Africanus or Hassan Ibn Mohammed al-Wuzza, who left precious testimonies on the history of sub-Saharan Africa.

Moreover, it would be accurate to state that, in the medieval era of these Muslim writers and travellers, the African regions were already using Arabic writing in the context of medieval African Muslim kingdoms and empires. Very early on, these African hegemonies would go on to have their own scribes and manuscripts, either in the Arabic language or written in Arabic characters but in African languages (Hawsa, Swahili, Fula, Songhai, Mande languages, etc.). Here, we could recall the existence of nearly a million medieval manuscripts from Timbuktu written in Arabic characters, and often in Arabic languages, although sometimes in African languages such as Tuareg, Songhai and Fula.

This overview of the repertory of African writings should also draw attention to the important and highly ideological context of West African societies from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to the 1950s, which saw the emergence of many African writings that Western grammatology often qualified as 'indigenous'. These include the following written forms: Vai (between 1832 and 1834), Mende (1921), Loma (1930s), Kpelle (1930s) and Bassa (1920s). All five transcribed

Mande[6] languages and were part of the symbolic Sudanese graphic sphere referred to as the 'Mande space': a linguistic and mythical space with the Mande sanctuary in Kangaba at its centre. *Kamã blõ*, the 'vestibule of clavicles', represents those of the creator God, *Mangala*. The inside of the sacred house is painted with the 266 'fundamental signs that prefigured the universe, conceived and graphically represented as a whole, before its realisation' (Dieterlen, 1959, p. 121).

We should also mention King Njoya's Bamoum script in Cameroon. 'Starting from some five hundred characters or figures, he arrived at seventy-three letters and ten figures' (Njoya, 1977). This writing, in its various versions, was used to chronicle dynastic traditions, translate religious texts and write correspondence. We should note that the most important of the Bamoum manuscripts was written in Bamoum characters under the direction of the king himself, translated into French as *Histoire et coutumes des bamoum* (1952).

To close this overview of the repertory of African writings, we shall add that other writing systems exist in Africa and testify to the participation of African peoples in the 'adventure of writing'. On this point, reference should be made to the well-researched and scholarly works by Ngandu Nkashama (*Littératures et écritures en langues africaines* [1992]) and Battestini (*Ecriture et Texte: Contribution africaine* [1997]), both devoted to African writings and texts.

This brief overview has sought to situate the knowledge and practice of writing by Africans within a historical depth and cultural continuity that goes back to Nubian antiquity. It does not endorse the cultural diffusionism that makes Egypt the epicentre of the world. It is, rather, a question of demonstrating that, since ancient times, and fully aware of being semiotic subjects and historical players, certain African peoples have invented or adopted systems of writing, while others have not.

Conclusion

Two integral conclusions can be drawn to tie up our semiotic and discursive approach. Our semiotic and discursive (as well as realistic, contextual and dynamic) approach to the relationship between writing and ideology in Africa places the will

6 Mande refers to a linguistic group that is divided into 'three branches: Central Mande, around Bambara, Forest Mande, in the West and the Mande of the East, or mana-busa' (J. L. Doneux. 2003. *Histoire de la linguistique africaine, des précurseurs aux années 70.* Aix-en-Provence, Publications de l'Université de Provence, p. 167), while Mende corresponds to one of the languages of the Mande group, and more specifically the subgroup of Forest Mande from the West.

to write at the base of the scriptural process. It also pays semiotic attention to the discursive intervention of power therein. This means that we are able to emphasize the decisive role of the semiotic subject of writing in this process, i.e. the importance of discursive and semiotic strategies in the negotiation and management of the polemical social relationships within which (from the outset) any writing decision is taken. In this perspective, we maintain that writing is 'a cultural act involving the whole of society'. Its process must thus take on board both social and cultural elements that represent or configure society in its integrity.

The process of writing in Africa – and, it would seem, writing in general – testifies to a history and practice based on the absolute will of writing – writing as a divine gift – along with the vital necessity of its institutional inscription – writing as organically linked to a semiotic activity that selects and articulates definite forms, interpreting them according to the will of the writing that assumes and guides it. In other words, writing, or indeed each text, scriptural figure or configuration, finds the full measure of its meaning only in the history and practice that establish it as a value and activity of meaning, episteme and praxis for the whole of society. Far from providing a measure of the degree of civilization of its technical and intellectual sophistication, it reflects the effort and desire to escape the constraints imposed by a given historical configuration. In this, it constitutes a response that is both symbolic and practical, and thus also ideological.

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CHAPTER 18

EPIGRAPHY AND THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE AFRICAN PAST

Paulo Fernando de Moraes Farias

Introduction

Like 'history', 'epigraphy' is a name given both to a field of study and to the matter it studies. In the first sense, 'epigraphy' is the discipline that investigates a particular category of written sources found in Africa and elsewhere. In the second sense, 'epigraphy' is the collective name of the sources that fall into that category. They are also known as 'epigraphic inscriptions', or simply 'inscriptions'.[1] Any piece of writing is an inscription. However, one distinguishes epigraphic inscriptions from other writing by a combination of overlapping criteria: the types of surface on which they are inscribed, their average textual length, and their usual contents.

Typically, inscriptions[2] are carved (incised or cut in relief) on surfaces expected to be particularly durable: rock faces, built walls, tombstones and other monuments, metal tablets and other metal objects, and other hard materials including gems. The disciplines of epigraphy and numismatics overlap in the study of coin inscriptions. Inscriptions that were painted, rather than carved, on rock faces and walls are also extant. By the hard surfaces they mostly use,

1 We use 'epigraphic evidence', 'epigraphic materials', 'epigraphic inscriptions', 'epigraphic sources' and 'epigraphic texts' as synonyms of 'epigraphy' in the second sense of this word.

2 Henceforth, we use 'inscriptions' with the meaning of 'epigraphic inscriptions'.

epigraphic inscriptions differ from manuscript writing in ink and printed writing, which are historically associated with soft surfaces: papyrus, parchment and vellum, silk, bark paper and wood-pulp paper.

Nevertheless, inscriptions have also been made on a variety of other media, among them clay tablets (dried in the sun, or hardened by firing, after the writing), ceramics and ceramic sherds, wood and glass. Some were incorporated in textiles during weaving, or embroidered, painted, or block-printed, on them (Blair, 1998).

Inscriptions engraved on hard surfaces stand a high chance of surviving over centuries and millennia. We can still read them in the original, without the mediation of copyists and translators. Because of this time-defying physical immediacy, inscriptions are archaeological objects, but they are above all verbal messages. They address us in words, which other archaeological objects do not. They are texts and need to be analysed in the context of the textual traditions to which they belong. The modifications introduced into those traditions under certain historical circumstances must be carefully examined for their meaning.

The length of epigraphic inscriptions, and the topics they deal with, have varied across cultures. Typically, inscriptions are much shorter than book-length texts like chronicles, treatises, holy books, and travel narratives, which in the past were normally reserved for manuscript writing in ink.

Historically prominent among the contents of inscriptions are: celebrations of the deeds of living rulers (Pharaohs and others); proclamations of law codes, rulers' decrees, and religious principles; commemorations of dead potentates, other notables, and members of their families; and the recording of the foundation and restoration of buildings. Sometimes, inscriptions preserved administrative and economic records. Thus, as it happens with other categories of historical sources, both written and oral, a significant proportion of inscriptions around the world are associated with political power, religious authority, and wealth. Such elite-oriented epigraphy tends to attract the most attention from historians, even where non-elite funerary and other inscriptions are the most numerous. Nevertheless, in the following discussion, when the epigraphic textual tradition under examination includes elite and non-elite inscriptions, we consider both.

The African regions that yield considerable bodies of epigraphic evidence include the Nile valley, Ethiopia and Eritrea, East Africa, North Africa west of Egypt, the Sahara, and parts of West Africa. The epigraphic sources of ancient Egypt powerfully attest to the role played by Africa in the invention of writing. South of the Sahara, the presence of epigraphic sources shows that, in parts of this vast portion of Africa, writing has a much older history than is often

supposed. In West Africa, the making of inscriptions began hundreds of years earlier than the tradition of manuscript writing in Timbuktu.

Other sections of this General History examine the information African inscriptions contribute to the history of various African regions, and to world history. In the present section we do something else. We adopt an epistemological and methodological approach (Moraes Farias, 2003). We discuss the nature and scope of the knowledge one can draw from epigraphic sources, and the way to gain such knowledge.

To grasp the meaning of inscriptions in full, it is always essential to focus on textuality and comparison. We must subject the texts inscriptions offer us to detailed and comprehensive analysis, instead of just sifting out from them dates and a few other isolated data. We must also compare each epigraphic text with its counterparts in the same region, and in other geographical areas in contact with the region. We thus perform the indispensable tasks of identifying the traditions of textual conventions that run through large corpuses of inscriptions, and detecting convention variation between geographical areas and historical periods. To do this, it is essential not to treat elite inscriptions as more important than others. All inscriptions contribute their texts to the general analysis. It is by looking at large numbers of inscriptions that we recognize those conventions, that is to say, the ways of constructing text that are socially considered normal and correct within a particular tradition.

To fit the discussion in a few pages, in this section we concentrate on some central aspects of the epigraphic evidence from one single region, the eastern Niger Bend and the area immediately to the north of it (the Adagh or Adrar-n-Ifoghas). The insights generated by the discussion are transferable to other regions in, and beyond, Africa. We choose this region because for a long time historians had access to only a very small part of its epigraphic texts (Sauvaget, 1950; Viré, 1958, 1959).

Most of the West African epigraphic materials we will be referring to are funerary inscriptions (but just a few of these of personages recorded as 'kings' and 'queens'). In addition, we will refer to graffiti (informal inscriptions) on rock faces, spontaneously made by ordinary men and women. Their graffiti record their live presence, express personal feelings, and convey other messages. Virtually all the stone-engraved inscriptions reported from our region are either funerary inscriptions or graffiti, and the latter provide some of the most interesting epigraphic evidence. In Africa, and around the world, epitaphs and graffiti often record common people otherwise unknown to history. They transcend the sphere of political power and social elites.

Fascinating aspects of our region's epigraphy

A fascinating aspect of our region's epigraphy is the secular coexistence in it of two separate scripts, often used in the Adagh side-by-side for different but complementary purposes. Tifinagh, a script developed in North Africa and the Sahara (Galand, 2001; Casajus, 2013), reached the region first. Though the known local Tifinagh inscriptions are undated, it is probable this African script reached the Adagh in the fifth century CE (Dupuy, 1991). Not later than the early eleventh century CE, the Arabic script was imported across the Sahara. It spread from the Adagh to the eastern Niger Bend in the following decades. The earliest internally dated writing known from West Africa is an Arabic-script graffito extant at Essuk, in the Adagh, made in AH 401/1011 CE by a man who gives his name as Muhammadin ibn al-Hasan.[3]

The language of the Tifinagh-script inscriptions is Berber. This script is not historically associated with native speakers of other West African languages. The Arabic-script inscriptions in the Adagh and the eastern Niger Bend are in the Arabic language and couched in the idiom of Islam. But some of them contain Berber, Songhay, and Mande words. Indeed, Arabic-Islamic inscriptions provide the oldest (1203 and 1253 CE) unmistakable testimonies of the use of the Songhay language in the Saney-Gao area (Moraes Farias, 2003). Clearly, in our region the making and commissioning of Arabic inscriptions were not restricted to foreign traders. They were widely practised by locals (including Saney-Gao rulers) whose mother tongues were Sahelian, and who either had become Muslim or borrowed Islamic customs to a certain degree. Those Arabic-Islamic epigraphic texts are part of West Africa's complex cultural fabric, not a foreign enclave.

The assessment of the historical value of the region's epigraphic materials requires an epistemological and methodological break with some old assumptions, which presided over the study of the local Arabic epigraphy. Indirectly, they also coloured historians' attitudes towards the local Tifinagh inscriptions. In this section, we critique those assumptions by placing our focus on the varying attitudes towards the computation of time the inscriptions embody, on the purposes the inscriptions serve, and on the categories of people they record. We pay special attention to the positions occupied by women in the Tifinagh and the Arabic epigraphic corpuses. At each of these levels, our critique is led by comparative analysis of the full texts of as many inscriptions as possible, something historians and archaeologists have often failed to practise.

3 This grafitto is now published (Moraes Farias, 2017b).

An epistemological and methodological shift

It was long assumed that this region's inscriptions had historical value only in so far as they were datable and recorded events and names also mentioned by other categories of sources, especially the seventeenth-century Timbuktu chronicles, the texts of Arab geographers such as Al-Bakri (eleventh century), and Songhay oral traditions. Supposedly, in the absence of links with non-epigraphic sources, it was difficult, or impossible, to integrate the epigraphic evidence into meaningful reconstructions of the past. In short, there was no acknowledgment of epigraphy as an independent category of sources.

Such criteria would leave historians largely unable to make effective use of the epigraphic sources from our chosen region and historical period. However, if we adopt different criteria, we can draw important historical evidence from those epigraphic materials (Moraes Farias, 1990).

Ancestral forms of the Tifinagh script were used in ancient North Africa for funerary inscriptions. Also, an inscription at Thugga (Dougga) in Tunisia, which dedicates a temple to the Numidian king Masinissa, is notable for being internally dated to the tenth year of the reign of his son and successor Micipsa, which corresponds to 138 BCE (Galand, 1998). But the Tifinagh inscriptions reported from West Africa are not dated and almost never funerary. Most of them are graffiti. They do not name people known from other sources. They do not mention political hierarchies or large-scale events like battles, droughts, floods, famines and migrations. Tifinagh inscriptions rarely allude to Islam, and they do not mention pre-Islamic religious practices. They radically challenge the notion that writing in general, and epigraphic writing in particular, have a necessary association with political power and religion. However, besides omitting dates they seem to avoid all the topics conventionally perceived as conveyors of historical information (Aghali-Zakara and Drouin, 2007; Drouin, 1999, 2010). What kind of historical evidence can they then provide, if any?

Knowledge and use of the Tifinagh script is widespread in the Berber-speaking societies in the region, even though the sectors of these societies that specialize in Islamic 'clerical' roles disregard the script as trivial and often pretend not to know its signs. Both men and women learn the script and inscribe it on rock faces and other media. Tifinagh (meaning 'signs', 'letters') are a mostly consonantal alphabet-like system of signs. This system comprises, according to the geographical area, from twenty-nine to thirty-two signs. Unlike some other, non-alphabetical, West African graphic systems of signs, Tifinagh are not linked

to esoteric knowledge only accessible to initiates. And, unlike Arabic, the script is informally taught, and there is no scholarly social layer who practise it better than the rest of the population. Tifinagh is a demotic script. Sign variations are observable across the Tifinagh inscriptions. While not precisely datable, these variations show that the script has evolved during its long history in the region.

Historically, Tifinagh were not used for noting down Berber oral literature or writing historical narratives. Rather, Tifinagh is a script for ludic purposes such as making puns, and for personal matters like signing objects one has made or owns, signalling an individual's presence at a particular place, and conveying information about the itinerary followed. A large number of rock-face Tifinagh inscriptions are love messages carved by either men or women. However, Tifinagh epigraphy virtually excludes personal emotions linked to death and funerals.

When the Arabic script and language became available to West African Berber-speakers, they continued to use Tifinagh for those traditional purposes. But they adopted Arabic for writing literary, historical, and religious manuscripts, and for engraving funerary inscriptions. In the Adagh, which is a Berber-speaking area, there are large cemeteries with tombstones inscribed in Arabic. The two scripts became complementary, each with its own specialized sphere. However, the two spheres overlap on the rock faces, where Tifinagh and Arabic graffiti are often found together. While most Arabic graffiti share with their Tifinagh counterparts the function of signalling individual presence, they generally include manifestations of Islamic piety.

When all this has been considered, two kinds of data provided by Tifinagh epigraphy stand out as of great historical interest. First, Tifinagh inscriptions are the main evidence for a historically and theoretically important fact. In West Africa, for probably a millennium and a half, a well-established script was used almost exclusively for erotic and playful purposes, personal signature, personal messages between friends, and practical messages between fellow pastoralists.[4] This unusual phenomenon is an important datum for the study of the world history of writing. It is the progressive inventory and comparative textual analysis of Tifinagh inscriptions that allows the phenomenon to be grasped. Second, the long coexistence of the Arabic and Tifinagh scripts reflects, and illuminates, the general model of the initial acculturation of Islam in West Africa. Islamic practices were adopted while older cultural practices were preserved. To be functional, societies required interplay between the old and the newly imported

4 In recent decades, the script has also been used for other purposes, including the diffusion of information about health issues, and political propaganda.

cultural features and group identities, which had to be articulated with each other. For this to be achieved, significant numbers of people had to acquaint themselves with both the new and the old cultural codes.

Contrary to the Tifinagh inscriptions, the region's early Arabic inscriptions generally include absolute dates according to the Islamic calendar. In fact, the inscriptions' phrasing highlights those dates, sometimes to the point of rhetorical redundancy, in an emphatic way rarely seen in North Africa, Muslim Iberia, and other Islamized parts of the world. In the early West African epigraphic texts, chronological statements clearly play an ideological role that exceeds the mere dating of events.

The dates in the Adagh and Niger-Bend Arabic inscriptions record year and century, and often also month and day. To these dates are added reinforcing phrases like 'of the dated Era', 'of the [*Hijra*] Era', 'of the Prophet's Era', 'of his [the Prophet's] Era' (Moraes Farias, 2003). Sometimes, two of these phrases occur in the same inscription. However, modern historians used to pay attention only to the bare dates, without considering the added phrases about the Era and the historical reasons why they had been included.

In the Adagh, at Essuk, the site of the old market town of Tadmekka or Tadmekkat, a salient Arabic graffito omits the name of its engraver and avoids all Islamic pious formulae. It simply proclaims, 'This is the year AH 404 [1013-1014 CE]'. There is no explicit reference to any concrete event to be dated. Rather, the inscription is the display of an abstract awareness of the Islamic year, and contrasts with traditional Berber calendars. Even at present, traditional Tuareg time-reckoning does not number years, nor gather them into centuries; years are simply named after important events.

The inscriptions added a new Islamic frame of chronological reference to the traditional one, which nevertheless persisted. They also helped to add a new Islamic frame of geographical reference to older frames. Another salient rock-face inscription at Essuk/Tadmekka states that 'there will remain to it [the town] a market in conformity to Mecca, and the Book [the Qur'an] will remain' (Moraes Farias, 1999). It links up with Al-Bakri's eleventh-century CE treatise, which says that the Berber town name 'Tadmekkat' meant '[in the] form of Mecca'. But the inscription goes further, by making clear that locals perceived the town not simply as a mirror of Mecca's topography, but as a replication in the Sahel of Mecca's role as a centre of Islam and trade. Indeed, in Berber, 'Ta-d-Mekkat' actually means 'This very one, Mecca', or 'Verily, here Mecca'. In the cemeteries, in addition to referring to the Islamic era, the Arabic epitaphs, by the way they were positioned on the graves, underlined the geographical orientation towards Mecca intrinsic to Muslim tombs.

Arabic funerary inscription emphasizing absolute dates continued to be made in the south of our region, at the Bentyia or Kukyia site on the Niger valley, down to the late fifteenth century CE. North of the Niger Bend, in the Tilemsi valley (between the Adagh and the Niger valley), two funerary inscriptions dated from the first half of the seventeenth century CE have been found, one of which emphatically refers to the *Hijra* era. But they are exceptional. A change of attitudes towards the computation of time and the Muslim funerary rites had taken place. Throughout the region, inscriptions no longer recorded absolute dates. Along the eastern Niger Bend, engraved tombstones were no longer produced.

The adoption, and the abandonment centuries later, of the textual conventions we have described remained invisible to modern scholars until the beginning of the present century. Up to then, epigraphists, historians, and archaeologists approached our region's Arabic inscriptions with a methodology that did not demand textual analysis across the whole epigraphic corpus. Rather, attention was concentrated on isolated groups of inscriptions, and particularly on a few eleventh and twelfth century CE inscriptions from Saney, singled out as (at least potentially) historical because they named royal figures. However, the discussion circled inconclusively around the names and dates in those few sources, which cannot be reconciled with the kinglists in the seventeenth-century Timbuktu chronicles nor with oral tradition. Some of the royal inscriptions had been commissioned on the Niger Bend but engraved in Almeria (in Muslim Spain). Hence, they did not follow the emphatic dating conventions that had become normal in both elite and non-elite Arabic inscriptions made in West Africa. This further diverted attention from those conventions.

Because of all this, modern scholars failed to acknowledge, let alone explore, crucial aspects of the historical evidence provided by the regional corpus of Arabic epigraphy. As the corpus shows, the key to what we historians vaguely describe as 'conversion to Islam' was the appropriation of trans-local, intercontinental parameters for the conceptualization of two fundamental categories of human experience, time and space. The parameters were taken from Islamic culture, which in that historical context was the Sahel's best means of access to the world around the Mediterranean and across the Red Sea. The emphatic phrases accompanying the inscriptions' dates celebrate the appropriation of the Islamic Era by Sahelians. West Africans did not play a passive role in the process of cultural borrowing. Rather, Sahelian towns and rulers had decided to reach out to that world of other goods, ideas, places, and events, first glimpsed through trans-Saharan trade. The emphasis on the Era, and the appropriation of Mecca's role by Tadmekka, were

not imitated from standard North-African Islamic epigraphy. Rather, the Islamic chronological and geographical frames imported across the Sahara were creatively modified south of the desert, to signify a historical mood different from that obtained in regions long in contact with Islam.

The later abandonment of epitaph-making, and of absolute dates in inscriptions, reflects historical changes in this region that are only beginning to be investigated. Local Muslims came to experience, and represent, their connection with the Islamic world at large in new ways, which no longer required the display of absolute dates according to the *Hijra* calendar. The notion that tombs devoid of inscriptions best show respect for the divine will, which creates life and brings it to an end, was propagated in the region by new networks of Islamic teaching.

Women's roles and matrilineal affiliation

Another significant aspect of this region's epigraphy is the role of women and matrilineal descent within it. Both men and women engraved Tifinagh graffiti, and in these the parental reference can be to the mother. Generally, the Arabic graffiti reported from Essuk/Tadmekkat name men as their makers, and the parental references in them are to males. However, at the same site, at least two funerary Arabic inscriptions refer to the female parent. They both date from AH 504/1111 CE and were made for 'Kurash daughter of Tinmal'. These are Berber women's names.

The Arabic funerary inscriptions made on the Niger Bend for elite persons record four women bearing the Arabic title of *malika* ('queen'), who lived between approximately AH 450/1058 CE and AH 549/1155 CE. Epigraphists and historians took for granted that the women were kings' wives and owed their high status to their husbands. The main meaning of that title in European languages and in Arabic inspired this assumption. However, here too comparative textual analysis of the epigraphic evidence dispels received ideas and reveals original manifestations of African culture. The *malika* inscriptions mention no husbands. On the other hand, two other Saney funeral inscriptions name sons of two of those queens, without taking the trouble to mention the sons' fathers. It is clear that the queens were prestigious ancestors in their own right. In fact, all the historical evidence suggests that the term *malika* was, in that historical context, the translation of the name of an autonomous female high office. In some West African societies, as a counterbalance to the powers

of the male ruler (the 'king'), a senior woman was appointed to an office of comparable rank, but with a predominantly ritual rather than political remit (Moraes Farias, 2003). A female officeholder of this type needed not be, either biologically or classificatorily, the king's wife, sister or mother.[5]

Some other Arabic inscriptions in the cemeteries at Saney, and further south at the Bentyia-Kukyia site, also record only female ancestry. Yet others yield mixed female/male genealogies. In such trading centres, intermarriage frequently reinforced the alliances between local lineages (including chiefly linages) and diaspora-trader lineages. Hence reference to female, or both female and male, ancestors may have been often important, to establish one's proper genealogical status in the community.

Conclusion: on textuality

The historical object specific to epigraphic studies is textuality. It is the sum of discursive practices embodied in inscriptional traditions, and the variation of those practices across historical and geographical contexts. This applies not only to the Adagh and eastern Niger Bend, and to the Tifinagh and Arabic traditions of epigraphy. It is also the necessary approach to the inscriptions in other regions of the vast African continent, no matter how different the chronological, linguistic, and religious contexts in which inscriptions have been produced since the early days of Egypt, Meroe and Ethiopia. The task is to identify all of the strands woven together into each text, and into the whole particular tradition to which that text belongs. It is not to pick and choose a few threads of evidence here and there, nor select a few inscriptions for attention and reject the rest of the corpus as devoid of historical value. As pointed out long ago by Sauvaget (1946), no inscription is banal once we cease to study it in banal ways.

5 See for instance the Nikki polity (in Borgu, Benin), where a female office of this type continues to exist.

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CHAPTER 19

TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE HERITAGE AND NEW APPROACHES OF AFRICAN HISTORY

Herman O. Kiriama

Introduction

Cultural heritage is an expression of the ways of living developed by a community, passed on from generation to generation (ICOMOS, 2002). It is now widely acknowledged that heritage is not only manifested through tangible forms such as artefacts, buildings or landscapes, but also through intangible forms such as voices, values, traditions and oral history (Abungu, 2012; Kiriama, 2009). Cultural heritage, especially its intangible dimensions, acts as a means of preserving the links between the past and the present, and also allows the transmission of its different shades and colours to future generations (Lenzerini, 2011).

Cultural heritage and history

Africa has a diverse and rich heritage. It ranges from the cultural and natural to the tangible and intangible – or the memories and stories that live within its peoples. According to UNESCO, intangible heritage is made up of:

> people's learned processes along with the knowledge, skills and creativity that inform and are developed by them, the products they create and the resources, spaces and other aspects of social and natural context necessary to their sustainability. These processes provide living communities with a sense of continuity with previous

> generations and are important to cultural identity, as well as to the safeguarding of cultural diversity and creativity of humanity (UNESCO, 2003).

Unlike the written word, intangible heritage is constantly recreated by a community before its transmission to the next generation. One can therefore argue that oral history is more inclusive than written history and involves the history of each generation (Abungu, 2012). As intangible heritage is concerned with the symbolic and other social values that people associate with a site or sites, as well as the oral traditions and the cultural spaces in which these forms of 'living heritage' are played out, it is thus an important instrument in the recording of the history of a people or community (Deacon, 2004).

During the colonial period, however, as a result of a mission to 'modernize' Africa, laws were passed by the colonial administration that abhorred Indigenous knowledge systems and practices. African heritage was perceived as negative and irrelevant, and this was reinforced by an education system which dismissed culture as irrelevant to contemporary development concerns. Formal education, and the written word in the language of the colonizers, were glorified instead. As a result, the development of oral traditions, and indigenous knowledge and skills expressed through the creative narration of history, artistic skills, cultural practices, expressions, drama and innovation, were stunted. The heritage that colonialists thought deserved protection was only the physical aspects, and often this heritage was appropriated, its creation attributed to communities that supposedly came from outside the continent (Abungu, 2012). For instance, in colonial Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), the site of Great Zimbabwe was, based purely on its physical attributes, used by the colonial government as a symbol of colonial hegemony; its creation was attributed to non-Africans. The African colonial governments therefore deliberately 'forgot' the histories and heritage of most ordinary Africans, and heritage institutions, like museums, instead focused on the heritage of white people. In Cape Town, South Africa, for instance, heritage sites such as the Castle of Good Hope were established to uphold and glorify the history of the Afrikaners and the white colonial rulers. The experiences of the Indigenous Peoples of South Africa, such as the Khoisan, as well as the heritage of ordinary Black people, were ignored. It is unfortunate that even the post-colonial African governments have not done much to change this situation, having to a large extent continued to use Western constructs to manage African heritage.

One can argue that heritage offers historians the opportunity to interact directly with their subject matter, establishing an active relationship between the present and the past. It should be noted that we make no distinction here

between tangible and intangible heritage because one cannot exist without the other. According to Munjeri (2004), the interpretation of the tangible can only be done through the intangible. Therefore, as Tosh (2000) argues, oral history (intangible heritage) is 'an effective instrument for re-creating the past' by virtue of being 'the authentic testimony of human life as it was actually experienced'. In other words, heritage allows us to experience life as the subjects we are writing about experienced it, or want it experienced.

It has been argued that heritage is often one-sided and therefore difficult to use to reconcile the differing political viewpoints in post-colonial, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Africa (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996). That notwithstanding, I believe that with proper handling, heritage can be a useful tool in the writing of African history. This is because within every heritage landscape there are threads, whether positive or negative, that link the communities which occupy that landscape. The weaving of these threads will lead to an understanding of the connections that exist between and within the communities of that landscape. Promoting and supporting African heritage can therefore lead to the safeguarding of heritage as a valuable resource for future generations, and to achieving social cohesion within society.

Africa has a number of heritage sites – monuments, rock art, historic landscapes and others. In most African communities, these heritage sites, and especially memorials and monuments, have been used to depict collective memories of the communities at various stages of their development. For instance, in Nairobi in 2006 the Kenyan Government erected a statue of Dedan Kimathi, the freedom fighter and resistance hero who fought colonial oppression and was executed by the British in 1957. The statue of Kimathi is clad in military regalia and holds a rifle in one hand and a dagger in the other, symbolic of the last weapons he wielded. This was a way for the new government to acknowledge the role of the Mau Mau rebellion in the liberation of Kenya, demarcate itself from the post-colonial government, and through the statue rewrite the history of Kenya. During the Apartheid era in South Africa, the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria was constructed by the Apartheid regime as a symbol of the power of the Afrikaner colonizers. The monument, portraying battle scenes between the early Voortrekker settlers and Indigenous Africans, was intended to symbolize the settlers' and thus white civilization's triumph over barbarism (Sheriff, 2014). After the end of Apartheid in 1994, the new government instituted the Legacy Project, in which it encouraged the founding of post-Apartheid heritage institutions such as the Apartheid Museum, District Six Museum and Freedom Park, and tasked them with the goal of promoting

reconciliation, redressing historical imbalances, correcting distortions in South African history and forging a shared national identity (Sheriff, 2014). These institutions were to use heritage as a vehicle for the construction of a national identity because heritage allows them to look into the past, or to foster what Marschall (2004, p. 95) calls 'introspection', and then establish the best way to represent the nation in the present. Thus heritage is not only important for nation-building and telling the 'other' side of the conflict story, it is also useful for articulating the values of the new dispensation as well as contributing to cultural empowerment of formerly disadvantaged communities (Kiriama, 2009, p. 13; Marschall, 2004, p. 95).

The site of Osun Osogbo, a sacred grove in southern Nigeria, is another example of how heritage is a useful tool in the writing of African history. The grove is regarded as the domicile of Osun, the goddess of fertility, and is dotted with sanctuaries, shrines, sculptures and art works in honour of Osun and other deities. In this grove the tangible and the intangible have been woven together to tell the story of the founding of the site and the identity of the Yoruba people. Probst (2004) has shown that by using the shrines and sculptures found in the Osogbo grove, the Osogbo Heritage Council has been able to write both the legendary and traditional history of Osogbo. The legendary history is that of the goddess Osun or Oso Igbo, considered to be the founder of Osogbo; the traditional history is about the coming of Laroye and Timehin in the seventeenth century, their encounter with the goddess and the establishment of a settlement on the banks of the Osun River. Frequent floods suffered by the new immigrants were attributed to Osun, who was angry with the new immigrants for destroying the land. After a sacrifice was offered, the goddess led the people to a new settlement where they would prosper and multiply, upriver at their present location. Thus, the shrines and sculptures that are found inside and outside the grove have been used to explain the migration history of the people of Osogbo (Probst, 2004, p. 49).

A similar example can be seen along the Kenyan coast where sacred forested sites known as Kayas, a representation of the formation and identity of the Mijikenda peoples, can be found. The Kaya forests are remnants of what was once an extensive diverse lowland forest found in Eastern Africa. The existence of these sacred forests is linked to the history and traditions of the Mijikenda (nine houses) ethnic group; a grouping that brings together nine communities that speak the same language, except for some diversity in dialect, and who claim descent from an ancestral area of Singwaya (Shungwaya). According to Mijikenda oral traditions, when their ancestors arrived in the area more than

600 years ago, insecurity and the need to protect themselves led them to build their homesteads, or *Kayas,* on six individually fortified hilltops. About three centuries ago, when conditions improved and the communities started to settle outside the fortified forests, the original Kayas were designated by local elders as sacred places and burial grounds, ensuring their protection. Thus, the Kayas as they are today represent a living tradition; human-environment interactions where physical, ritual and 'magical' sites in the forest have clearly been shaped by human activity (Githito, 1997; Nyamweru, 2012). Therefore, the location, history and development of the Kayas cannot be separated from the history, beliefs and culture of the Mijikenda. The Kaya elders describe detailed lineages of the founding figures of the Kayas, which point to a definite time of origin of the Mijikenda groups after the sixteenth century. The Kayas, therefore, are an integral element in the history of the Mijikenda. Still, today, the Kaya is regarded as the ultimate reference point of the customs and identity of the people. Kayas are also a repository for accumulated knowledge from the past and continue to provide a cultural identity for the future. In the present, the Kaya serves as a political rallying point and a source of knowledge for everything from medicines to information for litigation. Currently, Kayas remain the resting place of the fathers of the Mijikenda society. The carved memorial posts called *vigango,* placed at the head of the graves of departed elders, not only connect the living with the dead, but ensure that the departed elders continue to protect the living from misfortune.

It is not only monuments and sacred forests that have a story to tell. Open spaces that people have come to imbue with significance are also important in the writing of the history of our modern states. One such example is Freedom Corner, found inside Uhuru Park in Nairobi. This space was a gathering point used by the late Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai and other women in 1991, demanding the release of political detainees held by the Moi regime. Since then, this part of the park has become a focal point for critics of successive Kenyan governments. Ironically, however, perhaps as a way to hamper its critics by constricting their space, the new Kenyan government, together with the British government, unveiled in late 2015 – in a section of Freedom Corner – a monument funded by the British to remember the veterans of the Mau Mau rebellion against the British. This act itself is a powerful indication of the symbolism of heritage places in the writing of the new African history. One can argue that the choosing of the Freedom Corner as the home for the Mau Mau monument was a tacit acknowledgement of the role that Freedom Corner has played in the democratization of the Kenyan nation and, therefore, that

the Mau Mau rebellion being a precursor of the later struggles, there was no better place than the Freedom Corner to commemorate it. Therefore, when the history is written of the liberation of Kenya and the fight for greater democracy, the struggle for human rights and the accountability of the government to its citizens, it cannot be complete without the full story of Freedom Corner.

The same significance can be attributed to heritage items such as the axes, knives, stools, rock paintings and other items used by various African communities. These items are rich sources of historical information about the people who made and used them.

Indeed, the fact that the 'intangibles behind the tangibles' are as important as the tangible heritage in our historical development, was seen during the debates for the removal of the statue of Cecil Rhodes from outside both the University of Cape Town in South Africa and Oriel College in Oxford, United Kingdom. In South Africa, one of the protesters said that the call for the removal of the statue is a 'metaphorical call for the transformation of the University of Cape Town's culture and faculty, which many blacks feel are alienating and still reflect a Eurocentric heritage' (Parkinson, 2015). In the same vein, one Oxford student did not want the statue removed because 'The Rhodes statue stands as a reminder that we have a long way to go in accepting our history…the statue should stay and remind us that Oxford has much to do to redress its racial imbalances' (Latif, 2016). This shows that heritage is a dynamic and democratizing force that provides us with two sides of the same coin; the same heritage enables us to write our historical developments from different perspectives, and therefore keeps history dynamic and not static.

Just as the powers that be can and have appropriated the heritage to reinforce their hegemony, the downtrodden, or subalterns, also appropriate the same heritage to tell their own side of the story; this is the reason why Latif, quoted above, does not want the statue of Rhodes removed as she wants it to tell the story of the injustices that Black people and minorities have suffered and continue to suffer. The same approach is illustrated in the small village of Shimoni on the Kenyan south coast. It has a cave which – despite the fact that its past use as a slave pen is contested by four of the village communities – has been opened by these same communities as a 'slave cave' for tourists. This presentation of the cave by the Shimoni communities as an element of slave heritage has taken place in spite of the fact that Kenya's national government has not recognized the historical existence of slave heritage in the country. That notwithstanding, the cave is now both an international and local tourist attraction and what is intriguing is that it is now a must-see for all levels of

Kenyan students, from primary to university. Thus, the local community, the subalterns, have upstaged the government and made this cave an unofficial slave heritage site in Kenya. The inhabitants (subalterns) of Shimoni have used their own forms of heritage which exist in direct opposition to the national – the authorized heritage discourse – to create their own discourse(s) – a subaltern heritage discourse. This alternate history directly challenges the hegemonic/dominant national paradigm which is quiet to the point of denial about the existence of slavery in Kenya. It is these forms of memory/heritage discourses that are used by the local people to demand that the historical injustices done to them by past and present governments are addressed (Kiriama, 2009). Heritage is thus an important component in surfacing this power struggle.

Conclusion

This chapter has briefly surveyed the role that heritage, in both its tangible and intangible manifestations has in the writing of Africa history. It shows that heritage can be a liberating and democratizing tool when it enables both voices, hegemonic and subaltern, to be heard. Cultural heritage is an important accompaniment to recalling or remembering our past, and thus plays an important role in establishing our commonness with our fellow 'villagers' (Kiriama, 2013). In other words, our memories and the places where we replay them enable us to create our common identity (Lowenthal, 1998). It also shows that heritage plays a role in power negotiations within communities. This is because heritage is a hegemonic struggle between contending forces in society over who has the right to delineate the destiny of the community. The complexity of African history is wrapped within the rich heritage, both tangible and intangible, that the continent possesses; and the complexity of Africa's development can only be wholly understood when its heritage is taken as an integral part of this historical development, as every stage of the developmental process is written within this heritage.

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CHAPTER 20

AFRO AMERICA

Africa and the Arts

Yolanda Wood

Introduction

Afro America exists. It is at once ancient and current, with no precise borders. It has been a feature of the whole of the Americas since the times of colonization, becoming ever wider and longer as the settlers made massive use of the women and men transported from Africa. A large proportion of this population – held as slaves – fled to forests and caves, building spaces where they could come together and be free. This process was long and complex, and these spaces became corners where cultural traditions of African origin survived – as seen, historically, in Brazil's Palmares Quilombo or the emblematic San Basilio Palenque in the north of Colombia,[1] listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. These memorable places have conserved and preserved African values, like a culture of resistance – expressing itself in different ways – for all those exploited in the sugar and coffee plantations, or other productive or patriarchal domains to which they were confined.

Such resistance existed in spite of the conditions within colonial power arenas, where bans and de-cultural actions were applied to any material or physical medium of African culture bearing evidence of an African's worldview and beliefs. Indeed, African deportees were stripped naked for their Atlantic crossing.

1 Cfr. Alejo Carpentier. 'Lo que el Caribe le ha dado al mundo', *Correo de la UNESCO*, Dec 1981.

Thus, began the break with everything that had gone before, and the certainty of removing any thought or sense of belonging vested in material or ritual objects: all were devalued and devalorized, all African beliefs demonized. Faced with adversity, loneliness and a total lack of knowledge of their new reality, along with the loss of their tribal references and language of origin, African deportees had a real need for psycho-social reconstitution in the new context. This diaspora was also subjected to the loss of its original attributes: men and women were renamed according to their masters' decisions and desires, their African names erased by the notary's ink, as Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén describes in "El Apellido" (*Lo habéis disuelto en tinta inmemorial. Lo habéis robado a un pobre negro indefenso*). To this day, such actions add a greater complexity to the definition of Afro-descent, since there is no question of pre-existing genealogy.

Unfortunately, this filiation evolved with time into a form of ethnic self-recognition, according to racial phenotype, more than a true historical and social understanding of the African presence among us, well masked by miscegenation or pushed into the shadows by exclusion and racism. In contrast, asserting Afrodescendance in Afro America means bringing to the fore the culture of this deported multitude – a huge population who have not only inhabited the great extension of a territory – on this side of the Atlantic – but have also lived, and continue to live, socially and culturally, within our space of individual and collective diversity.

What, then, of the arts?

With all this in mind, it is not difficult to understand the rebirthing process required for the expression of African art in Afro America. Key elements of this cultural remaking include memory, along with the symbolic reappropriation of the natural environment and all kinds of beliefs. Affective relationships, destroyed through the slave trade, were rediscovered in the spiritual family and other networks of mutual support, including *cabildos*, African-American syncretic religions such as vodu, santería, candomblé and certain secret societies like the Abakúa. Many artistic expressions were revested, full of meaning, in these practices. These include, above all, signs that were indecipherable to the colonists. One example is the *veve*, from Dahomey, through which Africa resurfaced in all its mythical strength, alongside the pantheons where Catholic images were venerated – a whole correlation of hybridization with African thought. In the context of colonial domination, dance, music, bodily expression, rituals and,

of course, the images associated with these practices, were not understood or promoted as 'art'. An essential question for contemporary art theory and history, then, is how to draw upon these expressions as a fundamental source for the understanding of Afro America through its cultural constitution. This means bringing to the fore everything that has been devalued by the so-called modern Euro-Western hegemony.

This current of thought, ignorant and mistrusting of Africa's cultural richness, reduced the existence of a great continent to that of its deported people, exploited for economic and commercial benefits to further the strategies of the colonial power. The great continent disappeared behind the image of the Black man or Black woman, placed on the lowest level of the social scale and classified – according to the vision of the other – as savage, damaged and part of the established system. This Africa of individuals, in the social and cultural context of an Afro America represented by European artists, was reduced to figures and characters in the visual context of this artistic tradition. Many examples can be found of the picturesque, burlesque, caricaturesque vision of these figures, developed through painting, and especially engraving and photography, throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These images attest to an idea of Africa and Africans recognized outside their original culture, reinstalled in another space. Their documentary function within this space demonstrates the way in which their very existence acted as a driver for important aspects of popular culture, especially through the appearance of miscegenation, as we can see in Mexico's *pintura de castas* or the work of Spanish artist Victor Patricio de Landaluze in Cuba. This vision can also be observed in the independentist and abolitionist iconography of the Haitian Revolution (1804), represented in the works of French artists and the neoclassical style. The visual imagery of this transcendent event, for Afro America and the whole world, exposes a vision of racism according to the 'pseudoscientific' foundations of the time and the dominant tendencies of French thought, which exerted their influence on the revolution of the former colony of Saint Domingue.[2]

Local artists were also trained in this pictorial tradition. The San Alejandro Academy of Drawing and Painting, created in Cuba in 1818, admitted only white apprentices. The teaching model was French and at its head was Juan Bautista Vermay, a disciple of Jacques-Louis David. This is why it is so exceptional that, towards the end of the nineteenth century, some paintings by local artists (even those trained in Europe) began to show evidence of sensitive portrayals of Black

2 Cfr. Gérard Alexis, 'Le serment des ancêtres', in Haiti's national collections. https://aica-sc.net/tag/gerald-alexis

people from a different perspective. Two works by the Puerto Rican artist Francisco Oller are good examples of this other point of view: *La Escuela del Maestro Rafael Cordero* (1890) and *El Velorio del Angelito* (1893). The main character of both these paintings is a Black man, obviously a former slave. The respectful portrayal of the subject in the first work is apparent through his socially recognized profession (a teacher), and his affectionate relationship with children of all skin colours in his small school. In the second painting, the Black man is shown in the middle of the scene, standing before the body of a dead child laying on a table, while around them a great festivity takes place (the child has died free from sin and thus goes straight to heaven). The work clearly shows the artist's critical stance in relation to this Christian concept, which was widespread in rural areas of his country. The individual Oller chooses to express his alternative viewpoint on the subject – through the other's eyes – is the old Black man, shown standing silently before the dead child.

Laying claim to Africa

It was necessary to lay claim to Africa in a different manner. There were several messages contained in popular culture that twentieth century intellectuals and artists were able to draw upon in order to build an alternative discourse, or other modus operandi, forging their own form of modernity. The research undertaken to bring out this difference focused on American cultural matrices, the Indo and the Afro. Mexican muralism bears testimony to the country's original cultural richness, as well as to its own role in its historical and social formation. As has already been said, although Afro America has no borders, there are nevertheless countries and territories where Africa's presence has been more significant, both demographically and culturally. This is true of Brazil and, especially, the islands of the Antilles, described by the poetess Nancy Morejón as 'the heart of Afro America'.[3]

Towards the 1920-30s (a little later for certain islands), artistic and cultural movements emerged that were strongly orientated towards laying claim to the presence of Africa. This occurred not only through Black individuals and their portrayal in images, but also through a feeling of Africanity in a spiritual and emotive sense, deeply connected to the search for national expression – a central focus of intellectual concerns. This was an inclusive moment for literary,

3 Cfr. Nancy Morejón. 'Afroamérica, la invisible? Aproximación a una poética del Caribe', *Poética de los altares*. Ed. Letras Cubanas, 2004, pp. 5-27.

musical, dance and visual manifestations derived from another logic, outside of the traditional Euro-Western notion of art, beauty and order. There was a whole world to be rediscovered, evoking new relationships between the natural and the supernatural realm, between spirits and people, gesturality and orality, steeped in African traditions. It was a provocative situation to distinguish an Africa from within – neither analogous to, nor absolutely different from that of the ancestral continent. Africa thus became a symbol in the quest for identity. The vocation of ethnological and anthropological thinkers, as well as scientific researchers, contributed much to this rediscovery. These include Jean Price Mars and Fernando Ortiz, figures such as Marcus Garvey, and writers and poets like Nicolás Guillén, René Ménil, Aimé Césaire, Claude MacKey, Alejo Carpentier and Palés Matos.

At the same time, this appropriation of Africanism formed part of an avant-garde trend in Europe, drawing upon African sculptural forms and masks in particular as a way to renew the modern visual language – the work of Pablo Picasso being a notable example. Meanwhile, in Haiti, Andrés Breton discovered what was, for him, a totally new kind of pictorial imagination in Haitian creation. It was so different from what he had known that he identified it as 'surrealist' when it was, in reality, a popular expression steeped in the mythical strength of traditions that had come from Africa.

Everything had to be resituated in its place and a synthesis produced between these two worlds. For this to happen, in the words of the Brazilian *Anthropophagic Manifesto*, everything needed to be devoured to bring about mutation. Wifredo Lam is an obligatory reference to cite in this context. This Cuban-Chino mulatto from Sagua La Grande was an indefatigable traveller, living in shared spaces (Cuba, Spain, France, Italy and New York). During his time in Paris, he immersed himself in the debates of modern art and found himself confronted with the contributions provided by African art as a formal research source for avant-garde aesthetics. This was the time of the great wave – a 'diaspora' of objects and African signs were arriving in Europe, devoid of their signifiers.

Lam's work gave African elements back their enigmatic meaning by drawing upon the Cuban popular tradition. He had not been to Africa. All the meanings were derived from the Afro American imagination and it was his 'return to his native land' in 1942 to escape the Second World War that really set the

revelations in motion. This was a return to himself, to his roots.[4] Myth and reality merged: papaya, masks, *santería* deities and more. Everything came together to create a surprising world. His work was foundational, laying claim to the Afro visual adventure. *The Jungle* (1943), acquired by MOMA New York, is one of his major paintings, in which he reveals the legendary strength of the metamorphosis between humans, plants and animals, a mysterious convergence of spirits in a 'landscape' of sugar cane.

The symbolic dimension of African signs inhabiting the new American context; the development of a nature populated by spirits living freely in the protective silence of the forest, rivers and sea; the commitment to fight the marginalization, discrimination and exclusion brought about by centuries of colonial exploitation and the other forms of domination and inequalities suffered thereafter; art as the refuge of ancestors – all these became a living Africa in the poetics of contemporary artists. Some of these individuals, such as Barbara Prezeau, Manuel Mendive and Santiago Rodríguez Olazabal, even travelled to the original African sources to get closer to these two worlds, apparently connected by the geographical expanse of the Atlantic, but really united by the vastest human transit in history, the inhuman passage of the slave trade and slavery.

4 Cfr. Yolanda Wood 'Césaire y Lam: inquietudes y reflexiones'. http://isweletu.blogspot.mx/2008/04/yolanda-wood-csaire-y-lam-inquietudes-y.html .

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CHAPTER 21

HISTORICAL SCIENCES AND THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY IMPERATIVE

Augustin F. C. Holl

Introduction

Since the publication of the first volume of the *General History of Africa* in the early 1980s, significant changes have occurred in archaeological research in Africa, albeit with important variations – the Nile Valley and the southern part of the continent have been investigated to a much greater extent than West and Central Africa. In each case, the observed changes are both qualitative and quantitative. Research projects, even those with low budgets, are more sophisticated. The number of excavated sites is on the rise across the continent, but it is within the framework of the initial history of the continent that the most revolutionary changes have taken place. The territorial range of the earliest hominids has expanded dramatically, and now stretches from the Chad basin to Ethiopia, and from that west-east line to the southern tip of the continent. The origin of modern humans – *Homo sapiens sapiens* – is now clearly accepted to have taken place in Africa between 150,000 and 100,000 years ago. All of the major discoveries and breakthroughs are multidisciplinary in nature. In fact, it is the main characteristic of current historical sciences.

On historical sciences

There is no human community without a narrative of its origins and a sense of its place in the universe. That cultural script is part of a society's history and fundamental to the psychological well-being of its members. There is, however, a significant difference between that kind of historical narrative and the one to be discussed in these few pages, which is history as a disciplinary field of the humanities and social sciences. The historical sciences encompass all these domains of scientific investigation that deal with change and transformation through time. They include such fields as cosmology – research on the origins and development of the universe; geology and other earth sciences; paleontology – the evolutionary biology of plants and animals; archaeology – the long-term study of human cultural evolution; and finally, history, the recent end of the continuum. There is a constitutive tension in the production of historical knowledge (Kuhn, 1962, 1990), a tension between the specific and the generic, the local and the global, tradition and innovation. In fact, it is this fundamental tension that makes science exciting. The 'Big Bang' and the relativity theories helped shape cosmology along dynamic and solid lines of investigation. The same holds for the *Principles of Geology* of Charles Lyell for the earth sciences, and Charles Darwin's *Origins of Species by Means of Natural Selection* for biology. The nature and pace of change are one of the key question in all these fields of investigation. Is it gradual, with minor cumulative changes, as suggested by Lyell and Darwin? Or do some of the changes come at a rapid and unpredictable pace followed by stasis, after Gould and Elredge (1977)?

The multidisciplinary imperative

This chapter focuses on the patterns of change in the production of scientific knowledge on the initial history – also known as prehistory – of Africans during the last four decades. The *General History of Africa* was shaped in the 1960s with archaeological knowledge produced during the Colonial Period. In Africa, archaeological research in both theory and practice is as diverse as the multitude of contributing academic traditions. The importance of theory is generally emphasized by anthropologically trained archaeologists, with those anchored in humanities tending to favour a culture-history perspective. In practice, however, both perspectives are essential for an interesting and accurate rendering of Africa's past. The initial history of Africans is buried in the ground.

The testimonies of remote life have to be retrieved through archaeological excavations, analysed, dated and interpreted in anthropological and historical terms. The endeavour is axiomatically multidisciplinary. The social sciences help to understand the multiple dimensions of individuals' lives in society; biological sciences shed light on physical transformations, reproduction and demography; earth sciences allow for an interpretation of the taphonomic processes and the history of investigated archaeological localities; and finally, physics of weak radioactivity makes possible the absolute dating of archaeological contexts and evidence. The multidisciplinary imperative simply requires the researcher to be informed of the potentials and limits of the methods and theory of the disciplinary field he/she relies on.

Writing the initial history of Africans

The initial history of this massive continent started with the emergence of early hominids, the 7 million-year-old *Sahelanthropus tchadensis* [Toumai] from the Djourab in Chad and the 6 million-year-old *Orrorin tugenensis* from Kenya. Despite that significantly long beginning, the cultural part of this initial history started around 3.3 million years ago in the West Turkana basin, with the invention of the earliest stone tools (Harmand et al., 2015). The writing of the long-term initial history of Africans has to take all facets of life into consideration. Rivers, lakes, phytogeographic zones contracted and expanded according to shifts in the Earth's climates. Individuals, families and whole ethnic groups move from place to place. New ethnic entities emerged while others vanished. In the process, contingent convergence of independent factors constrained the evolutionary trajectories of Africans and African societies, in the past as well as in the present. When reflecting on present-day Africans lives, two crucial concepts need to be pondered over: (1) the sensitivity to initial conditions, and (2) path-dependency (Adams, 1996).

The initial conditions referred to above are necessarily relative. Social life is always the product of a collective history. This collective history shapes the expectations and constrains the evolutionary trajectory of the society under consideration. Change can be incremental and gradual, sudden and revolutionary; but the success or failure of the outcome depends on the compatibility between the new and the old. The collapse of the Soviet Empire (ca. 1917–1989) is a graphic illustration of the 'sensitivity to initial conditions'. A radical social and economic change can be engineered to achieve a harmonious world of equal

citizens. But its implementation, in the case alluded to above, depended on tyrannical state control and oversight, leading to the precise opposite of the intended goal. The system lasted for less than a century, much less than the frequent lifespan of average-sized empires of the past. In the case of Africa, the demarcation line for the delimitation of successive states of 'initial conditions' can be set upon the documented political interference and the effective presence of non-African forces, a perspective outlined below.

'Path-dependency' is a more dynamic perspective on the impact of the 'sensitivity to initial conditions'. The evolutionary trajectory of any social system is strongly constrained by its history. Mindsets and worldviews are products of history. They develop, expand and change, and in the process frame and guide the actions of individuals. There is a certain range of flexibility that allows for the emergence of cultural heroes and charismatic leaders. Such individuals may have a significant cultural impact that can trigger tremendous change. In general, the success of these cultural heroes is predicated on their profound and even 'instinctual' understanding of their respective communities' history and expectations that allows them to 'leap forward'.

Case Study - Bantu expansion: a new synthesis

The 'Bantu Question', as framed initially, emerged as a research issue in the classification of African languages (Blench, 2006; Vansina, 1990). W. Bleek (1827-1875), H. H. Johnston (1857-1927) and C. F. M. Meinhof (1857-1944) identified a Bantu language family that spread from Central to Southern Africa, which suggested the expansion of an ancient population from West to East and Southern Africa, resulting in the emergence and diversification of present-day Bantu languages. The processes that triggered and sustained such an expansion were, however, completely unknown. Systematic comparative Bantu linguistic work was launched after the Second World War by two scholars: J. H. Greenberg (1955) and M. Guthrie (1967-1971). The expansion model of the former became the standard theory for the explanation of the present-day distribution of speakers of Bantu language. According to that model, the Bantu nuclear zone is located along the Benue River valley in the Nigeria–Cameroon border area. An initial eastward movement along the northern fringe of the equatorial rainforest resulted in the formation of Eastern Bantu languages. A second movement followed the coastal and western flank of the same rainforest leading to the formation of Western Bantu languages. Both branches converged

later in the southern savannah, and from there expanded southwards to reach South Africa in the first few centuries of the Common Era.

Archaeologists and historians joined their efforts to address the issues raised by the 'Bantu question' (Oliver, 1966; Phillipson, 1994). R. Oliver (1966) relied heavily on M. Guthrie's reconstruction of the Bantu homeland and suggested expansion paths starting from eastern Congo westwards. D. Phillipson (1994) relied on the Greenberg model, and identified an East African Chifumbaze Complex, an archaeological signature of the early eastern Bantu communities. Critics considered these developments as fundamentally circular. Archaeologists and historians relied on linguistic reconstructions to support their suggestions on the one hand, and linguists used archaeologists' and historians' conclusions to back up their findings.

Two series of recent newcomers to the topic, palaeo-environmental and populations' genetics research, have completely changed the situation (Holl, 2015; Lezine, 2013; Montano et al., 2011; Plaza et al., 2004). According to converging palaeo-environmental results, the equatorial rainforest reached its maximum extension some 6,000 years ago with a first important change due to a significant drop in rainfall occurring 4,000 years ago. The impact of this climate shift was confined to the northern margins of the rainforest (Lezine et al., 2013). A second shift in climate, triggered by the onset of strong seasonality without decreasing rainfall, occurred 2,500 years ago. The equatorial rainforest shrank and was reduced to scattered relict refuges; grasslands spread with the expansion of pioneer species like the palm tree (*Elaeis guineensis*). It is during this episode that bulrush millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*) expanded further south and east, as indicated by archaeological evidence from southern Cameroon and Congo. There was no need to circumvent the rainforest as initially thought, because it had disappeared.

The analyses of different arrays of genetic markers allow additional insights into the Bantu question. The key question raised at this juncture is simple: are the widespread groups of speakers of Bantu languages genetically related? To address this question, different ethnic groups, spread from the Nigeria-Cameroon border to Eastern and Southern Africa, were sampled. The variations in Y-chromosome (descent along the male line) (Montano et al., 2011) and mitochondrial [mt] DNA (descent along the female line) (Plaza et al., 2004) do not support the suggestion of two branches that came to converge south of the rainforest. All of the sampled ethnic groups are genetically related. Many of the expanding Bantu speakers had significant gene flows with foraging groups – pygmies in the north, and !kung and San in the south. Bantu expansion was a clear case of demic diffusion.

In summary, initially, starting 4,000 years ago, groups of mixed farmers growing millet and mastering iron technology expanded along a moving frontier in a familiar savannah landscape. The shrinkage and virtual disappearance of the rainforest allowed these family-hamlet based groups practising swidden cultivation – slash and burn – and originating from West African savannah, to expand south and southeast within less than 2,000 years. Some of these groups adopted livestock husbandry. Others invented elaborate socio-political systems on the coast of the Indian Ocean – Swahili city-states – and in the interior, in Mapungubwe, Zimbabwe.

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SECTION II

REVIEW OF THE GENERAL HISTORY OF AFRICA: VOLUMES I-VIII

INTRODUCTION

Doulaye Konaté

Introduction

The *General History of Africa* (GHA), published under the auspices of UNESCO, establishes the groundwork for a contemporary historiography of the continent, away from the Hegelian approach to the history of humanity that excluded African societies. Forty years of sustained research attest to the richness and strength of the field, and point to the need to update a significant part of the content, and even revise some volumes. The key challenges faced by the modern world, particularly those associated with global Africanity and hence the question of Pan-Africanism, justify the writing of new volumes.

In view of the 'antecedents'[1] of African historiography, it is hard to undertake the writing of new volumes of the *General History of Africa* without taking stock of the eight existing volumes. This is indeed an emblematic body of work produced under the auspices of UNESCO by leading experts on the history of the continent at the time.

The guidance memo for Volume IX, adopted by the Scientific Committee for the work at hand and produced after a number of preparatory meetings, specifies that the 'key aim' is to 'update the content of previous volumes of the GHA in the

1 Thiermo Moctar, Dakar, 2015, pp. 7-20.

light of recent developments in various fields of scientific research and political, cultural, socio-economic changes that occurred in the continent since the last volume of the GHA was published'.[2] A previous review[3] of the eight initial volumes was undertaken by a group of sixteen historians (two per volume), as part of the UNESCO project on the pedagogical use of the *General History of Africa*. The new reviews of these volumes presented in this section are all the more interesting and useful because they take into account the viewpoint of Volume IX. The latter aims to 'describe a history of Africans and persons of African descent on a global scale, based on the fundamental concept of *global Africanity*, the initial dispersal of human beings from the African continent to people the globe, to the diasporas that have successively followed one another over time until the modern day'.[4] This much-debated concept should allow us to define and analyse recurrent dynamics (particularly with regards to comings and goings)[5] that link Africa to its diasporas and their diversity, to 're-evaluate the approaches to the period of enslavement and to study the relationship between pan-Africanism and the diasporas in order to understand how the diasporas experiences have nurtured pan-African thinking'.[6]

We cannot properly appreciate the content of the *General History of Africa* with regard to the concept of global Africanity and appraise it without recalling the historical context within which the work was carried out, and the objectives and methodology used, as well as its main characteristics and contributions.

Background context of the *General History of Africa* and the different steps involved in its production

In order to understand the importance of the project of a general history of Africa it must be placed in the context of the post-war period and the entry of African states onto the international scene. Africa, taking the initiative once again, needs to establish and consolidate a historical awareness, without which successfully completing an innovative political project will be difficult. It is a question of making history one of the levers of development for the

2 Volume IX of the *General History of Africa,* authors' guidance memo, p. 4.

3 D. Konaté (coord). Review of the content of the *General History of Africa*, UNESCO project 'Educational utilisation of the *General History of Africa*'.

4 Volume IX of the *General History of Africa*, authors' guidance memo, p. 4.

5 Giulia Bonacci, Paris, 2007.

6 Volume IX of the *General History of Africa,* authors' guidance memo, p. 5.

new Africa. Hence, Joseph Ki Zerbo, writing in an editorial of the journal *Afrika Zamani* back in 1975, stated that 'history as a lived collective experience is evolution. Moreover, correctly restored history is a source and resource of development in the same way that mines and plantations are'.[7] In an Africa emancipated from its colonial yoke, there was a pressing need for the new nations (after the partitioning of Africa at the Berlin Conference in 1884-85) to forge an identity. For peoples whose history had been denied for centuries, the rediscovery of their past became a guarantee of the affirmation of their different national identities. 'Living together' and the mobilization of populations within these new nation-states (with artificial boundaries) assumed at the very least the existence, even the consolidation of a feeling of belonging to a collective history that was at least shared by them, and which would bear a common destiny.

The decade following independence was particularly propitious for initiatives aimed at developing historical research that was used for textbook material. This period therefore saw the triumph of 'nationalist history' that celebrated and rehabilitated great historical African figures, mainly via narratives relating to 'national history'. At the same time, some historical research of the time, aiming to shed light on sub-regional, regional and even continental dynamics both past and present, was undertaken with a view to outline the cultural background that nurtures pan-African ambitions, and integration experiences and related projects in progress. J. Ki Zerbo asserts that 'history is the basic lever for our national awareness when it comes to the realisation of African Unity'.[8] The *General History of Africa* initiative is part of this stimulating political, intellectual and cultural environment. Many African writers and citizens of other regions who contributed to this intellectual adventure (which began in the Seventies) were also involved in different ways in the struggle for the continent's emancipation. Most of them are professional historians engaged in the political struggle for independence. It can be said that the *General History of Africa* has focused the efforts of an intellectual generation that felt the need to put the historicity of African societies, long denied by colonial literature and imperial ideology, back on a firm footing.

The writing of the *General History of Africa* involved several stages that began with an extensive programme of documentary research, the collection of oral traditions and an archival inventory from 1965 to 1969. From 1969 to 1971 experts took part in a number of work meetings in Paris and Addis-Ababa to

7 J. Ki-Zerbo, Yaoundé, 1975, p. 6.

8 J Ki-Zerbo, *idem*, p. 1.

work out the project agenda. English, French and Arabic were selected as the languages for the first publication, with the expectation of translation into some African languages (Hawsa, Yoruba, Fulani and Lingala), and European ones (German, Spanish, Swedish, Portuguese and Russian).

Step three, writing, was handled by a scientific committee of thirty-two members, two-thirds African researchers and one-third nationals from other continents. The adopted approach was resolutely interdisciplinary and respectful of differences among experts.

Project objectives and challenges

Amadou Makthar Mbow, the Director-General of UNESCO at the time and one of the main powerhouses behind the project, outlined the objectives in a preface that is one of the key texts in the book. This preface centres on a number of points made by Mr M'Bow that reflected Africa as featured in the 'colonial library'.[9]

The denial of history

M'Bow emphasizes the legacy of Hegelian thought about universal history in colonial historiography. This linear approach to humanity history excluded African societies. The lack of written documents was the alibi evoked to justify such an exclusion.[10] To this end, M'Bow denounces the use of 'double standards' when it comes to an appreciation of oral traditions as historical sources, depending on whether we are dealing with Africa or Europe. What was accepted for ancient Greece, namely the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* (oral narratives *par excellence*) as being valid historical sources was rejected for Africa, whose oral traditions were downgraded as 'repetitive memory' and subsequently unreliable sources of history. In fact, in colonial historiography, the history of Africa only began when the continent came into contact with Europe and appeared in colonial historiography as an appendage to European history. Thus, the reluctance to recognize the capacity of African peoples to create 'original cultures' posed a challenge that required the calling into question of prejudices and an overhaul of methods.

9 A now-famous expression used by philosopher and historian Valentin Mudimbé to describe the corpus of Western knowledge about Africa over time, including colonial ethnology. Cf V.Y Mudimbé, 1988.

10 Henri Moniot, 1975, pp. 106-123.

The image of a fragmented continent

The overriding perception we had of Africa was of a continent composed of juxtaposed subsets. North Africa (called white) and sub-Saharan Africa (called black) would have been separated by the impassable obstacle of the Sahara Desert. Ancient Egypt and Nubia[11] would also have evolved independently from the rest of the continent. Africa was therefore not a historical entity.

The wretched of the Earth

Mr M'Bow observed that racial stereotypes, associated with enslavement and colonization, have shaped the very foundations of colonial historiography on Africa. The use of discriminatory categories establishing the superiority of white people 'and the essentialization of the Negro' has prejudiced the foundations of this historiography. Africa, according to Mr M'Bow, has therefore struggled economically and psychologically. In fact, the explicit hierarchy of races echoed in colonial historiography served to justify *a posteriori* the colonization of the continent and, subsequently, Europe's famous civilizing missions.

One of the issues faced when writing the *General History of Africa* was how to produce a fact-based scientific history of Africa, and to steer as far away as possible from any spirit of revenge. Such a task requires a paradigmatic shift and innovative methodology. Professor B. A. Ogot, the director of Volume V, said that the project aimed to produce high-level knowledge on the history of Africa as an entity, with an emphasis on the relationships between different African regions.

Methods

Different degrees of geographical coverage

The approach[12] taken by the writers of the *General History of Africa* is regional in nature, with the exception of Madagascar. It rarely deals with 'national histories' considered in the context of colonial boundaries. Several scales are used, depending on themes. The geographical division adopted generally covered current sub-regions, with overflows often associated with the nature of

11 Nubia is part of present-day Sudan.

12 This approach and methodology were well summarized by Elikia MBokolo in an unpublished memo produced for a presentation on general history, as an introduction to the launch meeting of a project on the educational use of the *General History of Africa*, Paris, November 2008.

themes and how some were debated at the time. The continental scale helped to shed light on the relationship between Africa's different regions. This history written from within, emphasizing ideas, civilizations, institutions and societies, contributes to global cultural heritage. The global scale is also adopted for topics linked to the origins of humans, the enslaved trade and diasporas.

Methodological innovations

The question of sources is crucial for the writing of history. Oral traditions are recognized as being authentic African sources for the study of the history of the continent. Authors tackled the methodological challenges of using oral sources by developing coherent critical methods. But Africa is not just a reservoir of oral tradition;[13] it also has an important corpus of texts: the writings of Arab authors (the Kilwa Chronicle; the Timbuktu Chronicles from the sixteenth century), African writings such as those of the Bamoun kingdom in Cameroon invented by Sultan N'Joya in the nineteenth century, Ge'ez, now the liturgical language of the Orthodox Ethiopian Church, and European texts.

Interdisciplinarity is favoured as a method of approaching history. It involves the participation of other disciplines such as archaeology, linguistics and semiology as well as natural and life sciences.

Summary of content of eight volumes and proofreading

The eight volumes of the GHA were published over a period of twelve years between 1981 and 1993. The collection was, in general, organized in chronological order. However, the internal organization of the volumes involves chronological, regional and thematic approaches.

Volume I: Methodology and African Prehistory

Published in 1981 under the editorship of Professor J Ki Zerbo, Volume I devoted twenty-eight chapters (divided into three sections) to methodology and the prehistory of Africa.

13 MBokolo, 2006, pp. 88-93.

Section 1 (chapters 1 to 6) deals with the trends and evolution of historiography, outlining the terms of the debate on historiography and sources. The issue of the place in history of African societies is discussed, as well as the renewed use of sources and techniques used to write the history of 'peoples considered to have no texts'. In addition to using written sources (which are in fact more numerous and widespread in Africa than initially thought), the authors highlighted oral sources in section 2 (chapters 7 and 8). The role of interdisciplinarity in African historical research is also highlighted.

In Chapter 15, the director of the volume, J. Ki-Zerbo, examines the challenges posed by the interdisciplinarity of historical research in general and the writing of the general history of Africa in particular.

Section 3 (chapters 9 to 16) covers a wide range of topics, from archaeological methods and dating techniques to paleoclimatology and the ethnogenesis of migration. When it comes to the contributions of other disciplines that play an important role in the reconstruction of Africa's past, this includes archaeology and its techniques, strangely diminished to archaeological dating methods (Chapter 9). As Augustin Holl rightly notes, Chapter 9, which looks at the contribution of archaeology in the reconstitution of the past, requires a complete overhaul in terms of content. In fact, archaeology as a science and discipline cannot be reduced to archaeometry alone.

Linguistic contributions are presented in three chapters. One focuses on historical linguistics, the second on linguistic differentiation in relation to migration and 'ethnicity', and the third on classification and mapping of African languages. Chapters 13 to 16 deal mainly with the geographical context of the study of Africa's past.

The following thirteen chapters in the section present the context and results of archaeological research undertaken in Africa at that time. Chapters 17 and 18 focus on early hominids and research related to the origins of humans. Whereas Yves Coppens debates the general paleontological context of human evolution, L. Balout focuses on lithic technology (stone tools). A comparison of the main findings in southern East Africa – especially in the sites at Olduvai, Omo Valley and Afar Valley – indicate that Africa is the cradle of humanity. Leakey examines the context, chronology and main characteristics of fossil remains that have helped to trace the history of the ancestors of modern man, and all attest to the fact that Africa is indeed the cradle of humanity. This important sequence in the *General History of Africa* is certainly the one that needs significant updating. According to Augustin Holl, the 'revised edition should reveal the sites along with maps of regions where new fossils have recently been discovered'.

The new data provided by Southern and Eastern Africa findings in Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Chad 'helps to increase our understanding of Africa as the cradle of humanity'.

Chapters 19 to 26 present regional overviews of the continent in Prehistory. This regional data successively covers eastern, southern and central Africa followed by North Africa, the Sahara, West Africa and the Nile Valley. With regard to these regional studies, Augustin Holl says that 'it is important to link the Sahara to North Africa and the Nile Valley; the Sahara, Sahel and southern savannah regions must be studied in relation to the fact that research (on domestication and agriculture) demonstrates that these regions were in regular contact with each other'.

The last three chapters in the volume are thematic in nature, and examine consecutively prehistoric art, the emergence of food production and the chronology of metallurgy traditions (gold, silver, bronze, meteoritic iron and iron production). Augustin Holl points out that 'most of the hypotheses put forward in this chapter on iron metallurgy are largely obsolete'. Even though the contents of this volume are interesting despite their age, Holl's review concludes with the need to consider restructuring the organization of the chapters and updating much of the content. The review reopens the old debate about the use of the term 'prehistory' which remains chiefly 'Eurocentric'. The wording 'early Africa' seems more appropriate to describe this long period of time that was so important for the history of Africa and humanity as a whole.

Volume II: Ancient African Civilizations

Published in 1981 with G. Mokhtar as editor, this volume consists of twenty-nine chapters distributed in four sections. It examines the evolution of the first African States until the middle of the first millennium (around 500 CE). Just over half the volume focuses on the richest regions with written sources and magnificent monuments, such as Egypt and Nubia. The first section (seven chapters) focuses mainly on Egypt. Contributions successively deal with questions relating to the origin of the ancient Egyptians, the political framework and the evolution of Pharaonic Egypt, Egyptian culture, economy and society during the Pharaonic period, Egyptian relations with other parts of Africa and its legacy for global cultural heritage.

The second section (nine chapters) focuses on Nubia. Authors successively examine Nubia's role as intermediary between Mediterranean Africa and

equatorial Africa from the fourth to the first millennium BCE, the emergence of the kingdoms of Kush, Napata and Meroe, and the spread of Christianity followed by the emergence and development of the kingdom of Aksum.

The third section (four chapters) focuses on North Africa and the Sahara. Authors examine the so-called proto-Berber populations of Carthaginian North Africa and Roman and post-Roman North Africa and the Sahara during classical Antiquity.

The final section of the volume (nine chapters) presents regional overviews of sub-Saharan Africa prehistory. It includes a general review of the archaeology of sub-Saharan Africa to the seventh century CE as well as regional overviews of Western, Central and Southern Africa and Madagascar. One of the main strengths of the work is an emphasis on the African roots of the Egyptian civilization. Returning Egypt to its 'African bosom' has not been without some difficulty when it comes to presenting Egyptian history within the context of a general history of the continent. On this topic A. Anselin writes that 'We must investigate the conceptual difficulty that arises from the gap in *writing* all the history of societies that had connections with others, some of which had history and written records, and those contemporaneous but without writing deemed prehistoric?'[14] The author emphasizes the over-representation of the history of cultures and societies with written records (seven chapters on Egypt, four chapters on the civilizations of North-East Africa, Kush and Napata, four others at Aksum), which is the sequential cut-off point usually used to separate prehistoric societies from those dubbed historic because of the absence and presence of written records. The author also points out that when one relies on this criterion as a cut-off point, 'this results in the *writing* of History itself, in an under-representation of societies whose historiography is comprised of *historalities*' (for more about this concept refer to Anselin, epistemological volume, and the consistent, coherent and pertinent examples of the Dyeli bards of Manden). Anselin justly believes that

> thirty-five years after the first eight volumes of the *General History of Africa* we can no longer construct the narrative of Africa's ancient history solely on the basis of available epigraphic data, the only ones deemed legible, that in past times authorised (sic) the person who wrote them to remove from History those who left no written records of their own …

The findings of archaeological research over the past thirty years in sub-Saharan Africa have indeed been the source of valuable insights into the history of some African societies that have had either little or no written records over

14 Alain Anselin, *Review of Volume II GHA*, p 3.

extended periods of time along with an absence of lavish monuments.[15] Therefore, the research undertaken by a variety of multidisciplinary teams has gradually bridged the 'historiographic gap' regarding the history of climates (Nicole Petit Maire on the Algerian-Malian Sahara, Rachid on the Tassili, etc.). It is for this reason that the congruent share relating to the history of the Sahara is, in A. Anselin's opinion, the 'real blind spot' in this volume, and deserves to be reviewed and expanded, using current maps of archaeological sites, and new developments in the knowledge of inter-regional trade routes generated by archaeological satellite surveys.[16]

Volume III: Africa from the VIIth century to the XIth century

This volume, edited by M. Elfassi assisted by I. Hrbek, was published in 1988 and consists of twenty-eight chapters dealing mainly with the expansion of Islam in Africa and its consequences. This expansion triggered resistance and compromise, depending on the context. The resulting changes on the social, political and economic levels derived from syncretism. The first enslavement transactions are also analysed. The first six chapters of the volume focus on general aspects, dealing successively with Africa's place in world history, the birth of Islam, its different development phases, its spread to Africa and its insertion in the African social and cultural universe. Movements of populations across the Sudan, as well as the expansion of Bantu-speaking peoples, are also discussed in this section.

North Africa and the Sahara are dealt with in the next seven chapters. The narrative thread starts with the presentation of the first centuries of Islam in Egypt, followed by Christian Nubia, and at its peak, the Muslim conquest of the Maghreb and Berber resistance. There is also the issue of independent Muslim Maghreb, the role of the Sahara as a bridge between the North and the South, the emergence of the Fatimids in Egypt and the Almoravids in the Maghreb.

The following five chapters are all devoted to West Africa. They deal successively with trading initiatives and trade routes, with the Chad Basin as a

15 This is the case for archaeological digs undertaken in the interior delta of the Niger in Mali; the site at Djenne-Djeno in the inner delta the emblematic example. Cf S. K McIntosh, *Excavations at Djenne-Djeno, Hambarketolo and Kaniana (Inland Niger Delta Mali) the 1981 season,* Volume 20, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1995.

16 Cf A Anselin, *Review of Vol II,* p. 4.

crossroads, as well as peoples living in the Guinean region of Casamance, all the way to Mount Cameroon.

The next group of chapters features Eastern and Southern Africa, the Horn and contact between Ethiopia and the Muslim world on the east coast in particular. The hinterland of East Africa, Central Africa, Madagascar and the Comoros is also examined. The last three chapters deal successively with African diasporas in Asia and intra-Africa regional relations, the final chapter summarizing five centuries in Africa (seventh to eleventh centuries). It asserts that North Africa, West Africa, the Sahara and East Africa were integrated at an early stage into the Arab-Muslim sphere, whereas Central and Southern Africa remained on the fringes of 'Dar al islam' (the land of Islam).

Volume IV: Africa from the XIIth century to the XVIth century

Volume IV, edited by D. T. Niane and published in 1984, covers the period from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries. This period witnessed the emergence, growth and collapse of different political formations in different socio-economic contexts. Contributions highlight the role of religions as structuring frameworks for these political systems (in a context where ancestral religions prevail) and as a lever for strengthening or weakening state institutions (for example Islam in West Africa). The work also discusses intra and intercontinental trade relations that played a crucial role in political, social and cultural developments. The volume comprises twenty-seven chapters. The first group of chapters focuses on the Maghreb, which was experiencing a phase of unification under the Almohads. Four chapters (2 to 5) describe the political evolution of the Maghreb under the Almohads and analyse the conditions that triggered social stratification and the disintegration of the Maghreb into several entities (Marinid, Wahassid and Hafsid). Islam, during its consolidation phase, had an impact on Western Europe. In Chapter 3, Talbi describes the role played by Maghrebian scholars, medical historians, legal and geography experts in the expansion of knowledge and spread of literacy and scientific knowledge in Europe.

The next nine chapters focus on West Africa. The formation and expansion of Sudanese Empires (Wagadu – Ghana for Arabic writers – Mali, Songhaï) experienced major developments which are examined in three chapters (6, 7 and 8) written by D.T Niane, Madina LyTall and S.M. Cissoko. The findings of archaeological research undertaken in recent decades, particularly in the

Inner Niger Delta, have greatly enhanced our knowledge of the history of these States. Some of these findings have called into question the 'diffusionist' paradigm used to explain the emergence of the Sudano-Sahalian civilization as being purely due to the stimulation of trans-Saharan trade and Islam. Although trans-Saharan trade has had a significant impact on the development of this region by strengthening inter-regional trade, the latter had already experienced some growth based on the development of the local economy[17] as evidenced by new archaeological discoveries. A. Adandé also rightly notes that the 'permanence of the search for stability and security amongst the peoples of this region is a key factor contributing to the growth of exchanges. Amongst the cultural resources that have served to maintain this relative stability (some of which are still efficient),' A. Adandé mentions the 'Kurukanfuga charter'[18] or Manden Charter, a kind of constitution (enacted after the victory of Soundiata Keita over Soumaworo Kanté at the battle of Kirina) and a symbolic alliance between the clans called 'Sanankouya'.[19] This charter laid down the rules for 'living together' for the different nations and communities in the Mali Empire, whilst establishing a genuine social contract that governed relations between both leaders and peoples. The following contributions examine the evolution of Mali up to its decline, the formation of Songhai, its consolidation and collapse. The history of peoples from the Niger and Volta Basin, Chad Basin and the Haussa kingdoms are featured in the remaining chapters. It concludes with the presentation, in three chapters, of the situation further south along the Atlantic coastline, in coastal populations from Casamance to the lagoons of the Côte d'Ivoire and the Volta in Cameroon.

Chapters 15 to 17 focused on North-East Africa examine Egypt's position (under the Mameluks) in the Muslim world from the thirteenth century to the beginning of the sixteenth century, from Christian Nubia until the Funj conquest and its arabization (from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries) of Ethiopia and neighbouring states.

The next seven chapters (18 to 24) present the development of Swahili city-states along the coast fringing the Indian Ocean, the situation in the hinterland in the Great Lakes region, the basins of Limpopo and Zambeze, Equatorial

17 R. J. McIntosh, 1993, pp. 181-220.

18 UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage.

19 'Joking alliance' (*alliance à plaisanterie*), more commonly known as 'joking kinship' (*cousinage à plaisanterie*); Cf. Konaté, D. 1995. *Les fondements endogènes d'une culture de la paix au Mali : mécanismes traditionnels de prévention et de résolution des conflits.* Paris, UNESCO publications, October.

Africa, Southern Africa and Madagascar. When it comes to South Africa, and based on archaeological data, B.M. Fagan reopens the Great Zimbabwe file in Chapter 21: 'this site is revered for both its excellent architecture and the extravagant theories that surrounded its origins' (Volume IV, p. 352). He outlines the evolution that led to the emergence of this civilization across different archaeological cultures, along with insights provided by traditions and rare texts. The origin of Zimbabwe is therefore attributed to local African populations (the ancestors of the Shona and Venda people of present-day Southern Africa). Chapter 24 focuses on Madagascar and neighbouring islands from the twelfth century to the sixteenth century.

The final two chapters deal with more general themes: one looks at inter-regional relations and trade, and the other at Africa's place in international and intercontinental relations.

This volume reveals that the four centuries under consideration witnessed the growth of a variety of social and economic policies and political formations in Africa. As a result, different regions became interconnected via long-distance trading networks, some of which extended beyond Africa and opened the continent up to the rest of the world.

Volume V: Africa from the XVIth century to the XVIIIth century

Published in 1992 under the editorship of B.A. Ogot, this volume consists of twenty-nine chapters. It examines the various aspects of Ottoman expansion in North Africa, as well as the growth of the Atlantic slave trade and its consequences on the evolution of African societies. The volume is sub-divided into two major sections, one focusing on general themes, and the other on regional and local overviews.

The first two contributions successively examine the rivalries in international trade and their implications for the continent. The next three contributions focus on the evolution of social, economic and political structures during this period, population movements and the emergence of new socio-political organizations. Contributions open up the debate about Africa's place in the world with regard to the deportation of Africans, and the emergence of the Atlantic economic order. This debate is followed by a documented table of African diasporas in the old and new worlds. In Chapter 5, J. E. Harris recalls the key stages of this story (describing the prominent diaspora personalities)

and sheds light on the dynamics of African cultures in different regions of the American continent.

The remaining twenty-four chapters adopt a regional approach. The Ottoman conquest and domination of North Africa and the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia), Egypt, Sudan and Libya are analysed. West Africa is examined and current developments among the peoples of Senegambia (Wolof, Serer, Tukulor, etc.) are explored. The collapse of the Songhay Empire (1591) is one of the most significant developments in West Africa. Contributions also cover the states in the Niger basin, the peoples of Upper and Lower Guinea (chapters 13 to 15) to Cameroon and, further inland, the kingdoms of Kanem Bornu, Baguirmi, the Kotoko principalities and the Haussa states (chapters 17 to 29). Three contributions present the developments in central Africa covering an extensive zone from the Grassfields region of Cameroon to the South of Sudan, the kingdom of Kongo and neighbouring states. They also deal with the emergence and expansion of the Luba and Lunda kingdoms. Three chapters are devoted to South Africa. The latter focus on the northern part of the Zambezi Basin, Lake Malawi, then the southern region of Zambezi and Southern Africa. Six chapters are devoted to the situation in the Horn of Africa, the eastern coast of Africa, the Great Lakes region, and the peoples of Kenya, Tanzania, Madagascar and neighbouring islands. The conclusion is that most African states are weakened or crumbling, whereas long-distance trading networks have become denser across the continent. The slave trade and trade in gold and ivory appear to be the 'barometer of the construction and deconstruction of states and trading cities'. New states are emerging and establishing themselves on the continent and along the coastlines, trying to replace declining neighbouring states.

Volume VI: Africa from the XIXth century to 1880

Published in 1989 and edited by J. F. Ade Ajayi, Volume VI includes twenty-nine chapters, the first four of which focus on the key trends of the nineteenth century. A general overview of the state of the continent during the nineteenth century (Chapter 1) is followed by Africa's place in the 'global economy'. The abolition of the slave trade and the establishment of so-called legitimate trading initiatives appeared to be key levers for change for the political and economic status of the continent as a whole. A large number of local economies connected to the global market continued to make extensive use of slaves (despite the abolition) for the production and transportation of agricultural products and the harvested produce that fuelled

legitimate trade. The establishment of European communities in Africa, in Algeria and Cape Province in South Africa is another significant development during that period. The fourth chapter discusses the struggle for the abolition of the slave trade.

The next four contributions concern Southern Africa. Those focused on the Mfecane period shed light on the rise of the Zulu state under Chaka's leadership. The situation in Southern Africa became more complex with the arrival of foreign forces. The Boers clashed with the British and the expanding African peoples in the region. The last of these chapters examines the situation in countries in the Zambezi Basin.

The volume then turns its attention to East and Central Africa, and the hinterland. Particular attention is paid to trading networks that drove the exports linking the eastern coast of Africa to its hinterland all the way to the Congo Basin. This analysis concludes with a presentation of the populations and states in the Great Lakes region followed by the Congo Basin and Angola.

The next three chapters focus on the North-East and the Horn of Africa, the Indian Ocean zone and the Maghreb. The Egyptian renaissance, the situation in Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Madagascar are examined in turn. The following six chapters are devoted to West Africa, marked in the nineteenth century by major Islamic revolutions in the Sudano-Sahelian margins. The topic is featured in a specific chapter, followed by contributions successively devoted to the sultanates of Sokoto and Bornu, the Tukulor Empire of El Hadj Omar Tall and the Fulani kingdom of Macina (Dina). The populations and states of Upper Guinea and Senegambia, the Niger Bend and Volta Basin are then discussed. The developments that mark the Dahomey, Yoruba country and the Borgu are presented in one chapter as well as those in progress in the Cameroon and Niger Delta regions. The last two chapters in the volume deal with African diasporas and Africa's situation on the eve of colonial conquests.

Volume VII: Africa under colonial domination 1880-1935

Published in 1985 with Adu Boahen as editor, this volume is composed of thirty chapters. It examines European imperialism, with an emphasis on reactions in African societies. It is not, therefore, as F. Rajaonah and O. Ayodeji wrote, 'about a History of Europeans in Africa, but of a History of Africans in Africa and outside Africa that is inscribed within an international context, marked during this period by European expansion, the first World War and

the strengthening of connections between Africa and North America that contributed to the emergence of pan-Africanism'.[20]

Chapters 2 to 11 cover the period from 1880 to 1914 and deal with 'resistance initiatives by African societies' both in the face of wars of conquest as well as the establishment of the colonial system. Reactions to conquest were not limited to armed resistance. They varied, depending on the context, between armed resistance, alliance strategies, accommodation and non-collaboration. A resistant-versus-collaborating dichotomy is simplistic. On the eve of the First World War, European domination was exercised over almost the entire continent with the exception of Liberia and Ethiopia which were, however, subjected to the economic influence of the great powers.

Chapters 12 to 21 address the consequences of the World War (on a human, social, economic and political scale) before analysing different colonial policies, economic foundations and methods of implementation. It appears that the common theme behind all these policies is the notion of Western superiority that underpins these 'civilising missions'. Aspects of cultural life are discussed over the course of two chapters. Under colonial rule, religion and art appeared to be spaces of relative freedom, providing opportunities to express a negative response to domination.

Chapters 22 and 23 deal with nationalist and anti-colonialist responses in Africa between the wars. Nationalism, embodied by both the new and the old elites, was expressed in the press, by political parties, youth organizations and via religion (independent churches and millenarian movements). Economic issues fuelled social tension, especially in regions where colonies were numerous. A summary of the general features of the formation and rise of these nationalistic movements is presented in six chapters followed by a discussion of regional and local issues that covers North-East Africa, the Maghreb, the Sahara, West, East, Central and Southern Africa, with a focus on the conditions under which Ethiopia and Liberia lost their independence. Contributions also deal with the role played by the international context and by intellectuals studying abroad in favour of nationalist movements. The conclusion of the volume raises the question of the impact of colonialism on Africa and its significance in the history of the continent.

20 Review of the contents of the *General History of Africa* within the context of the UNESCO project for educational use. Review of Volume VII, refer to details mentioned above.

Volume VIII: Africa since 1935

This volume, published in 1995 with A. A. Mazruias as editor, assisted by Christophe Wondji, consists of thirty chapters divided into seven sections.

Section I (three chapters) deals with a decade of world conflict (1935-1945) in North Africa, the Horn of Africa, equatorial Africa under French, Portuguese and Spanish colonial rule and territories under British and Belgian rule.

Section II (six chapters) is devoted to the struggle for political sovereignty in 1945 to independence, with a general summary of the overall political context of the post-war period. The final two chapters offer a regional approach and examine the political struggle of different territories. Summaries cover North Africa and the Horn of Africa, West Africa, Equatorial Africa, East Africa, Madagascar and Southern Africa.

Section III (four chapters) deals with under-development and the struggle for economic independence. Contributions successively analyse economic changes in Africa within the context of the global economy (1935-1980), agriculture and rural development, industrial development and urban growth, and finally, comparative decolonization strategies.

Section IV (two chapters) handles the socio-political evolution of Africa since independence. An analysis is made of issues relating to national construction in Africa, nationalism, 'African' ideological constructions (African socialism, Nasserism, 'ujamaa', etc.), and the adaptations of political and ideological formulae known elsewhere.

Section V (six chapters) discusses sociocultural changes in Africa since 1935. Contributions examine in turn changes in religion, languages, arts and literature, philosophy, science and training programmes. One chapter summarizes the section.

Section VI (three chapters) focuses on pan-Africanism, its role in the liberation and integration dynamic on the continent since 1935. Relations between Africa and the diasporas are analysed with a strong focus on the foundational role played by the diasporas in the pan-Africanist movement.

The seventh section (five chapters) is devoted to independent Africa in global affairs. Contributions successively deal with Africa's relations with the two blocs (capitalist and socialist), developing countries (non-aligned movement), the Arab world, Latin American states and the United Nations. A projection for Africa in 2000 is made. The volume ends with a postface with a chronology of African news in the Nineties. It demonstrates the difficulties faced by writers of this volume that relate directly to the writing of history in present times, a history that is unfolding before their very eyes.

Contributions by the GHA and founding theories of African history

Methodological innovations previously mentioned, associated with new epistemological approaches, allowed the writers to establish a number of facts and develop the founding theses of African history (and through it African identity) across eight volumes.

Primacy of African civilizations

This theory is particularly supported in Volume II, directed by G Mokhtar, dealing with ancient Africa. It reiterates the historical depth of African societies: Africa is the cradle of humanity and the region of the world where the first technologies were developed; all lithic complexes are represented here. The civilization of the Pharaohs is integrated into this 'Negro-African bosom'. The work of Cheikh Anta Diop has opened new perspectives on this topic that are also being debated in a variety of intellectual circles. The domestication of plants took place early in Africa, within the framework of more or less permanent settlements. Complex iron-working societies were established in different regions of Africa during the first millennium BCE.

Unity of African civilizations beyond cultural diversity

This unity is appraised via key cultural factors, including languages, created by Africans, weakening the hypothesis of Hamitic languages (that came from other regions). Linguistic analysis reveals large language families.

This unit, according to the work of C. Anta Diop, is based on how long different populations stayed in the same regions – for example Black populations that immigrated from the Nile Valley to the interior of the continent, particularly West Africa. Multiple migrations that favoured the mixing of populations have endured in the African interior. Settlement history demonstrates the mobility of Africans, while the Sahara has never been a barrier to movement. Volumes II and III demonstrate the continuity of interaction between North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa at different times, and the role played by the Sahara in said relations.

Continuity of African history and the resilience of Africans in Africa and the diasporas

African history has gaps, but if these are put aside, there is a certain continuity through heritage and re-creations. Hence J. Ki Zerbo writes in his conclusion to Volume I, dedicated to methodology and prehistory, that 'in other words, in a way, the prehistory of Africa is not yet over'. 'Prehistory' is in fact a period of great creativity during which key inventions for humanity came about. Additionally, well-known civilizations in Africa that were long attributed to foreigners and which 'mysteriously disappeared', according to colonial historiography, were in fact African: cases in point being the Ife bronze statues, and the Zimbabwe (first millennium and from the Bantu peoples onward) and Swahili civilizations.

African societies have always shown great resilience in both Africa and the diasporas. So, they were able to reproduce even during the most unfavourable periods (slavery, colonization). For example, Volume V, which is chiefly focused on the slave trade and its negative effect on the evolution of the continent, also devotes key chapters to the internal dynamics of change in African societies. The regional approach to this theme investigates production methods, health systems and the impact of religion on African social and political structures.

Africa's openness to the rest of the world

Africa has never been isolated. Was it not from Africa that the first human migrations left to settle in other regions of the world? The accumulation of knowledge related to the process of hominization and the migration initiatives of *homo sapiens* from the continent demands an update of Volume I. Different aspects (geopolitical, economic, social and cultural) of Africa's relations with other parts of the world have been appraised in different volumes. We note that Africa received as much as it gave. In Volume IV, the role of Maghrebian scientists (doctors, geographers, etc.) in the transmission of scientific and literary knowledge to Europe during the Middle Ages was examined.

Over the long course of its history, Africa has been the recipient of many contributions from other regions. There are numerous examples of this. Economically, Africa has always been integrated into international trading initiatives. It has played a starring role in different 'world economies' preceding current globalization and before, becoming a focus from the sixteenth century.

Hence, trans-Saharan trade (anchored in the south to local and regional Sudanese commerce) connected the two sides of the Sahara from the eighth to

ninth centuries and had its extensions in Mediterranean Europe. It would be European demand for gold, in particular, that would impact its development over the following centuries. In I. Ba's analysis in Volume III, the place given to topics on international dynamics (expansion of Islam, Muslim Arab economy) is believed to have been favoured over internal ones, to a point beyond the assigned timeline in the volume. Africa's relations with the rest of the world across the Indian Ocean have been somewhat underestimated in some volumes. In his review of Volume VI, C. Coquery-Vidrovitch points out this deficiency and recalls the key role played by the 'global system of the Indian Ocean' from the east coast of Africa to Indonesia, China, India and Arabia in the nineteenth century and earlier periods.

On the basis of recent work, Wallenstein's thesis (in Chapter I of Volume VI) that places Africa outside the global economy before the arrival of Europeans, is rejected. The role of East Africa and Zanzibar must be taken into account in the 'global system of the Indian Ocean' before the arrival of Europeans.

With regard to economic exchanges, themes such as trade with the East and the role of certain communities in trading networks deserve more research. This is the case of Jewish communities in Africa, and other trading diasporas such as the Gujarati and Jola peoples.

Africa's relationship with the rest of the world is specifically addressed in the topics of trafficking and the constitution of various African diasporas. Key developments are devoted to African diasporas in Asia, but especially those created in the Americas and the Caribbean as a result of the deportation of Africans and the emergence of the Atlantic order. Global Africa is also an Africa that has been 'reinvented' by its deported nationals and afro-descendants in different contexts. In Volume V, a documented table of the African diaspora in the Old and New World enhances understanding of the dynamics of African communities in different parts of the American continent, notably Brazil. The 'comings and goings' abroad and within Africa have helped to construct global Africanity. Africa's 'new world' relations (last chapter in Volume VII) are also appraised under the banner of 'global Africanity'. The issue of the demographic weight of Blacks and religious syntheses in Latin America and the Caribbean are addressed, along with return movements (from Marcus Garvey's experience to the more recent integration of Afro-Brazilians in West Africa). Global Africanity is also reflected in cultural research on Africa, the New World and Europe. The first decades of the twentieth century witnessed intense cultural circulation between Africa, Europe and the United States and this deserves more in-depth research. Migrant workers have played an important role in building regional spaces and in spreading culture and political ideas. The pan-Africanism that sprang from the diasporas is indebted to all these initiatives.

Tradition of insubordination and African resistance

Africa has always demonstrated genuine resilience when having to face diverse, external acts of aggression. It has resisted conquest and occupation, such as the Roman attempt in Egypt, colonial conquests in the nineteenth century and domestic despotism. Post-war liberation struggles and more recent struggles against post-colonial dictatorships have helped to perpetuate this tradition of resistance. The resistance of 'enslaved' Africans on African soil and in the ships that transported them across the Atlantic took on different forms in the diasporas. Methods used, including religious syncretism, have been the subject of work in Africa as well as the diasporas.

The global history in the eight volumes of the *General History of Africa* unfolds via multiple themes, including the settlement of different regions of Africa, the formation and transformation of ethnocultural communities, and forms of social organization and political structures (city-states, kingdoms, empires). Cultural history topics such as scientific, technical and philosophical knowledge, and the circulation of the same; religion and spirituality, and diverse cultural movements and the arts, are included here. The inventiveness of Africans in the field of technology is illustrated by studying the history of metallurgy, agrarian techniques and food.

Various reviewers of the *General History of Africa* recognize the solidity of the work despite the test of time, although some of the chapters in these volumes could not be reproduced today without changes. C. C. Vidrovitch, who gave an uncompromising appraisal of Volume VII, notes however that 'the first chapter by volume editor Professor Ade Ajayi could be published today with barely any editing at all'.[21] The *General History of Africa* has responded, to a large extent, to the expectations of the times, and to a number of theories and assumptions that have been confirmed by the findings of more recent research. As with any research work dedicated to renewal, African historiography has undergone significant changes over the past three decades. When it comes to the history of early Africa and ancient history, archaeological findings have widened the horizons by providing valuable insights into what R. Mauny termed the 'dark ages'[22] of the history of Black Africa, as it appeared in reviews of Volumes I and II. For more recent periods there has been a renewal of research topics

21 C. C. Vidrovitch, review of Volume VI, p. 1.

22 McIntosh, R. J. 1988. 'From siècles obscurs' to revolutionary centuries on the middle Niger. *World Archaeology,* Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 141-165; and Mauny, R. 1979. *Les siècles obscurs de l'Afrique noire.* Paris, Fayard.

and approaches to the new challenges faced by our world. Certain topics, such as those relating to gender and the environment, are being explored. When it comes to global Africanity, something the *General History of Africa* is a part of, both Africans and afro-descendants have expressed a need for deeper knowledge of this topic. These days, more than ever, the question is raised about dialogue between nationals from different African diasporas, and between the latter and Africans from the continent. In addition, the absence of an appraisal of the role of women in business is noted by all reviews. The gender approach that was not on the agenda back then should be taken into account when updating specific content in these volumes.

The periodization of African history is also a recurring issue; the relevance of chronological benchmarks used for internal African dynamics remains a difficulty. Geographical divisions created by writers of the *General History of Africa* in the treatment of certain themes can be examined today in the light of new knowledge and developments observed on the continent. It is for all these reasons that the writing of new volumes of the *General History of Africa* is justified.

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CHAPTER 1

METHODOLOGY AND AFRICAN PREHISTORY

General History of Africa Volume I

Augustin F. C. Holl

Introduction

This volume includes twenty-eight chapters with an introduction and a conclusion by the editor, a preface by A. M. M'Bow and a presentation of the project by B. A. Ogot. It ends with a list of the members of the International Scientific Committee for the *General History of Africa* project (pp. 747-48), short biographies of the contributors to the reviewed volume (pp. 749-51), a general bibliography (pp. 752-800) and an index (pp. 801-19).

As the subtitle – 'Methodology and African Prehistory' – makes clear, the volume consists of two distinct parts. Sixteen chapters are devoted to methodological issues and eleven to the prehistory of Africa. Besides the introduction and the conclusion, both parts are arranged according to dominant themes, with a certain overlap. Historiography, its trends and its evolution are dealt with in what can be termed Section I. This includes chapters 1 to 6. Ethnohistory, oral traditions and their methodologies are discussed in chapters 7 and 8 from Section II. Section III – miscellaneous – comprises seven chapters (9 to 16) dealing with a wide array of topics, ranging from archaeological methods and dating techniques (Chapter 9) to historical linguistics and the classification of African languages (chapters 10 and 12), physical and human geography (chapters 13 and 14), paleoclimatology (Chapter 16), and ethnogenesis and migrations (Chapter 11).

Preface and presentation of the project

In the preface, former UNESCO Director-General A. M. M'Bow summarizes what is at stake in the writing of the eight-volume *General History of Africa* (1981, pp. xvii–xxi). His presentation articulates numerous key issues revolving around 'the denial' of history, the 'balkanized' continent, the 'wretched of the earth' and the genesis of the *General History of Africa* project. He outlines the project's scientific ambitions and stresses the imperative of widespread circulation and distribution of the published work.

The project was implemented and carried forward by an international scientific committee appointed by UNESCO Director-General M'Bow and chaired by B. A. Ogot. The project, its goal and its general scope are summarized by B. A. Ogot (1981, pp. xxiii-xxv). It aims to publish high-quality scholarship on the history of Africa, considered as a whole and emphasizing exchanges and relationships among different parts of the continent. This history, focusing on ideas, civilizations, institutions and societies, is to be presented from within as a genuine contribution to the world's cultural heritage.

Methodologies

The introductory chapter (Ki-Zerbo, 1981, pp. 1-23) by the editor reasserts the goals of the project and outlines the theoretical and methodological challenges of such a crucial endeavour. There is a significant imbalance, which stems from the ambiguities in positioning this text. It is simultaneously an introduction to the General History of Africa eight-volume series and an introduction to Volume I. In fact, Chapter 15, 'Inter-disciplinary methods used in this work' (Ki-Zerbo, 1981, pp. 348-58), is an extension of the general introduction that addresses issues from Volume I more directly, and as such is reviewed here.

Africa was exploited, conquered and marginalized, but this project is about the scientific rendering of the continent's history, to bring back to the fore the multiple forces that have shaped the making of Africa, from the emergence of humanity to the twentieth century. The project is axiomatically multi-disciplinary. Different research standpoints provide specific entries to the past of the continent. J. Ki-Zerbo outlines the peculiarities of writing Africa's history and singles out the main differences with other parts of the world. From his perspective, Africa's physical geography hints at difficulties specific to the continent (pp. 4–5): it is loosely connected to the rest of the Old World, via

the Gulf of Suez and the Sinai Peninsula, and its deserts, forests, marshlands and mountains made inter-regional communications difficult. Furthermore, centuries of enslavement drained a signification portion of the African population, keeping its overall population density below a critical threshold that may have allowed 'civilization' to emerge, as understood in F. Braudel's reference (p. 5). It is important to emphasize here that the scientific content of the volume was based on 1960s-1970s scholarship. This position was refuted by the early 1980s. Complex societies and urbanism are now well-documented in West Africa, starting from 2000 BCE. Indeed, evidence of bananas in southern Cameroon circa 500 BCE show that the equatorial forest was not really a barrier.

The sources of African history are divided into three main categories: (1) written sources, (2) archaeological sources and (3) oral traditions. These categories, depending on the circumstances, are supported by linguistics and socio-cultural anthropology. Written sources are confined to specific areas. While Egypt is not mentioned anywhere in this introduction, Egyptian hieroglyphs are the earliest written sources on the continent. Greek and Roman sources exist for North Africa, from Egypt and Nubia to Morocco. Arabic sources, both African and non-African, provide crucial information on North, West and Eastern Africa. Finally, there are sources in European languages pertaining to trade, colonial conquest and administration.

Archaeological sources are alluded to briefly. P. Huard's suggestion (1969, pp. 179-224), according to which 'pottery and objects of bone and metal found in the Nigero-Chadian Sahara demonstrates the link between the pre-Islamic peoples (Sao) of the Chad Basin and cultural areas extending as far as the Nile and the Libyan desert' (p. 7), is inaccurate.

Oral traditions are the most praised contribution of African historical scholarship to history writing in general. They offer an inside view of the historical process and pose methodological challenges of their own, discussed on pages 27–28.

Linguistic research through the classification of African languages and the study of loan-words, names and many other language 'facts' has contributed significantly to writing history in Africa. The same applies to socio-cultural anthropology once freed from its old 'evolutionist' and 'voyeuristic' attitudes to Africa and Africans.

As an extension of the general introduction, Chapter 15 (Ki-Zerbo, 1981, pp. 348–58), reviews the same range of methodological practices and disciplinary fields, divided into written sources, oral traditions, archaeology, art history, linguistics, sociology and natural sciences. Disciplinary complementarity, competition and rivalry are facts of academic life, with highs and lows depending

on the circumstances. The synthesis is always made from a certain perspective and, in the case of this volume, it is clearly history. The idea is to pull together all aspects of the past that help better understand the making of the continent's history. In summary, this chapter is misplaced and should have been inserted in the general introduction to the volume.

Historiography and historical sources

Besides the general introduction, the discussion on the evolution of African historiography and sources presents the wide array of methodological perspectives and tools used in the writing of African history. This part includes nine chapters, as follows:

J.D. Fage (1981, pp. 25-42) presents the succession of different historiographic – ways of writing history – traditions in Africa in Chapter 1. He outlines the main characteristics of these developments all over the continent and focuses on West, Central, Eastern and Southern Africa.

North Africa, as part of the Mediterranean world, was featured in Greek-Roman sources. The expansion of Islam followed the same path, up to the expansion of the Ottoman empire in the sixteenth century CE. However, with Napoleon Bonaparte's Egypt expedition in 1798, the French conquest of Algeria in 1830 and the British occupation of Egypt in 1882, the European colonialist perspective became predominant in historical scholarship. The spread of a European-style education system, combined with movements to modernize Islam and the emergence of nationalism, resulted in the development of local historical perspectives in Arabic, English and French.

Arab historians had sporadic contacts with sub-Saharan African societies, in Ethiopia and the East African coast in the east and the *Bilad es Sudan* in the west. The *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* (100 CE), Claudius Ptolemy (150 CE) and Cosmas Indocopleustes (600-700 CE) are the main historical sources for East Africa. The development of trans-Saharan trade generated a significant flow of information throughout the *Dar-al-Islam*. Arab writers from the Mediterranean and the Near East provided descriptions of regions they had heard about or travelled through. Local chronicles – history books – were written in West and East Africa. The *Ta'rikh al-Sudan* and the *Ta'rikh el-Fattash* were both written in Timbuktu in the seventeenth century, and Ethiopia produced works like Amda Syon's '*History of Wars*'. The Kano chronicle, the Kilwa chronicle and, to a certain extent, the Gonja chronicle (*Kitab al-Ghunja*)

are essentially direct transcriptions of local traditions. From the fifteenth century onward, European sailors and traders provided interesting descriptions of the Atlantic coast of West Africa, the Congo-Angola, the Zambezi valley and surrounding highlands, and Ethiopia.

Historical scholarship on Africa was fully developed in the eighteenth century around the issue of the Atlantic slave trade, and human status of Black Africans was downgraded. Hegel asserted in his lectures that Africa was an ahistorical continent, and Hugh Trevor-Hoper and many others followed the same path. European exploration of the continent produced a new genre, with significant variations from one author to the next. Colonial historiography was built on Hegelian premises, but was challenged by the first African intellectuals. From the 1960s on, African historiography had its first professional historians and was vibrant and as diverse as its practitioners allowed it to be.

Hama and Ki-Zerbo open Chapter 2 (1981, pp. 43-53) with a strong assertion: 'Man is a historical animal', a free adaptation of Aristotle's 'political animal' that applies to all living organisms. All aspects of daily life, institutions, arts, religious ceremonies and so forth are derived from historical processes and concurrently shape their course. The singular experience of each society therefore shapes its history. Three important considerations are singled out: (1) the African conception of time is asserted to be mythical and social, (2) Africans are well aware of being agents of their history, and (3) the African conception of time is genuinely historical. The overlap between mythical and social time is addressed through numerous examples. Myths rationalize the origins of everything, from objects to institutions, and give meaning to every action in daily life. They are constantly in the making, as can be seen in the emergence of nationalist myths.

The awareness of being an agent of one's own history is much more difficult to trace back in time. The events of the past few centuries – slavery, conquest and colonization – were not particularly favourable to the emergence of African historical agency. In ranked societies, rulers were praised by 'professional masters of words', a type of court historian. Women's historical agency took place in different areas, notably the Warrior Amina in fifteenth-century Hawsa land, the Amazons in the Dahomey kingdom and, more recently, in liberation movements and the struggle for independence. The historical nature of the African conception of time is difficult to understand. 'The social nature of the African conception of history itself lends it a historical dimension, for history is the developing life of a group.' (1981, p. 49). This chapter is difficult to grasp. It 'essentializes' Africans and does not provide a clear working definition of 'history'.

In Chapter 3, Curtin (1981, pp. 54-71) surveys recent developments and trends in historical research on Africa. In the Euro-centric conception derived from centuries of European domination and colonization, African history was marginal at best and was put to use in support of the *mission civilisatrice*. The Euro-centric view of the world is still alive and well, but significant transformations have occurred in historical research on and in Africa. History is no more a chronicle of kings' successions, major battles, and dates. Influenced by the social sciences, 'making or writing' history has undergone profound mutations. Today, history tends to be a social science investigating the evolution of human societies. There are important differences in scale: some works are parochially local, others are regional and others still are general. The struggles for national liberation and the movements towards independence inspired a patriotic and nationalist research agenda, brought to the fore in order to counter the schemes developed in the works of colonial-era historians. African history has similarly brought to the fore an important methodological shift toward the integration of new data and fields of inquiry. A rigorous methodology was developed to collect, analyse and compare data from oral traditions. This emphasis is an important contribution of African historical scholarship to history writing in general.

African history was late to enter the research and academic fields. It was carried forward by a number of dedicated researchers and teachers, Africans and non-Africans, from very diverse backgrounds. Sub-Saharan Africa is the part of the continent where the revival in historical research took place, in Francophone and Anglophone countries. North Africa, meanwhile, is anchored to the Mediterranean world. Apartheid South Africa created its own specific historical myths. African history is today part of the academic landscape. The former students are now researchers and teachers in various institutions of the continent, Europe, North America, Japan and the Russian Federation. This excellent chapter would have been even better had the impact of archaeological research on some of the debated historical issues been taken into consideration, as is the case for example with the 'Zimbabwe Debate'.

In Chapter 4, Obenga (1981, pp. 72-86) discusses additional sources of African history, with an emphasis on the natural sciences. He lists methods and techniques used in contemporary archaeological research, and mentions dating techniques, soil sciences, paleobotany and archaeozoology. Finally, Egyptology is argued to be another source of African history. For the author, some of the Egyptian scripts – hieroglyphic, hieratic and demotic – spread to sub-Saharan Africa, showing a deep and significant connection between Egypt and the rest

of the continent. Analyses from oral traditions and other social sciences are also featured in the historian's toolkit. This chapter is puzzling and particularly weak. Research on early African agriculture and early human archaeozoology was well-advanced by the late 1970s/early 1980s (Brain, 1981; Clark, 1982; Harlan, 1971; Harlan et al., 1979). The rationale for the shift from natural-science topics to Egyptology is difficult to understand. Historians should be open-minded, but it is unrealistic to require each of them to master such a broad range of topics and do it well.

In Chapter 5, Djait (1981, pp. 87-113) discusses general issues related to the written sources of African history and presents a balanced assessment of their relevance and utility. The author is well aware of the elastic notion of written sources, which include any figment of human thought ever transferred to a material support. Such a definition is too broad to be operational. The author then delineates the field of inquiry he will deal with: 'signs on any kind of support – papyrus, parchment, bone, paper' (p. 87). The domain to be covered is still very broad, encompassing the invention of writing up to the beginning of the modern era [fifteenth century CE], and covering the whole continent with a diverse mix of historical trajectories recorded in different languages. This having been said, the author assesses the general epistemological problems that the diversity of written sources poses to historians: the hieroglyphs of Ancient Egypt are contained within the specialized sub-field of Egyptology; other sources are in Greek, Carthaginian, Latin, Arabic and sundry European languages. They cover the classical world of the Mediterranean and the Islamic world including North Africa, and part of East and West Africa.

The topic is organized into three chronological segments: (1) the Egyptian Old Empire to Islam, up to around 622 CE; (2) the early Islamic period, from 620 CE to the middle of the eleventh century; and (3) the second Islamic period, from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries CE. The data are arranged into distinct culture areas and source types. Five such areas are singled out: Egypt, Nilotic Sudan and Cyrenaica in coastal Libya; the Maghreb, the northern Sahara, and the Fezzan and Tripolitania in the desert hinterland; East Africa, Ethiopia, Eritrea and the Horn of Africa; the western Sudan, including the Sahara and Lake Chad; and Central Africa, the Gulf of Guinea and South Africa. Even if the West African Atlantic coastal area is not mentioned, it shares most of its sources with the Gulf of Guinea. Most sources are written in non-African languages: Greek, Latin and Arabic. This leading group is followed by sources in Ancient Egyptian – hieratic and demotic scripts – Coptic, Hebrew, Aramean, Ethiopian, Italian, Swahili, Persian and Chinese. Some of the sources

are in African languages like Hawsa and Fulfulde in addition to Coptic, Swahili and Ethiopian. They are divided into two broad categories: narrative works with geographic descriptions, chronicles, annals, travels reports, other legal and religious documents; and archival material that includes family letters and private documents, legal and religious writings, and states' official papers. The rest of the chapter is a balanced presentation of the written sources available for each chronological period for each part of the continent, well-summarized in a very useful table on pages 102–05.

Chapter 6 by I. Hrbek (1981, pp. 114–41) complements the previous one, addressing the increased numbers of written documents resulting from the expanding European sphere of influence. In addition to the significant growth in the number of written documents, the period is characterized by two major developments: a significant decrease in the number of Arabic sources for the western Sudan and the emergence of African scholars and, in some cases, the creation of new scripts. The quantity and quality of written works seems to have declined in North Africa, with the significant exception of Morocco: Moroccan historians have written about the history of the ruling dynasties, cities like Tetouan, and even a general history of the kingdom partly based on archival material. The material that European travelers published became more and more important. In Egypt, for example, the '*Description of Egypt*' in twenty-four volumes, published from 1821 to 1824 – the result of Napoleon Bonaparte's Egypt expedition – is a rich source of information on virtually all aspects of life in Egypt during the first part of the nineteenth century. A tradition of royal chronicles emerged in Ethiopia in the thirteenth century, lasting to the early twentieth century. These are written in Amharic, complemented by other sources produced by numerous European travellers who visited the only Christian state in East Africa. The South African coast was visited by Portuguese and Dutch sailors before being settled in the middle of the seventeenth century by Europeans fleeing religious persecution. Most of the documents are from a European perspective, whether missionary papers or administrative material.

In general, the written sources can now be arranged into external and internal narratives. External narratives are written in Arabic and in European and other non-African languages. They include such works as those of Leo Africanus, Ahmad Ibn Majid, Abu Makrama, Salil Ibn Raziq and Al-Tunsi. The European literature on tropical Africa is vast. Books, travel reports and trade contracts are written in Portuguese, Dutch, English, French, Danish and more. In the nineteenth century, however, most if not all of the major works were those of explorers/travellers that European powers and colonial societies

had commissioned. The internal narratives are mostly in Arabic script. The earliest works in this genre are both from West Africa. The *Ta'rikh al-Fattash,* written by three generations of the Kati family from Djenne, is the history of the Songhay empire and surrounding lands up to the Moroccan conquest of 1591. The *Ta'rikh al-Sudan*, by the historian El-Saadi from Timbuktu, also presents the history of the Songhay empire but covers a longer period, ending in 1655. This genre spread across different parts of West Africa, as can be seen with the *Kitab Gonja*, *Kitab al-gazzargawat al-Barnu* and *K. Al-gazzargawat al-Kanim* in Northeastern Nigeria. Numerous chronicles, in Hawsa states, Baguirmi, Wadai, and Swahili city-states from East Africa, were primarily written for instructional purposes. There are also many untapped sources of information on Africa's past. Some Africans, mostly from the Atlantic coast, started writing in European languages, complementing the sources provided by the narratives of freed slaves. Companies, missions, state archives and private documents contain treasures of Africa's past. Dictionaries, grammar treaties and other linguistic data provide additional interesting sources.

For J. Vansina (1981, pp. 142–65), the historian has to learn to slow down, and listen, to understand the worldview of oral-based societies before proceeding to its interpretation. In Chapter 7, he outlines the basic characteristics of oral traditions and how they may be used to write the history of a specific community. Oral tradition is the cumulative knowledge transmitted from generation to generation. The transmission of such information and the building of cultural knowledge are structured and gain their meaning and importance through the skill, competence and reputation of the performer. The author distinguishes four main genres of oral literature: poetic, formulaic, epic and narrative. Some are more codified than others and take their profound meaning from their contexts of performance. The context can be instructional, political or religious and, in all cases, memory, knowledge and social skills are constantly mobilized. The evaluation of oral traditions is nonetheless fraught with difficulties. What is to be evaluated? Is there any archetype to be used in gauging the historical value of an epic? For Vansina, '[p]ractical experience has proved that the greatest value of traditions lies in their explanation of historical changes within a culture' (p. 165). This is probably accurate for the past few centuries, an accuracy that is inversely proportional to the length of time.

While Chapter 7 presents what can be termed an 'etic' approach to oral traditions, Hampate-Ba (1981, pp. 166–205) in Chapter 8 explores its 'emic' side. The rationale of the contribution is that orality precedes writing and has shaped the human experience. Accordingly, oral traditions are anchored in a certain

conception of humanity, its place and its role in the universe (p. 168). Hampate-Ba employs the traditions he knows best to spell out the characteristics of oral traditions. First, speech and words are of 'divine' origin, as shown by the Bambara Komo traditions. This divine gift, partitioned into power, will and knowledge, is mute and can be activated only by speech. Speech is thus the exteriorization of the hidden forces' vibrations. The power of speech is such that there are experts – the traditionists – *Doma, Soma, Donikeba, Silatigi, Gando, Tchiorinke* – and lineages of experts whose task it is to preserve and transmit the cultural knowledge. Many of these 'masters of words' were sidelined by the colonial system, jeopardizing the lines of transmission of this cultural knowledge. For the author, this was an intentional move of the colonial authorities, as uprooted people are much more malleable. Moreover, the ethical code of the masters of words is stringent: they have to speak the truth.

Almost all traditional crafts carry an important oral baggage. This knowledge is transmitted through a long apprenticeship. Practitioners include musicians, storytellers, negotiators, undertakers and others. They can be attached to a specific lineage – or patronym – and are part of a network of endogamic groups. In oral societies memory can be extraordinarily accurate, and one of the greatest problems in Africa has been the interruption of the chain of transmission of cultural and technical knowledge. The slave trade was the first and long-lasting disruption in the transmission of cultural knowledge. Later, the First World War wiped out a generation of young men. The development of Western-style schools sealed the end of the traditional education systems. Finally, Hampate-Ba summarizes his own experience with this advice to researchers: to be patient and be sure to have 'the heart of a dove, the skin of a crocodile, and the stomach of an ostrich' (p. 202).

Any archaeological finding is assessed and analysed along similar research protocols in Africa as elsewhere. Field conditions may differ from area to area, and researchers are thus forced to adapt their approaches to the specific field of inquiry. Chapter 9 (Iskander, 1981, pp. 206–32) outlines a series of methods and techniques used in archaeological research. Archaeometric research uses natural and physical-science methods, techniques and technology to address archaeological research problems. Sampling in relation to the research goals and the presentation of the results is thus essential. The author outlines a number of these techniques, ranging from radiography to neutron activation. Archaeometric analyses are used to identify objects and materials, trace artefact origins, understand manufacturing techniques and characterize certain artefacts. The rest of the chapter addresses specific techniques related to dating, archaeological surveys and conservation techniques. In addition to the few examples from Ancient Egypt in the text,

there is really nothing specific to Africa in the reviewed methods and techniques. The contribution should have been entitled 'Archaeometric methods and dating techniques in archaeology' instead.

Linguistics, race and ethnogenesis

This thematic section consists of five chapters. However, the rationale for the organization of two twin chapters at the beginning is not clear.

P. Diagne's chapter (1981, pp. 233–60), Part I of Chapter 10, focuses on the mutual relationship between linguistics and history, language classification being a distinctive way of revealing links between people. Three kinds of classification are discussed. The first is genetic classification, which aims to establish language relationships within a linguistic family. The second is typological. In this case, languages are arranged according to their similarities and affinities of structures and systems. The third is geographic, in that languages are organized according to their areal distribution and geographic proximity. Terms like Niger-Congo, Nigero-Chadian, West-Atlantic and others are clearly topological.

Language reconstruction helps trace the history of a specific language or linguistic group. It relies on sound correspondences, phonology in terms of structure and morphology, and lexicons (percentage of shared vocabulary). The chronology of language change is a difficult problem. The idea of a slow but constant change in the basic vocabulary that Swadesh formulated allowed a mathematical formula to be coined, but the technique has since become controversial. Languages are also an important tool in assessing ethnic and cultural relationships between people who may be spread over very large tracts of land. In summary, the contribution of linguistic research to the crafting of African history is plain and straightforward. To be precise and accurate, however, it is useful to emphasize that not all historical research projects require a linguistic component or backing.

The twin part of Chapter 10 (Ki-Zerbo 1981, pp. 261–70) focuses on the impact of race theories on crafting and writing African history. From the start, the author discusses the theoretical difficulties of the concept of race. Racialization is a process of somatic adaptation to particular biomes operating on a gene pool, enhanced by genetic drift. Scientific investigations on races are, therefore, articulated using morphological and population criteria. It has been clear for quite some time that there is no strict correlation between morphological and genetic variations; there are usually broader variations within than between populations. The use and abuse of the concept of race is fundamentally a social,

not a scientific, issue. Thus, it is not clear why this segment is an appendix to a chapter on linguistics and history. It would be better placed in the general introduction, which notes that the hierarchy of human 'races' – or whatever they are called – was used as an instrument of denigration and domination.

Chapter 11 by Olderogge (1981, pp. 271–91) analyses the foundations of diffusionist theories developed by the *German Historische Schule* to counter the evolutionist assertion of a possible parallel and independent cultural development. As an outgrowth of the Hegelian conception of historical development, Germany was the most advanced European country in African ethnological, historical and linguistic research. The Hamburg Colonial Institute, founded in 1907, quickly became an impressive centre of African studies, and the United Kingdom and France were strongly influenced by the German approach. According to the migration theories dominant in German Africanist scholarship, every technological and cultural innovation that could be documented in sub-Saharan Africa originated from West Asia and spread through Hamitic migrations. Olderogge reviews these developments and points to their collapse with the discovery of the *Australopithecus africanus* skull in 1924 in South Africa.

Archaeological research and the use of radiocarbon dating have completely changed the picture of past African cultural achievements. Africans transferred to the Americas and India have adopted new languages and cultural practices. Language and cultural practices can therefore change quite rapidly; new languages can be adopted and new patterns of behaviour developed to adjust to the ever-changing cultural environment. Ethnicity is particularly difficult to trace backwards. It is, above all, a process of adapting to actual cultural situations. The example of the foragers – also known as *pygmies* – of the Ituri and the Uele Forest is a case in point. Olderogge's discussion shows convincingly that language, biological ethnicity – race – and culture should be dealt with separately, not lumped together. The mode of production seems to have been much more efficient and instrumental in the rise and fall of this or that 'biological features'. The chapter is a solid and important contribution to the volume. It provides an interesting perspective on the development of African studies in Western Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In Chapter 12, Greenberg (1981, pp. 292–315) presents a genetic classification of African languages. The opening section explains the basic structure and logic of the classification methods. The model followed is that of the Indo-European linguistic family. The author proceeds with an interesting review of the history of the classification of African languages. Data on African languages were

collected on different parts of the continent, in Madagascar and Ethiopia in the seventeenth century. Data from thirty African languages were entered in the first book of its kind – the *Glossarium Comparativum Lingarum Totius Orbis* – [Comparative glossary of languages of the entire world], supported by Empress Catherine the Great of Russia and published in 1787 (p. 294). The material collected was used for different classifications of African languages. In the late 1950s through the early 1960s, a number of suggestions, some controversial, were debated: (1) Bantu languages were linked to Western Sudanic languages and were considered a sub-group of Benue-Congo, belonging to the Niger-Congo family; (2) an Afro-Asiatic family including the Berber, Ancient Egyptian, Semitic, Cushitic and Chadic languages replaced Meinhof Hamitic; (3) 'Negro' languages of the Niger-Congo family were arranged in a new group called Nilo-Saharan; and (4) the khoi-khoi was classified as a San language, belonging to the Khoisan family of Southern Africa.

The classification presented in this chapter includes four linguistic families that are a further elaboration of the author's previous classifications, all presented on page 308: (1) the Afroasiatic family is found in the north, northeast and east of the continent and includes the Berber, Ancient Egyptian and Semitic languages from Ethiopia and Eritrea; Kushitic languages from Somalia to Tanzania, the Nile valley and Sudan; and the Chadic in Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad; (2) the Niger-Kordofanian is divided into two branches – the Niger-Congo, covering most of sub-Saharan Africa from the West Atlantic coast to South Africa, and the Kordofanian, confined to the Kordofan in Western Sudan; (3) the Nilo-Saharan spread from West Africa with the Songhai to East Africa with the Masai, through the central Sahara where the Saharan languages Teda-daza, kanembu-kanuri and others are found; and (4) the Khoisan, with all the click languages, is mostly found in the southern part of the continent with two outlier groups, the Hadza and Sandawe in Tanzania and Kenya. Many other languages are spoken in Africa today, such as the Merina in Madagascar (Austronesian) and Afrikaans (Indo-European). The chapter gives a concise view of the genealogy and areal distribution of African languages. The most recent classifications are, in most cases, further elaborations of Greenberg's initial insights.

The appendix to this chapter, Chapter 12 by Dalby (1981, pp. 309–15), presents linguistic data from a geographic mapping perspective and cautions the reader about the simplification of current language classifications. He partitions his observational data into two categories: simple and complex. Simple units consist of languages that cannot be placed into any larger entity. Complex units, on the other hand, are languages

having strong links with internal and external coherence. When looked at from the perspective of the geographic distribution of simple and complex units, the linguistic map of Africa takes on a wholly different meaning. Approximately two-thirds of the languages spoken in Africa are found in an area measuring 5,600 kilometres (km) west to east, from coastal Senegal to East Africa and the Ethiopian highlands, and 1,100 km north to south, from the southern fringe of the Sahara to the north of the equatorial rainforest. This area is termed the 'sub-Saharan Fragmentation Belt'. There appears to be a strong correlation between linguistic fragmentation and mountainous areas, as evinced from the Togo Atacora mountains, the Jos plateau in Nigeria, the Cameroon highlands, the Nuba mountains in Sudan and the Ethiopian highlands. Instead of using the categories created by genetic classifications, Dalby identifies two regions of the highest linguistic affinity, which contain 80 per cent of all African languages. The northern one corresponds exactly to Greenberg's Afro-Asiatic family and includes seventeen simple and complex units. The southern region of highest affinity, equivalent to the Niger-Congo or Niger-Kordofanian, comprises fifty-eight simple and complex units. Africa has the highest degree of linguistic complexity of all the continents. However, the history of African languages has a long way to go; Bantu languages are so far the ones that have attracted the largest number of researchers.

Geography and palaeoclimatology

This thematic section includes three contributions presenting physical geography, economic geography and paleoclimatology.

For Diarra (1981, pp. 316–332), the author of Chapter 13, the physiographic characteristics of the continent may have enhanced or inhibited certain patterns of behaviour and historical developments. Africa is the remaining piece of the initial Gondwana. All of the other continents – the Americas, Asia, Australia and Europe – have drifted away. Geologically speaking, most of Africa is made of old Precambrian rock formations with granite, quartzite and gneiss, overlain from place to place by more or less thick sedimentary formations. Orogenic effects, faulting and other heavy geological processes have generated a series of highlands 1,500 metres above sea level. This is the case with the Atlas and Aures in the Maghreb, the central Saharan mountain ranges, the Cameroon mountains in the Gulf of Guinea, the Ruwenzori, Kilimanjaro and the Great Rift Valley in East Africa. Africa sits on the equator. Its phyto-climatic zones are arranged in parallel west-east bands distributed on both sides of the equatorial rainforest, slightly altered by the north-south orientation of the African southern

hemisphere portion. These biogeographical zones include the equatorial rainforest along the equator, the Sudano-Sahelian savanna or grasslands, the Saharan and Kalahari deserts, and the Mediterranean bio-climatic zone at both the north and south ends of the continent. The general distribution of rainfall is predicated on the fluctuations of the inter-tropical convergence zone (ITCZ), in a summer-rain system.

In Chapter 14, Mabogunje (1981, pp. 333–47), in the second contribution, follows up and discusses the economic aspects of the distribution of natural resources, including a review of the distribution and exploitation of mineral resources, rocks and ore. Vegetation, the essential life-supporting resource for most of 'human occupancy', is discussed in relation to its impact on population growth. The author notes that the extraordinary richness and diversity of African fauna and flora allowed early experimentations by Stone Age societies to develop. The regional distribution of pathogens has also certainly affected the pace and extension of cultural development all over the African continent. The chapter does not detail what is known about the use of African minerals to produce highly valued copper and iron artefacts.

In twin chapters by Said and Faure (1981, pp. 358–99), Said reviews the general patterns of climatic change during the Pleistocene and Holocene periods, while Faure expands the time frame and deals with the Late Cenozoic era (i.e. the last 5 million years). Climatic fluctuations are basic facts of life on Earth. They affect all living organisms and shape landforms. Significant improvements in research technology have opened access to new categories of data that were previously beyond reach: international deep-sea-coring programmes provided long sedimentary sequences accumulated at sea bottoms, and the construction of a geomagnetic chronology that spans 5 million years shows that the polarity of the Earth's magnetic field shifted from normal to inverse. These new data sets have replaced the Europe-derived Glacial Inter-Glacial succession – Donau, Günz, Mindel, Riss, Würm and Biber – used as early versions of the general climate-change patterns. They show that the correspondence made between the Alpine climate chronology and tropical and equatorial Africa terminology is, in fact, misleading. African lake catchments have also provided a wealth of paleo-climatic information. Local paleoclimatic sequences now all point to similar large-scale trends having a systematic alternance of predominantly wet and humid climates and hot and dry ones, albeit with significant regional variability. Parts I and II of this twin chapter present the same material with a different emphasis. However, the rationale for combining these two contributions is not clear.

Human paleontology

The next chapter is also split into two parts and presents the general evolution of human physical and cultural characteristics.

In the first chapter, Coppens (1981, pp. 400–36) deals with the general paleontological background to human evolution, while Balout focuses on the emergence of lithic technology. As humans are primates, Coppens delineates the genealogy of apes and hominids leading to the emergence of *Homo*, sketching the history of human paleontological research. The clustering of major finds in East and South Africa at sites such as the Olduvay gorges, the Omo and Afar valleys, and the Sterkfontein caves points to Africa as the cradle of humanity. L. Balout discusses the ambiguity of the concept of lithic tools and the beginning of the hominid use of 'artefacts'. The 'Osteodontokeratic Culture' of R. Dart is reviewed and supported. The contribution ends with a five-page glossary of technical terms.

Chapter 18 by Leakey (1981, pp. 437–51) reviews the contexts, chronology and main characteristics of the fossils used to trace the ancestry of modern humans. These too all point to Africa as the cradle of humanity, as Charles Darwin had predicted. The preservation of hominid bones – the fossilization process – is predicated on a number of conditions: rapid burial, soil chemical constituents and bone mineralization. Most of the fossil remains are found in East and Southern Africa, from Ethiopia in the north to the South African Republic in the south. In East Africa, fossils are found in lacustrine environments, in the faulted area of the Rift valley. In South Africa, they are found in underground cave breccias. Modern humans – *Homo sapiens sapiens* – are today the only representatives of the *Homo* species on earth. They emerged some 100,000 to 200,000 years ago and colonized the planet. The Pre-sapiens are arranged into two lineages, *Homo* and *Australopithecus*. The *Homo* genus is made of *Homo erectus* (0.5 to 1.6 million years ago) and the earlier *Homo habilis* (more than 1.6 million years ago). The *Australopithecus* genus, with a gracile and robust species, includes *A. bosei*, *A. afarensis* and *A. africanus*. All of these hominids used stone tools and had access to meat that they collected from carcasses or hunted.

Regional syntheses

There are eight regional syntheses presenting the archaeological record of the continent's long-term human evolution. All parts of the continent are reviewed, with an additional chapter devoted to the prehistory of the Nile Valley. The

general chronological framework is the same for the whole continent. It starts with the Oldowayan period in Eastern, Southern and parts of North Africa. This first stage of human cultural development is followed by the Acheulean, characterized by a 'hand-axe, cleavers, pick toolkit' with an assortment of retouched tools in virtually all parts the continent. The Middle Stone Age (MSA) – or Middle Palaeolithic in North Africa and the Sahara – is characterized by significant regional diversification. There are many local regional variants, most of them based on the use of the Levallois debitage technique. The Late Stone Age-Terminal, Epipalaeoloithic or Mesolithic, depending on the area, share similar broad characteristics. First, a blade technology that resulted in the production of bifacial points used as hafted spear-heads. Then, a Mesolithic technology – with the invention of the bow and arrow – used to produce tiny geometric lithic pieces used as arrow parts. Grinding equipment is more frequent in late Stone Age sites, suggesting a more systematic processing of plants and minerals such as the red ochre used in rock art.

The prehistory of Eastern Africa is summarized in Chapter 19 by J.E.G. Sutton (1981, pp. 452–86) and that of Southern Africa in Chapter 20 by J.D. Clark (1981, pp. 487–529). Both contributions overlap significantly. They share an identical chronological framework and topical presentation of information. The Sutton chapter starts with a rather long methodological prelude, while Clark revisits the data on early hominids already discussed by Yves Coppens and Richard Leakey. Problems of chronology and assemblage classification are discussed, and a general chronological framework is outlined. The prehistory is divided into three major periods starting with the Early Stone Age (ESA), which lasted from the origins of tool-making to circa 100,000 years ago. This is followed by the MSA, from 100,000 to 15,000 years ago. Finally, the Late Stone Age (LSA) spanned from 15,000 to the advent of iron metallurgy, around 2000 BCE.

The oldest hominid-made stone artefacts are found in Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania, along the East African Rift valley. All of these sites were located in lacustrine environments and contained small flakes and core tools. South African sites, on the other hand, are mostly found in caves and contain rearranged evidence of early human technical skills. This early ESA phase is called the Oldowayan. The unretouched flakes were used for light cutting tasks, and choppers and chopping tools were used for heavy-duty activities. These early hominids were able to hunt small game and had access to large animals' meat through skillful scavenging. A stone circle from one of the Olduvay gorge sites and a slightly raised platform from Melka Konture are considered evidence of the earliest shelters ever built in human history. The Australopithecines and *Homo*

habilis were very likely the makers of these early lithic artefacts. The Acheulean – or hand-axe civilization – is as widespread as the Oldowayan, including many more sites. It is found on other continents, in Europe as well as western and southern Asia, and lasted for some one million years. ESA hunter-gatherers probably lived in small mobile groups, taking advantage of seasonal variations in the distribution of resources. Fire was also probably used during the Acheulean, but convincing archaeological evidence is still not available. MSA populations were all *Homo sapiens*, first of archaic form and later fully modern. A new stone-knapping technique called Levallois debitage was developed, and most of the tools were made from retouched flakes. The repertoire of lithic artefacts became broader, with a number of specialized tools and regional tool-making traditions developed all over the continent. Fauresmith, Sangoan and Lupembian are some of the local names of these traditions. LSA lithic complexes were basically made of blade and bladelet tools. Hafting was a common practice, and bows and arrows were an essential part of the hunter's gear. Caves, rock shelters and open-air sites were used according to their availability and the seasons. Some of the rock-shelter walls were painted with animal imagery.

The emergence of food-producing economies is documented in different parts of East Africa, along the Nile River in the central part of Sudan, in Ethiopian highlands, and in the Kenyan and Tanzanian rift valley. Early development took place in the Khartoum-Shaheinab area. The complex includes bone harpoons and microliths with pottery and dates to the seventh and sixth millennia BCE. Livestock husbandry has been documented at Kadero, with 90 per cent of cattle and sheep-goat bones in addition to a large amount of fish, all dated to the second half of the fourth millennium BCE. The Ethiopian highlands, Agordat in Eritrea and the shelter of Godebra near Axum, both probably dating to the third millennium BCE, present evidence of livestock, pottery, geometric microliths and remains of millet (*Eleusine coracana*). Pastoral Neolithic sites are found along the rift valley in Kenya and Tanzania. At Narosura, for example, 95 per cent of the recorded animal bones belong to cattle and sheep/goats. A tradition of fishing communities seems to have spread over vast tracts of land, from East Africa to the Sahara and West Africa. Their toolkit is characterized by the presence of bone harpoons that were essential fishing gear. They also made pottery decorated with wavy lines and dotted wavy lines. For Sutton, this aqualithic civilization may, in fact, have been the material signature of the expansion of speakers of Nilo-Saharan languages.

The idea of a pan-African 'aqualithic civilization' developed by ancestral speakers of Nilo-Saharan languages is particularly controversial. The widespread presence of large and deep freshwater lakes at the beginning of the Holocene era probably

triggered parallel and similar adaptation of LSA populations that took advantage of available aquatic resources. The general outline of these chapters has sustained the test of time, and they can easily be updated with the most recent findings.

The following twin chapter (1981, pp. 530–67) includes a contribution by de Bayle des Hermens on the northern portion of Central Africa and Van Noten et al. on the southern part of the Congo drainage basin. It provides an overview of the prehistoric sequence of most of today's equatorial rainforest and its northern margins. The area under consideration extends from the Gulf of Guinea in the west to the East African Great Lakes in the east, and the northern limit of the Congo basin to approximately 10° latitude south in southern Angola and Shaba. The contributions of both Parts I and II of the chapter are based more or less on the 1952 climatic and chronological framework that Mortelmans devised. However, the pluvial chronology used in this contribution was completely obsolete by the early 1980s.

It is important to emphasize that all ESA archaeological assemblages presented were collected from secondary and extensively reworked erosional contexts. The chronological assignments of ESA toolkits are therefore essentially typological. 'Pebble tools' assignable to the Oldowayan period were found in the Shaba, Western Central African Republic and northeastern Angola. Acheulean civilization was divided into five (Acheulean I to V) sub-units, based on typological considerations. All recorded assemblages are reworked and re-deposited. The Acheulean is followed by the Sangoan civilization, which was widespread in the Congo basin. The Sangoan, understood as a forest adaptation toolkit, was followed by the Lupemban, a central African MSA complex. It is divided into four successive units. A different series of stone-tool assemblages – proto-Stillbayan, Stillbayan and Magosian – developed in parallel in the Shaba and eastern Angola. In all of these areas, they are all followed by a Mesolithic complex, the Tshitolian. Neolithic complexes, characterized in this case by the presence of pottery and ground axes, are documented in the Central African Republic, at Batalimo and in the Uele province in the northern Congo Democratic Republic. A megalithic tradition emerged in the northwestern part of the Central African Republic and east-central Cameroon. The archaeological sequence of central Africa is probably the least investigated of all the major parts of Africa, and the general chronological outline is tentative at best.

Chapters 22 (Balout, 1981, pp. 568–84) and 23 (Hugot, 1981, pp. 585–610) share a common thread, with the same terminology borrowed from southwestern European prehistory. ESA sites with choppers and chopping tools are found in the Maghreb and the Sahara, and a relative chronology based on the terrace

system of the Saoura river is devised, along with bio-stratigraphy, to organize the material found on surface sites elsewhere. There are numerous Acheulean sites in the Maghreb and the Sahara, found along the littoral in Morocco, in hinterland lacustrine environments and around artesian springs in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. Saharan ESA sites are found along ancient river drainages such as the Teffassasset in northern Niger and the Adrar Bous. They are widely spread from El-Beyyed in Mauritania to Es-Shaheinab on the Nile in Sudan. The MSA – or Middle Paleolithic – sequence is made of two complexes, the Mousterian and the Aterian. Sites with material culture belonging to both complexes are found from the Mediterranean and Atlantic coastal areas, all over the Saharan desert, up to the Nile valley in Egypt and Sudan. The Aterian is an original lithic complex characterized by the presence of stemmed tools, to enhance their hafting. Early LSA complexes are absent from the Sahara but widespread in northwest Africa, where there are numerous Iberomaurusian and Capsian sites. The Iberomaurusian buried their dead in large cemeteries, while the Capsian developed a sophisticated bone industry and launched intensive exploitation of aquatic resources in the hinterland low-lying areas: the Chotts below sea level. This exploitation is indicated in the landscape by a large accumulation of mollusk shells, called *Ramadiyya* in Arabic.

The shift to food-producing economies is reflected in the cattle and sheep/goat herding sites of the Cardial tradition in northern Morocco along the Straight of Gibraltar, the Capsian Neolithic in the Aures and coastal mountain range in Algeria and Tunisia, and the 'Neolithic of Capsian tradition' in the northern and northwestern Sahara. The 'Sudanese Neolithic', with spherical pottery decorated with wavy lines and dotted wavy lines, was spread all over the Sahara, from the Nile valley in Sudan to northern Mali. Evidence of millet cultivation was found in the Dhar Tichitt region of Mauritania. Other than this well-known case, agriculture does not seem to have developed in any other Saharan site. Most of the Capsian of the hinterland were mobile hunter-gatherers living in small groups.

Shaw (1981, pp. 611–33) opens Chapter 24 with a presentation of West Africa landscapes. These range from equatorial rainforest in the south along the Atlantic coast to the southern margins of the Sahara, with Savanna/forest mosaic, the Sudanese Savanna, and the Sahel shrubs and steppe found in between. Archaeological research intensity is particularly low in West Africa, and ESA assemblages are particularly scarce. A few series of hand-axes were found in Senegal, Guinea, Mauretania and Ghana, in secondary and reworked contexts. Acheulean sites are found in the Jos plateau in Nigeria and the Fouta

Djalon in Guinea-Senegal. Numerous researchers suggested the existence of a West African Sangoan complex as a post-Acheulean industry. It was supposed to have spread further south than the Acheulean, in Cap Manuel in Senegal, the Atacora mountain range in Togo and southern Ghana. Today, the term Sangoan has been dropped from the West African archaeology lexicon.

There is scattered evidence of MSA artefacts in the Nok culture area in Nigeria, as well as in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Tiémassas, where a series of bifacial points were found in a well-delineated stratigraphic context. LSA settlements with Mesolithic tools are more numerous and widespread, as seen in sites such as Iwo Eleru, the Rop shelter, Kourounkorokale, Kintampo and others. The shift to food-producing economies took place at the end of the third millennium BCE, when cattle and sheep/goat husbandry was introduced to West Africa from the Sahara. The advent of copper and iron metallurgy are discussed toward the end of the chapter. The copper-smelting tradition from Akjoujt, dated to the fifth century BCE, is linked to the Bronze Age cultures of Spain and Morocco. Iron smelting was documented at Taruga in central Nigeria and in habitation mounds along the Niger river. The recorded evidence dates from the fifth to third centuries BCE and seems to have originated from Carthaginian north Africa. The megalithic traditions from the Senegambia and the original site of Tondidaru in Mali, pointing to elaborate cultural practices and mortuary customs, are presented at the end of the chapter.

In Chapter 25, Debono (1981, pp. 634–655) focuses on the archaeological sequence of three distinct segments along the Nile River: the Sudan in the south, Nubia in the middle and Egypt in the north. The material is presented chronologically, starting with the Oldowayan and ending with Pharaonic Egypt. Sites with choppers and chopping tools assigned to the Oldowayan were found in Sudan at Nuri and Wawa, around Thebes in Upper Egypt and at Abbassieh next to Cairo in Lower Egypt. Acheulean sites are distributed all along the Nile valley, from Sudan to the delta, generally in the same localities as the previous Oldowayan ones. This is the case at Atbara, Wawa and Nuri in northern Sudan; on the ancient terraces of the Nile in Nubia; and Abbassieh, Thebes and the Kharga oasis in Egypt. MSA assemblages with 'Mousterian-type' industries relying on the Levallois debitage technique are documented in southern Sudan at Tangasi, Abou Tabari and Nuri. A Nubian Mousterian complex developed in the Nubian portion of the valley. Two skull fragments dated to the MSA were found at Silsileh, but they are still being analysed. When available, these new data sets will shed some light of the MSA inhabitants of the Nile valley. The LSA and the Epipalaeolithic of the Nile valley are characterized by a plethora of small regional complexes, each with a

separate name. No fewer than eighteen taxonomic units equated with 'cultures' have been identified. It is not known whether some simply represent seasonal toolkits of the same foragers groups.

Neolithic lifeways developed in the delta and further south in Sudan. Early Khartoum and Es-Shaheinab contain pottery with early wavy lines and dotted wavy lines, with Mesolithic tools and bone harpoons. Mixed economies with livestock husbandry of sheep/goat and cattle, and the cultivation of wheat, barley and lentils, appeared at Merimde and the Fayum in Lower Egypt and the Badarian and Nagada I and II contexts in Upper Egypt. During the Pre-Dynastic era, Upper and Lower Egypt were each independent states. A unification process finally led to the formation of Pharaonic Egypt ruled by a 'god-king'. Despite the presence of metals, copper, bronze and iron, stone was still used as the predominant raw material during most of the existence of the Egyptian state.

Topical syntheses

The volume finishes with three topical syntheses dealing with African rock art; the emergence, development and expansion of agriculture; and the advent of metallurgy.

African 'prehistoric art' is the topic of Chapter 26 by Ki-Zerbo (1981, pp. 656–86). There are two major areas of rock art in Africa: the Sahara and part of North Africa, and Southern Africa from Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana and the South African Republic. Thousands of rock-art sites exist in all these areas, found generally in mountains and plateaus, in cave and rock shelters, and sometimes on open-air horizontal and vertical surfaces. Assessing the chronology and evolution of rock-art traditions is particularly difficult. In some cases, superimposition can help. Painted blocks found in the sites' stratigraphies are very useful. Most of the time, however, researchers rely on typological and stylistic parameters to organize their data into meaningful units. Such a far-reaching chronological system was designed for the Sahara. It includes an early 'Bubalian period' with representations of large wild fauna, also called 'Ethiopian mega-fauna'. It is followed by the Bovidian period, featuring livestock, cattle, sheep and goats; and thereafter by the 'horse [Caballin] period' with horses in a flying gallop, some tracking carts. Finally, the 'Camel [Camellin] period' was characterized by images of dromedaries and caravans. In technical terms, there are two main techniques for the production of rock art, with large areas of overlap: engraving and painting. Engraving consists of pecking, scoring

and grooving the rock surface to produce dots, lines or grooves that can be combined to create images. Painting, on the other hand, requires additional knowledge to manufacture paints and efficient compounds. The paintings of the Tassili-n-Ajjer in the Sahara and those from the Branberg in Namibia are well-known. Rock art conveys the different facets of the operation of past African minds. These can be interpreted along a broad range of options that can be aesthetic, religious, environmental, social and economic.

In Chapter 27, Portères and Barrau (1981, pp. 687–705) discuss the emergence and development of African agricultural systems. They rely on N.I. Vavilov, who has identified eight origin centres of cultivated plants, one of them – the Ethiopian – in Africa. To these, the authors have added West African and East African agricultural areas, with the latter possibly a southern extension of the Ethiopian centre. Specifically, African plants such as tef, ensete and millets were domesticated in the Abyssinian centre, while sorghum, bulrush millets and eleusine were cultivated in East Africa, and the *Sorghum* species, *Pennisetum* species, *Digitaria* species (fonio) and *Oriza glaberrima* (African rice) were domesticated in the West African centre. These latter plants are, in fact, divided into tropical and subequatorial belts. The tropical belt is predominantly that of cereals, with a few tubers and Karite. The subequatorial belt, extended to Central Africa, is that of yams, palm-tree and *Cola nitida*. Hunting and gathering predominated in the southern part of the continent until the middle of the first millennium CE. In summary, Africans developed their own original ways of managing plants; some cultigens like wheat, barley, lentils and wax came from the Near-East and reached the Mediterranean zone, the Nile valley north of Nubia and the Ethiopian highlands. It is unfortunate that the fundamental works of J.R. Harlan (Harlan et al., 1979, p. 197) were not taken into consideration in this chapter.

Chapter 28 by Vercoutter (1981, pp. 706–29) is a misnomer. It is, in fact, a complement to Debono's contribution with a focus on the recent prehistory of the Nile, from the emergence of food production to the advent of iron metallurgy. He discusses the patterns of cultural evolution from the Neolithic to the third millennium BCE and from the third millennium to 500 BCE, respectively, in Lower and Upper Egypt. The advent of metallurgy is addressed in the last two pages, with most of the continent not even mentioned. Precious metals, gold, silver and even copper were well-known and widely distributed along the Nile from the end of the fourth millennium BCE. Bronze entered the scene in the second millennium, with iron (meteoritic) making a sporadic appearance from 1580 BCE. It was around 700 BCE that iron metallurgy started to spread in the Lower Nile valley. Paradoxically, iron metallurgy was older in Upper Egypt, where

the Pharaohs of the twenty-fifth dynasty around 800 BCE used it often. Iron production intensified during the Napata period, to reach a peak in Meroe in the last centuries of the first millennium BCE. For the author, this development was crucial for the diffusion of iron technology in sub-Saharan Africa. Other than the inaccurate title, the developments presented in the chapter are strictly confined to the Nile valley, with almost no relevance for the rest of the continent.

The editor (Ki-Zerbo, 1981, pp. 730–45) wrote the concluding statement. The title, 'From Nature in the Raw to Liberated Humanity', is puzzling. It is not clear what 'nature in the raw' is supposed to mean, and 'liberated humanity' is formulaic yet difficult to understand. The content of the contribution revolves around a series of key elements: (1) that Africa is the cradle of humanity, (2) that humanity evolves through constant adaptation to changing climatic circumstances and cultural innovation, and (3) that new social systems were forged during this multi-million-year odyssey. Through hunting and gathering, agriculture and livestock husbandry, and sophisticated complex societies, the creation and recreation of humanity that took place in Africa is still in the making.

Conclusion

Volume I of the *General History of Africa* launched the eight-volume series in 1981. Scholarship on the initial history of the continent, from the earliest time to the advent of metallurgy, was assembled for the first time in a single book. Historical research never stops. New developments of the past almost four decades have amplified and expanded the scope of the trends set forth in this first volume.

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CHAPTER 2

ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS OF AFRICA

General History of Africa Volume II

Alain Anselin

Introduction

Most of the contributions assembled in Volume II of the *General History of Africa* were debated at the Symposium on the Peopling of Ancient Egypt and the Deciphering of the Meroitic Script that took place in Cairo, Egypt from 28 January to 3 February 1974.

Participants in the Symposium included a significant number of African researchers, from Sudan (one), Egypt (seven), Senegal (one), Congo (one), one absent from Burkina Faso, as well as a UNESCO representative from Benin. The Symposium was filled with lively debate and the refutation of two conflicting positions. One, contemporary with colonization, promoted the notions of a predynastic race and black-skinned whites as keys to the history of Egyptian settlement – prehistory could be African, history could not. The other theory, developed prior to independence, restored Egypt to Africa. It was in this context that the Cairo Symposium took a fresh look at the data using the methods and techniques of the time.

The importance of iconographic sources was emphasized in the main. Säve-Söderbergh and Leclant stressed that the links indicated by cave paintings between the vast expanses of the Sahara and the banks of the Nile nodded to a migration of peoples of the Sahara and groups from the South to the valley –

something confirmed by research over the last thirty years. Diop set out to return Egypt to its southern African hinterland by systematically using Pharaonic statues and art to support his point of view. Although a debate on the north-south orientation of a 'civilizing' wave of peoples in the valley had prevailed up to that point, the avalanche of new data now made this idea redundant, suggesting instead the image of a growing and unifying political movement in the valley from south to north that repositioned its starting point back in time: in Upper Egypt, digs at the Uj tomb of King Scorpion at the Abydos necropolis push back the origin of the first Horus back to circa 3250 BCE, and the resumption of excavations at Nekhen led to the exhumation of the famous 'Elephant Kings' of Hierakonpolis (Nekhen) which have no inscriptions and date back even further to circa 3700 BCE.

Here we shall focus on the key points of these presentations, those that gave the past a future, such as Cheikh Anta Diop's desire to revisit ancient texts (demonstrating how ancient cultures viewed the Ancient Egyptians, whose anthroponomy[1] was itself the subject of heated debate), and marshalling anthropological data from anthropometry (measuring the melanin in the skin of mummies) and haematology to interpret their origins. This desire was shared by Blanc, who extended the field of physical anthropological research to the Upper Nile, and Leclant, who fittingly advocated that historians needed the 'indispensible assistance of experts in unrepresented disciplines at the Symposium' the most.

Today, because this debate has taken place, the spectacular accumulation of data and the use of new tools and methods have made it possible to take a fresh look at a complex universe – too complex to be satisfied with the Gobinean reading of history affected by the colonial centuries, and which the Cairo Colloquium could not fail to encounter on its path.

One example suffices to illustrate the scientific productivity of the Symposium. The second triennial conference, entitled *Egypt at its Origins,* opened by Jean Leclant in Toulouse in 2005, was a continuation of the 1974 recommendations. A workshop was held there with nine presentations on physical anthropology, chaired by Eric Crubezy, taking into account new data filtered by new tools (paleodemography, paleopathology and population genetics). The genetic study of Berber-speaking Siwi (a population rooted in the Siwa oasis from the Neolithic period to the Persian and Roman invasions, and up to the Arab

1 Intriguingly, not one participant quoted Joseph Vergote in this context (who saw affinities between Ancient Egyptian and Semetic verbal systems) with the translation on p. 90 of his Grammar of *p3 km*, as 'the Black person, that is to say, the Egyptian'.

conquest), suggested a complex genetic footprint. It quantified the key impact of sub-Saharan populations and found a clear link between the Siwi and the peoples of North-East Africa. We could continue with work by Zakrzewski on the predynastic population of Nekhen, investigations by Crubezy which traced the boundaries of the ancient Khoisan settlement to Upper Egypt, where its faint traces remain identifiable, and Keita's work, as the most groundbreaking.

The Symposium wisely recommended research on migratory movements throughout Africa. From this perspective, whether rapid or slower in nature, those concerning the Sudanese-Egyptian Nile basin and the Sahara from the Horn of Africa to Chad could no longer be ignored in climate history studies. These studies now suggest that the civilizations of Northeast Africa (like those of the neighbouring Near East and elsewhere) were, around the major river basins of the fourth millennium BCE, the exceptional and still original work of 'climate refugees', to use a term that is undoubtedly reductive. Genetic studies can no longer be overlooked, not only for humanity but also for 'domesticated' species of animals and plants, along with their close links with modern archaeological research. If the genetic map and linguistic geography do not match up – see above – their comparison nonetheless offers avenues of research. Hence the work by Cerny's team highlighting the close links between the peoples of Upper Egypt, North Cameroon and Ethiopia – the Cameroon people living in the Mandara mountains speaking Chadic languages, and the Ethiopians speaking Kushitic languages, prior to Ge'ez being spread throughout the region during the Aksumite period. This broadens the linguistic debate to include language families that had been little studied or used in comparisons that have long focused on the East.

Egypt's African roots

The distinction between prehistoric or historic societies, depending on the absence or presence of writing – a decisive tool when it comes down to a society organizing itself – carries considerable weight in the writing of history itself, and deserves to be investigated in an epistemological manner. As a result, the reintroduction of classical literature from Egypt in the history of its continent led to an over-representation of Egypt in the *General History of Africa*, just as the existence of an archive of monumental and documentary inscriptions also led to over-representation of the civilizations of North-East Africa, Kush and Napata, Aksum – all based on the underlying functioning of this epistemological divide, which has its own recent history.

Yet the history of Egypt cannot simply overlook the millennia without inscriptions or iconography during which its political society was formed, with the Nekhen site providing, as early as 3700 BCE, the model that would be developed and modified throughout the dynasties, and other sites such as Adaïma providing a picture of a neighbouring village that was practically anepigraphic yet part of the history of Upper Egypt. A review entitled *ArcheoNil,* founded by Beatrix Midant-Reynes, has been studying the entire fourth millennium since 1990; it is a successful exercise in resolving the gap, with one issue dedicated to the emergence of writing in predynastic Egyptian societies. We must question the conceptual difficulty that arises from the break in writing the history of societies that have relationships with each other, some of which are historical, having writing, and others prehistoric, lacking it. Once taken into account, this divide then underlies the writing of history due to the disproportion between the mass of written data available and that of the written collection of oral traditions. The result is an under-representation in the writing the history of societies whose historiography is made up of 'historaliterature' (for more about this concept, see Anselin, epistemological volume, and the consistent, coherent and relevant example of the Dyeli [storytellers] of the Manden people).

Thirty-five years after the eight initial volumes of the *General History of Africa* were published, we can no longer reconstruct the story of Africa's ancient history simply on the basis of available epigraphic data, the only data deemed readable, which once authorized those who wrote it to exclude from history those who left no written trace of their own. These days, the tiniest archaeological site becomes a book, while graves under the ground often becoming chapters of researched text right down the syntax of their artefactual and iconographic assemblages.

Finally, we cannot exclude the most ancient past from the history of modern Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, and reduce their ancient history to the Carthaginian and Roman periods. Nor can we reduce that of the Sahara to the desert it is today.

It is by using all the advanced methodological and conceptual tools from the past thirty years that we can re-examine those of the previous generation, without which our work would not have seen the light of day, and we would not be here attempting to add an extra step to an existing staircase, so to speak. Taking on the role of critic also requires paying tribute!

The first four chapters of Volume II focus on Egypt. Thirty years after the GHA, Egypt no longer needs to be reintroduced into its own African continent in terms of historiography, and the author of the first chapter has a lot to do with that. Cheikh Anta Diop repeated his presentation from the Cairo Symposium. A

comparison of lexical elements of Ancient Egyptian and Wolof enriched avenues explored by Sauneron a few years before as being of interest (the identity of third-person singular pronouns (*f*) in Egyptian and Wolof). Later, in Chapter 4, Zayed and Devisse placed Diop's presentation in the context of the urgent need to put an end to the division of Africa established by the General Act of Berlin in 1885: 'The history of Egypt has long been regarded by Egyptologists themselves as "Mediterranean" and "white" so investigative techniques, materials used and most importantly the mindsets of researchers, must be changed to put the land of the Pharaohs back in its African context'.

Thirty years later, the history of Egypt begins two centuries earlier. The kings preceding Narmer were buried at Abydos, had already founded Memphis and, if we place the prehistory/history divide into perspective, seven centuries earlier, Nekhen too. The country was marked by the political breakthrough of kingdoms of the south towards the north, integrating cultural traits into the process. One can only imagine that Cheikh Anta Diop would have been delighted by these new findings: was he not a pioneer of new methods when he built the first carbon-14 dating laboratory in Africa (Diop, 1968)?

Chapter 2 by Abu Bakr examines the chronology of successive Empires and occasionally provides hagiographic prominence to a few spectacular figures at the expense of historical clarity. While the 'archaic' period suffers from a lack of data from that time, the history of the Ancient Empire draws on a faithful exploitation of royal records and documents, and the biographies of high officials. The First Intermediate Period, marked by famines and strong social tensions, can be interpreted via didactic literature of the early Middle Kingdom (Period of Reunification). During this period, a more substantial body of Egyptian texts – great works, notable exploits, ceremonies, trading transactions, military campaigns – continued to tell the tale of each reign.

The Second Intermediate Period was marked by the Hyksos conquest which introduced 'horses, chariots and armour. The Egyptians, who had previously never needed such weaponry, finally used them against the Hyksos and drove them out of the country'. History must certainly have been more complicated. The story of the five centuries of the New Empire (1580-1085 BCE) is somewhat centred around the extraordinary figures of that time, Akhenaten and Tutankhamun. Thutmose III's numerous military campaigns suggest that the prosperity of the Pharaonic era of that time, the fruit of its own economic and social dynamics, had greatly benefited from the impact of goods and labour brought home from expeditions abroad. The author, therefore, opened a small window on social history.

The founder of the nineteenth dynasty, a general called Horemheb, initiated some reforms, passed a tax collection law, and opposed 'the treacherous rise in corruption among military officials and civilians since the reign of Akhenaten'. He promoted another officer called Ramses I. The glorious reign of Ramses II is explored at length, the decadence of the Ramessid period quickly sketched over, along with the rise in power of the priests of Amun. The time was ripe for probing the history of power exerted by officers and their descendants, as well as priests.

These days, the First Intermediate Period is the subject of a less academic analysis that re-establishes it within the context of the co-evolution of weather-orientated events and internal social chaos, and the relative autonomy of provincial authorities offsetting the crumbling of central Pharaonic power (Moreno-Garcia). Raids during the New Kingdom period in Egypt by 'sea peoples' in the eastern Nile delta, in conjunction with the Berbers in the west, remained incomprehensible. Reported in the history of the Eastern Mediterranean, these raids seemed to be the tail end of a long migratory flow that began in northern Greece, impacting Mycenae and then Troy (1210-1200 BCE), Ougarit and Canaan (1190-1180 BCE), before coming to a grinding halt before the armies of Ramses III between 1188 and 1177 BCE.

The periods that followed were summarily presented as ones of decline for Libyan dynasties settled in the delta and the 'Sudanese' dynasty, the Kushites having always kept a capital in present-day Sudan. Finally, the Saite dynasty and the Persian period only warranted a few lines.

Chapter 3, by Yoyotte, paints an articulate picture of the economic landscape of Egypt and the state administering it – a state with astonishing organizational charts created by 'royal or priestly administration of the arable land, flocks, mines, granaries, treasuries, river transport, justice, and so on', a particularly hierarchical bureaucracy with established and 'remarkable techniques of secretarial work and accountancy' (UNESCO, 1981, p. 121).

Thirty years later, Moreno-Garcia reopened the dossier on a state running a rural landscape that spanned 2,000 kilometres of valley land and a huge delta, contributing to 'the creation of local elites through matrimonial alliances, the integration of rural elites in the governing of the area and in the opening of new channels of social promotion on the fringes of local power bases', and the foundation 'of agricultural areas and temples that disrupted the organization of the countryside, the exploitation of local resources and work patterns', and whose 'tax requirements on work and on specific agricultural commodities led to changes in the productive choices of farmers …and in the running of …the area.' (Moreno-Garcia, 2019 [translation by author]).

Yoyotte clearly identifies the impact of the system on the political history of Egypt,

> Pharaonic history seems to have been acted out to the rhythm of the struggle between high officialdom, which tended to set itself up as a hereditary and autonomous power, and the monarchy, clinging to the right to control appointments… In the Second Intermediate Period, high office became a personal property that could be bought and sold. The end of the New Kingdom came when the Theban priesthood and the southern military command were joined and became the appanage of a dynasty of high priests of Amon (UNESCO, 1981, p. 119).

He then devotes a few lines to the status of women 'who enjoy equal rights over property and legal recourse', but not a jot on labour law at a time when the work of peasants and craftsmen was at the hub of the economic apparatus of the Egyptian State. Reference can be made here to the greatest benefit of work by Menu and Moreno-Garcia, who freed Egyptian work vocabulary from long-standing rushed research initiatives that led, for example, to the translation of the word *bꜣk* as *slave*, whereas Egyptian texts provided the example of *bꜣk* as *bꜣk.w.* The ownership of one man by another is an avenue that Egypt did exploit when it came to its workforce. The New Kingdom was famous for its picket lines by craftsmen at the royal Tomb, followed by negotiation initiatives. In 1907 Baillet wrote: 'The Egyptian language does not have a specific word to designate a slave. That doesn't mean that the language lacks the terms to express the concepts of subordination, labour and service. But none of these words corresponds exactly to the idea of servitude… the possession of a person's body and soul… unlike the Latin and Greek words servus, doulos' (Baillet, 1907, pp. 6-25).

The fourth chapter, by Zayed and Devisse, kicks off with a caution against jumping to conclusions too fast when data is missing, continues with the observation of a cultural gap between rural Egypt and its neighbours in the savannahs and oases, 'more or less kindred' to the Egyptians, and differentiates them using scripts as a measure of 'cultural progress'. Yet it is the registers recording tax abuses, burnt by the illiterate peasants in the Admonitions of Ipuwer, which showed that written documentation was a political tool and cultural advancement is enhanced by sharing it.

In the West, the Libyans, in predynastic Tehenu Palettes, exerted ongoing pressure, advancing to the Western delta – two millennia later they obtained permission from Ramses III to settle there, boosted their military defences and eventually ended up ruling Egypt. The author's analysis of the state of knowledge at the time notes that exchange between Egypt and the Sahara was 'occasionally denied', and reports an ongoing investigation into Saharan cave art from the Atlantic to the Red Sea, suggesting routes via the oases. But due to a lack of data: 'Nothing today proves that these routes were regularly frequented during the

dynastic era. But archaeology is expected to reveal whether or not the Egyptians criss-crossed the axes from the oases' towards the mountains of the Sahara. The wishes of the authors of this chapter have been largely fulfilled. At Gebel Uweynat, a Middle Kingdom inscription links the name Mentouhotep and the country of Yam, giving a new lease of life to the location in the process.

In the South, the countries of Nubia named in Egyptian sources are not pinpointed in a precise manner. The *kɜɜw* in Weni's biography, specifying the basin and mountain ranges of foreign countries, is a victim of its transcription: '*Kaaw*', at its most applicable point of comparison, shares African vocabulary used from Libya to Ethiopia. In the south-west, up until 1930, the Teda lived on Gebel Uweynat, the mountain of springs. The name they gave to its now fossilized riverbeds, *Karkur* Idriss, Karkur Ibrahim, and so on, signifies *river* in their language, and in the south-east, in Dinka, *kuer*, in Agaw, *kura*. The routes along the Sudanese fossil valleys of Wadi Howar and Wadi Malik towards Chad, and the donkey caravans that followed them, now emerge from the silence of the data. Even the paleolake of Mega Chad is now conjectured in Egyptian texts.

The authors cast a logical eye on the status of data they have to interpret. The foundation of Kerma and the Kingdom of Kush are 'poorly understood due to insufficient research'. The land of Punt is not defined by any archaeological evidence in line with texts and inscriptions mentioning it until the reign of Ramses IV. No doubt we shall have to wait until textual evidence and archaeological data confirms this. Finally, both authors put forward the hypothesis of a relationship between Africa and Egypt based on the dispersion of headrests, *wrs* in ancient Egyptian. A few years later in 1980, Lam, a student of Cheikh Anta Diop, produced a map and studied the relationship in a thesis supervised by Jean Leclant, confirming the relevance of intuition in these matters. The opening of the cultural file led the authors of the chapter to consider new research methods that were more productive, and to question century-specific assumptions: the issue 'of relations between Egypt and the African continent during the Pharaonic era is one of the most important issues relating to African historiography today. It also calls into question research methodology'.

North Africa and the Sahara

The plan for Volume II of the *General History of Africa* does not escape history but reflects the story of History – that of data, and of the disciplines and methods that establish said data. A chapter on the *Sahara* on the shared history

between Proto-Berbers and the Nilo-Saharans could have judiciously preceded, been integrated into and given full meaning to chapters 17, 18 and 19.

A Sahara that is empty today, bustled with life less than 10,000 years ago. Its disparate data in iconographic cave art is the ultimate echo of times past, reminding us to take climate history into account when looking at the history of cultures. The historiographical vacuum has gradually filled today due to work by numerous interdisciplinary teams from Algeria, such as Rachid (Tassili), and from abroad including Di Lernia (Acacus), Le Quellec (Messak), Zboray (Uweynat), Kuper and Riemer (Gilf Kebir). All of them worked on sites, often UNESCO World Heritage sites, requiring international protection that was tricky to organize. Egypt had to repatriate the ransacked site of Nabta Playa to the Aswan Museum.

Over the past thirty years, an increase in chronological (C-14 dating), and archaeological, genetic and linguistic data places the Saharan region, its paleolakes (Lake Mega-Chad) and mountain ranges, as well as northern regions of the Maghreb and southern regions of the Niger and Chad, as part of the cultural world of the Nile valley bordering it to the east – facts recalled in the collective work *Egypt and Nubia, Gifts of the Desert.* The more arid the climate of the Sahara became, the more the Nile valley and its delta, the result of centuries of annual flooding triggered by receding monsoons to the south, attracted people from the xerophilous savannah lands. They vied to replace the early foundations of Mediterranean agriculture at Merimde with the farming of the kingdoms of Upper Egypt that the elites had established from Iry Hor to Memphis in 3200 BCE. It is within this same context that the Berber universe of the Tehenou, noted in Egyptian biographies dating from the Ancient Empire, must be reinstated (Harkhouf, Weni). The history of the Sahara began prior to classical Antiquity. We can see the blind spot in Volume II in this silent expanse. Moreover the history of North Africa cannot be diminished to the commercial and political presence of incoming colonies settling around the Mediterranean basin at Carthage (a colony of ancient Phoenicia) and Greece (Cyrenaica).

There is a need to paint a more complete picture of the vast countries in the north of the continent, one that is better integrated into the *General History of Africa*. No culture is isolated; no history is an island among the archipelago of histories. This is something that the author Pierre Salama understood only too well: twenty years after publishing a map of trading routes uniting the shores of the Niger with the Mediterranean in Volume II, in 2000 he published a map of the *Trading Route Network of Roman Africa.*

Maps of archaeological sites and inter-regional trading routes have undergone adjustments thanks to satellite-driven archaeological surveys. Bubenzer and

Bolten provided a convincing example for the identification of caravan routes in the eastern Sahara, and Friquet and Le Quellec for the inventory of lithic monuments at Tassili Immidir. Roman Africa camped at the gateway to the Sahara, preceded by many other African civilizations, long victims of silent data.

Egypt and the Classical World

It is tempting to consider together chapters 5 (legacy), 6 (Greeks in Egypt, as visitors then rulers) and 7 (Egypt under Rome), the first describing the 'heritage' that would inspire other cultures, the second an intercultural era over two periods, one marked by the loss of sovereignty, and the third chapter turning Egypt into a granary for the Roman Empire.

Now a collective of spectacular locations in twentieth century literature, the metaphor of the legacy, far from innocuous, neglects the essential in the development of this inheritance: during the slow march of history, the tradition of inventiveness, characteristic of the human species, and the paths of interculturality, characterized as much by conflict as they are partnership. Egyptian culture was very quick to travel down the *paths of Horus* towards the Levant. Both sides borrowed from each other, as products and ideas travelled with missions and armies. The Nekhen breweries in Upper-Egypt, circa 3800 BCE, and later ones at Tell el Farkha in the eastern delta during the Iry Hor period, produced Egyptian beer on sites that included kilns and granaries. An Egyptian brewery was recently unearthed on a site near Jerusalem. Conversely, Palestinian wine urns were discovered at Abydos in the Uj tomb dating back to 3250 BCE, imports that ended when the kings of the First Dynasty set up their own wineries in Egypt.

The authors of the fifth chapter El-Nadoury and Vercoutter, emphasize the model provided by Egypt to the civilizations around the Mediterranean basin, in the size of stones and statues, architecture, quarries and water-borne transportation of stone blocks for royal funerary complexes. The ancient Egyptians excelled particularly in fractions and geometry (the best calculation of pi in Antiquity), in the observation of time (calculation of a year as 360 days, plus 5 epagomenal days) and medicine (suture stitching, reduction of fractures).

The authors expand on a less spectacular example: the invention of a plant-based support for writing purposes, papyrus, the ancestor of paper (obtained without felling a single tree). The most ancient papyrus scroll was discovered in 1938, blank, dating back to the First Dynasty. The most ancient

written papyri date back to the reign of Khufu, in the Fourth Dynasty. The authors revealed that the scribes from the Registry used between 750 and 1,600 metres of rolls (*mḏꜣt*) of papyrus per month, very little next to the records and inventories of palaces and temples, 'hundreds of kilometres of papyrus that must have existed even though only a few hundred metres have actually been found'. An apt reminder to combine archaeological research with historical research.

As for hieroglyphic script itself, recent findings shed new light on its impact on the development of ancient scriptures. First, it inspired some inscriptions by oriental miners in Upper Egypt, a far-flung protosinaitic test bed long used for funereal purposes, which ended up providing materials and principles for alphabetic cuneiform Ugaritic script, rapidly employed for administration and trade in the Mediterranean.

The following chapters are, in Latin in the text, those of colonial *exactio* (levies). The establishment of Greek dynasties in Alexandria was the topic of a detailed sixth chapter by Riad and Devisse. The Ptolemaic rulers equipped their capital with massive wheat granaries centralizing the harvests from throughout the land, and a central bank with numerous branches that minted coins with the profiles of kings and queens, including Cleopatra. These rulers lived mainly in Egypt and developed political and trading links as far as Meroe in modern day Sudan. This entailed a spectacular military effort to engage in war with Near Eastern countries. Elephants were hunted along the Eritrean coast to Somalia and transported by boat from bases established there by the Ptolemaic dynasty 'to defeat their Seleucid rivals who were getting them from Asia. It was also necessary to go to India to find elephant tamers to control the captured animals'. The indirect benefit of these endeavours? 'Hippale's discovery of monsoon patterns during Ptolemy III's reign reduced travel time to India and made the trip less expensive and dangerous'.

A class of affluent Egyptians appeared, including the analyst Manetho, who collaborated with the Greeks. Acculturation was shared. The Alexandrian world invited Egyptian gods into their syncretic pantheon, which was soon exported to the Aegean. The Egyptian elite close to the Ptolemies spoke Egyptian and Greek. Bilingual inscriptions in both Egyptian hieroglyphs and in Greek, having survived the steamroller of history, were a key to men from other societies understanding hieroglyphic texts twenty centuries later. These constitute the distant origins of contemporary interpretation. We are all familiar with the role of the Museum of Alexandria and its Library, the many scholars and men of letters, the decline and burning of the institution under Roman rule, and the development and triumph of Christianity that wielded the fatal blow.

Chapter 7 by Donadoni sees Egypt fall under the direct authority of the Roman Emperor. Egypt's function as the granary of the Empire is described in minute detail. The delegation of administrative jobs to a propertied class equipped the Roman colonization with collaborators and cut down costs. In 212 CE, when the Constitution granted the right of citizenship to all inhabitants of the Empire, it excluded Egypt from the list. Exhausted by the colonial farming of its wheat and the burden of taxation levied by *exactor*, the country ceased to be the granary of Rome as the peasants abandoned their own fields for the desert.

The Empire became Christian. Egypt, which now depended on Constantinople, became Christian in due course – a path of social and religious conflict: the story of Horapollon, landowner and philosopher, the grandson of grammarian Horapollon (who taught in Alexandria and in Constantinople), could be suggested to students at this point. Horapollon taught Aristotle in Alexandria, now the capital of the diocese of Egypt, but remained devoted to the Egyptian Gods, which resulted in many an ear bashing by the Christians. Hieroglyphic script was no longer written or read, and was already the topic of conjecture among the Egyptians themselves.

Nubian developments

The title of Chapter 8, written by Adam and Vercoutter, is most inappropriate. It assigns the Nubian people a historical destiny from the mindset of the early twentieth century and exploits Egypt. The geographic location of Nubia makes it a bridge to deepest Africa. Fortunately, the authors of the different chapters have a clear and forward-looking perspective on this knowledge: 'There is still much to be learnt from archaeology' in Nubia 'as excavations have not yet revealed their greatest findings, the theories outlined remain pure speculation".

The results of thirty years of research by Polish and Sudanese archaeological teams now provide a completely different and particularly complex picture. Nubia and the whole of the Sudan are rooted in a Neolithic Nilo-Saharan dynamic with pottery dating back to ancient times (ninth millennium BCE), and reports of inter-regional trade with valley cultures followed by political exchange during the era of Pharaonic expansion.

Chapter 9, by Sherif, is devoted to Nubia prior to Napata and is one of the most comprehensive summaries of the state of knowledge at the time, both in terms of the archaeology of the material culture and the reading of the political history of the region. The clear distinction made between groups A and C in the

chronology of Nubian studies and the obsolescence of group B are well presented. It is noted that the culture of pastoral group C developed independently of that in Egypt, from which they adopted neither the technology nor the writing techniques. The cycles of Egyptian relations with Nubian countries are characterized by high points at the end of great periods of fading Pharaonic power, or intermediate periods of contemporary chronicles that continued to mobilize Egypt northwards. Once Pharaonic power was restored, Egypt turned back towards the south. During the Middle Kingdom period, Amenhemat I, and then his son Senousret (Sesostris I), occupied Nubia and built fortresses there. The word Kush appeared in Egyptian texts around that time. Shortly before the Third Cataract, archaeology unearthed the culture of Kerma, deemed to be an advanced Egyptian trading post for its discoverer Reisner (1913-1916), but for Hintze in 1964 it was more the residence of the local ruler of the Kush. The author of the chapter takes a rational approach to the state of knowledge: 'The Dongola region is packed with sites dating back to the Kerma period and, as we have not yet undertaken systematic archaeological research, plenty of things remain to be learnt about the Kerma culture'. Four decades of digs by Swiss and Sudanese teams back this point today. Excavations by Honegger have revealed the importance of large herds of cattle whose bucrania encircle the most ancient royal tombs and the original architecture of early palatial complexes. During the ArcheoNil Study Days opened in Paris by Jean Leclant in 2010, Honegger presented an analysis of the Kerma digs, including digs at a pre-Kerma agglomeration covering two hectares (circa 3000 BCE), characterized by storage pits, huge livestock pens and fortifications comprising six parallel fences forming a barrier 8 metres wide and 160 metres long. He compared the palatial complex to palaces in kingdoms of the Upper Nile, particularly at BuNyoro and, as an aside to the plan, expressed a more recent interest in Mbanza Kongo, and a desire to work with African archaeologists from Congo or Cameroon as part of his international team.

During the New Kingdom period, once the sovereignty that had been undermined by the Hykos in the north had been restored, the Egyptians turned their attention again to Nubia. Tuthmosis I conquered the land as a whole and put an end to the independence of the Kingdom of the Kush, but not without resistance. Grimal recently published the annals of Tuthmosis III, outlining the state of Wawat and Kush tribute payments. Horemheb and Ramses II established an Egyptian presence by constructing monumental temples and exploiting gold from Nubia to benefit the royal treasury. They reorganized Kush, run by a 'governor of southern lands': the *W3w3t*, from Nekhen to the

Second cataract, and Kush, the whole of the land between the Second and Fourth cataracts. This viceroy of Nubia from the history books ruled over the local princes and ensured the delivery of tribute payments to Thebes. Nubia was becoming Egyptianized, as evidenced by burial methods and grave goods, and by the fact that the elite Princes spoke Egyptian. A viceroy of the Kush, Pa Nehesi, and his troops helped Ramses XI to quell a revolt at Assiout, and one of his relatives was subsequently appointed viceroy of Nubia and Vizier of Thebes.

Chapter 10 is written by Jean Leclant. After almost five centuries of Egyptian rule over the Kush, from 1580-1085 BCE, 'an almost all-pervasive silence fell over Nubia', a hiatus of two centuries due to a lack of data. His reading of history has not aged regarding the objectives of the ninth volume of the GHA. Setting himself apart from the trends of the time, Leclant remains adamant about the indigenousness of the princes from the Kurru burial site (late ninth century BCE), ancestors of the line that was to go on to unite Sudan and Egypt during the twenty-fifth dynasty. Around 750 BCE, the Nubians occupied part of Upper Egypt. The next king, Piye (Piankhe), engraved 159 lines of text on a stele at Napata, recounting his campaigns against the Libyan dynasties that ruled Middle Egypt and the Delta. On another he 'defined the federal character of the Kushite Empire'. His brother Shabaka conquered Egypt right to the delta. Both of Piye's sons succeeded him with Taharqa (-690/-664 BCE) building shrines in the foothills of Jebel Barkal and battling the Assyrians in the north. For 'half a century', observes Leclant, 'a united Egypt and Sudan were a great African power'. After Taharqa's death, Assurbanipal sacked Thebes in -663 BCE. The Kushites retreated south.

The history of the Kushites is more difficult to establish after their withdrawal from Egypt. It wasn't that the Kush was in decline, it was 'an African culture that sometimes asserts itself more in its specificity and other times it wants to get in tune with Egyptian civilization, being uniquely African itself'. When Psamtik II invaded the Kush with an Egyptian army 'bolstered by Greek and Carian mercenaries' and captured Napata, the Kushites transferred their capital to Meroe, close to the Sixth Cataract, in an area more favourable for farming and at the crossroads of the trade routes from the Red Sea to Chad. Cambyse's Persian army wanted to repeat Psamtik II's expedition and sustained a definitive defeat. Later, the *kdke*, the Kadakes, would repel the Romans occupying Egypt, who were stunned to see women in the role of warrior queens with royal status, the subject of much research since then. Modern studies have also focused on the issue of languages and their contacts. The use of the Egyptian language changed in Meroe. The Kushites abandoned hieroglyphs for an original cursive script

and took on Egyptian as their language. Egypt embraced Meroitic syncretic cults, such as the Isis cult at Philae, with demotic graffiti in its sanctuary in both Greek and Meroitic languages.

It was agreed that a preliminary report on the *Symposium on the Deciphering of the Meroitic language*, prepared at UNESCO's request by Jean Leclant, should logically feature after Chapter 10. The Meroitic language spoken in Napata and Meroe remains unintelligible despite the script already having been deciphered (see the 13 Meroitic Newsletters).

> The historical account of the studies made on Meroitic showed how systematic research on the inscriptions, which had gradually been collected in a haphazard way in the course of excavations, had been started only in recent years. Archaeological research was likely to bring to light more inscriptions in the future; none had so far been discovered in the region between the second and fourth cataracts ... It was particularly important to persevere with archaeological work as it could reasonably be hoped that a bilingual inscription might one day be discovered (UNESCO, 1978).

Four meetings went on to take place in Khartoum, Berlin and Paris between 1970 and 1973. Forty years later, the 800 texts collected by Griffiths have yielded limited meaningful vocabulary, a few morphemes and no translation. The orientation of the identification of Meroitic to Kushtic languages also spoken in the region gave way to Claude Rilly's solid argument that it belonged to a central Sudanese language family. A proposal by the Symposium is still valid: the language training of Sudanese students at Khartoum University, preferably those speaking a language from one of these linguistic families as their mother tongue, along with the establishment of Sudanese research initiatives.

Chapter 11 by Hakem, Hrbek and Vercoutter, paints a detailed picture of Kushite civilization, its capital moving further south within a millennium just as, 3,000 years before, Egypt's capital had crept slowly northwards. The description can only be enhanced today by taking into account the country's status on the far flung trade routes that were part of the world economy of the millennium, and the way power anchored itself to it using acculturation and innovation:

> Trade and politics were intimately intertwined in early states. Imported items were dominated by elite interests, and through the state institutions of redistribution, a mechanism for tying clients to the political centre was established. The centre's need for the collection of goods for export was primarily based on the ability of its military/administrative apparatus to extract goods through tribute, taxation and raiding(Haaland, 2014).

Aksum

The emergence of Aksum is placed once again within the context of the history of its time, during which Ethiopia was 'a crossroads of trade and cultural influences' (UNESCO, 1981, p.372). The decline of Meroe 'and the waning power of the south Arabian kingdoms' permitted 'the Ethiopians to control all trade of gold, incense and ivory, as well as products imported from the Indian Ocean' (UNESCO, 1981, p. 359), thus establishing favourable conditions for the creation of an Aksumite kingdom in the second century CE. The authors provide good descriptions of material culture, the urbanization of the capital, the position of its port at the crossroads of trade between India and the Mediterranean and its role as a hub for the ivory trade, this commodity having become 'indispensable to the luxury-loving Romans' (UNESCO, 1981, p. 377).

For Anfray, the author of Chapter 14, 'African origins gave' Aksum, located at the crossroads of all the global-economic influences of its era, its special character. The region expanded its millet farming and pottery activities from the fourth millennium BCE and became rooted in pastoral farming, raising long-horned cattle similar to 'those that were raised at the same time in the Sahara and in the Nile basin' (UNESCO, 1981, p. 341). Aksum emerged as a political power when it tapped into trading activities and developed the port of Adulis, founded by the Ptolemy family in the third century BCE to funnel in elephants for use in the military, transforming it into a kind of maritime hub. The Aksumites therefore had close historical ties with the kingdoms of southern Arabia. The author hesitates between cultural unity due to south-Arab settlers, or to Indigenous peoples who had assimilated 'the superior culture' (sic). Aksum sent ambassadors to Meroe, the city that controlled the desert region inhabited by the Bedja people, then conquered it during the fourth century, waging war on Sabean Arabia shortly afterwards, for a time incorporated in the kingdom of Aksum. 'The state was divided into Aksum proper and its vassal kingdoms, the rulers of which were subjects of the Aksum king of kings [Negus], to whom they paid tribute' (UNESCO, 1981, p. 384). This is how an empire was built that stretched from the rich farmland of northern Ethiopia to Sudan and southern Arabia.

The picture of economic life is a source for reflection. The people of Aksum lived off the produce farmed on irrigated terraces, drank locally brewed beer and wine, and boasted renowned artisans and ironwork already recognized in Meroe. Aksum minted its own coins (from gold) in the second century and exported precious materials, gold, Bedja emeralds and ivory. The imports were destined for

the bilingual Aksumite aristocracy (Ge'ez, Greek) and included finished products, clothing and fabrics, tools, brass, iron and copper from the Mediterranean, as well as cotton, rice, sugar cane, sesame oil and iron from India.

The writing of the Aksumites, contemporaries of the Greeks and Romans in Egypt, was derived from that of southern Arabia. However, writing from left to right was adopted very quickly in the second century. Inscriptions by King Ezana in the fourth century then introduced syllabism and thus the vowel signs in the writing of the language of Aksum, Ge'ez. In the north, Aksum was the distant trading partner of Byzantium. Ideas – and sometimes languages – followed the same routes as goods, helped along by missionaries. The common historical scenario was that kings converted. During the fifth century, the Bible was translated into Ge'ez.

Eastern Africa

Chapters 22 and 23 seem to suffer from the lack of exploitation of possible Arabic sources relating to human and economic geography (trade networks).

Chapter 22, too reliant on the *Periplus* commentary, should be reviewed on the basis of archaeological and historical data published since 1981. Pinpointing the actual location of Punt is still a hotly debated topic. The Egyptian *List* of the Countries of the Kush situated the country of *Pwanet* in a region 'where Egyptians were unknown' implying a location beyond the southernmost part of Eritrea. Chapter 23 suffers from the same problems – outdated data, a dated ethnographic approach, often questionable vocabulary ('The Hadza remain hunter-gatherers', the Bantu 'have an attachment to iron and agriculture'). The author nevertheless refutes theories attributing an external origin to African civilizations, which seem to him to 'derive from prejudiced European scholarship and grotesque attitudes towards Africa' (UNESCO, 1981, p. 579). The best part of the chapter on Madagascar and Grande Comore, which would have benefited from being linked to chapters on the eastern coast, is the identification of Indonesian and Bantu traits relating to linguistic and botanical matters, as well as to material culture. But this is an overview, hence not free from reference to the *Periplus*. Comments on the possible role of Anjouan Island (Bantu-speaking Comoro Islands) in the movement of Indonesian populations towards Madagascar deserve to be developed and to be the subject of archaeological and linguistic studies.

West and Central Africa

The author of Chapter 21, M. Posnansky, starts off with a juicy caveat: 'The "Neolithic" in sub-Saharan Africa is a term which has been used in various inconsistent ways in the past ... to denote an agricultural economy' (UNESCO, 1981, p. 533). He notes the obsolescence of research on settlements 'studied nearly half a century ago'. He then examines the role of agriculture and iron, drawing on a substantial corpus of systematic studies on Bantu languages, as well as new methodologies boding well for a great future. Scant data lead to conjectural conclusions:

> in the course of time, with more advanced retrieval techniques and intensified botanical and palynological research into the genetic background and distribution of Africa's cultivated plants, it should be possible to provide more substantial information (UNESCO, 1981, p. 540).

Posnansky nevertheless draws from available data the image of an agriculture far older than that of the late scenarios dear to colonial ideology. He comments that yams, sorghum and palm oil originated from West Africa, and the same goes for rice (*Oryza glaberrima*). We can even add today that, having started from the shores of Chad and the Niger basin to the rice fields of Casamance, African rice cultivation is at the origin of that in Louisiana, having crossed seeds and rice growers in the steerage of the Aurore (slave ship) during the slave trade of the early eighteenth century.

Data relating to copper and iron metallurgy experience the same uncertainty and persistent image of transmission from the Mediterranean world. Posnansky recalls the work of Cheikh Anta Diop on African iron smelting, supporting evidence of African iron metallurgy being of African origin. Nok culture and sites at Burkina yielded stone and iron tools in the same context, and Posnansky argues that the 'possibility must remain open that iron working took place in predominantly late stone age contexts' (UNESCO, 1981, p. 545). As for the theory of diffusion from the sites at Meroe, it is invalidated by the much older dates for iron metallurgy in West Africa (see below). Explorations of the sites by satellite could make it possible to establish a map of ancient African metallurgy in the future.

While these chapters remain hostage to the data and vocabulary of the decades preceding the writing of the first eight volumes, their authors, in particular Wai-Andah, who wrote Chapter 24, see these contributions as drawing a line under the legacy of the Berlin partition. Less than twenty years later, Wai Andah took stock of progress made and what remained to be done in *The Epistemology of West African Settlements*.

Chapter 25 frames the history of central Africa around the spread of metalworking and the 'amazing spread of the Bantu languages' (UNESCO, 1981, p. 620). The authors outline a co-evolving vision of human, animal and plant species using the vocabulary of a human geography that sketches the broad outlines of history according to a standard conceptual framework that has become quite narrow (gatherers, stone age, iron age). The synthesis of available data is all the more critically remarkable when the spotlight turns to the precocious emergence of metalworking initiatives. The best tribute is the surfeit of recommended objectives put forward by the authors of different chapters, presented by each collective work and each symposium to Wai-Andah, de Maret and Posnansky, who participated in the GHA. Twenty and thirty years later, in the collective work edited by UNESCO on the topic of iron metallurgy in Africa (Bocoum, ed. *The Origins of Metallurgy in Africa. New Light on its Antiquity [West and Central Africa]*), and at a Symposium held in November 2010 at Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, the work of a hundred African researchers highlighted the lavish use of new technologies (radiocarbon dating) and digital tools (databases), with a continual focus on interdisciplinarity (archaeology, history, linguistics, cultural anthropology), and the sharing of knowledge to be integrated in school and university textbooks.

Southern Africa

Chapters 26 and 27 by J. E. Parkington and D. W. Phillipson, respectively, suffer from the lack of archaeological research in the decades before and after independence, which extended the media life of publications dating from the colonial era, such as work by the abbot Henry Breuil, and an interpretative framework that tells us more about the history of historical theory than about history itself. The analytical vocabulary of the chapters remains reliant on the 'ages' yardstick, which obscures the history of tools used by each society and renders the motivation for possible acculturations unintelligible. The chapter on hunter-gatherers is thus grouped together with chapters on the Iron Age, not necessarily as the result of a linear diffusion of a new technology. Although they are usually linked by history, the forge is not necessarily born near the granary. For example, the Elmolo, from Turkana Lake, who were ancient pastoralists turned fishermen, hunted hippopotamuses from boats using harpoons, as did the first kings of predynastic Egypt, the Horus harpooners, who carved the title *Hr msnw* in hieroglyphs on the ivory of their 'powerfacts' (inscribed objects

in which the inscription is more important than the function), while their knowledge of iron extended as far as it falling from the sky, *bi3 n pt*.

These days, with the help of new data, the question has to be asked in a different way. The Issouqan of the Moroccan Draa Valley, Berber-speaking Haratin hunters, seem to be the perpetrators of the endogenous invention of iron metallurgy in the second millennium BCE, and the same goes for Bambara society, where the antelope, the wild animal of agriculture, and the hyena of the komo, the wild animal of the blacksmith, express the domestication of mineral and plant life in words of the hunt – which questions the lifestyle of societies with an emerging metallurgical innovation as much as it sheds light on its somewhat remarkable precocity.

The chapter by Phillipson also deplores the lack of data and the 'unequal distribution and quality of archaeological work', from which he depicts societies practising agriculture (the plants then identified: squash, pumpkin, millet, peas), raising sheep, working stone, iron, copper and familiar with gold, made famous by its monumental architecture (Zimbabwe) – for a time victims of Berlin's division of history and its colonial mythologies.

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CHAPTER 3

AFRICA FROM THE 7TH TO THE 11TH CENTURY

General History of Africa Volume III
Idrissa Bâ

Introduction

The work is divided into 28 chapters of varying importance, along the themes of religion, trade, geography and sometimes ethnolinguistic entities, with a final summary chapter. In this review, the first part will be devoted to a summary presentation of the chapters, following the themes mentioned above. A second and final part will cover the critical analysis and perspectives.

Islam as the driving force of history

The period in question here is marked by the swift expansion of Islam in all of its dimensions (religious, political, economic, cultural, etc.) across the known world, covered in chapters 1-4, 7-10, 12-13, 20 and 26. This expansion concerns Africa, mainly through four modalities: military conquests, trade, population movements and the voluntary conversion of some of the Sudanese political elite.

Islam's expansion through military conquests

Military conquests would gradually affect North Africa, the Sahara and sub-Saharan Africa. In North Africa, a clear distinction was made between

Egypt on the one hand and the Maghreb on the other. As shown by T. Bianquis (Chapter 7), M. El Fasi and I. Hrbek (chapters 2 and 3), Amr conquered Egypt from 640 with relative ease, and with good reason. This Byzantine province, a land of conflict between different forms of Christianity and a victim of excessive tax burdens, was ripe for the Arab conquest.

However, in the Maghreb, the Arab conquest faced the fierce resistance of the Berbers. But the superiority of the Muslim armies would eventually overcome these attempts at resistance. They were in fact, a veritable war machine – described in detail by H. Monès (Chapter 9), who builds on and supplements chapters 2 and 3 by M. El Fasi and I. Hrbek, respectively – which was set in motion and succeeded, in four key stages, in ensuring the conquest of this region and establishing its authority.

The first stage (641-649) consists of 'the campaigns of 'Amr ibn al-'As and 'Abd Allâh ibn Sa'd [which] can be considered as the preliminary or preparatory stages of the conquest' (p. 232).

The second stage began in 663 when the new caliph, Mu'âwiya, appointed Ukba Ibn 'Amîr al-Djuhanî as governor of Egypt, and Mu'âwiya Ibn Hudaydj al-Sâkunî as commander-in-chief of the Arab army. This followed a long period of nearly twelve years marked by lethargy and paralysis in the expansion of the conquest due to the civil war raging among the Arabs since the middle of the caliphate of 'Uthmân (644-656), and lasted until Mu'âwiya ibn Abî Sufyan's accession to the caliphate in 661. During this phase, the Muslim armies received substantial reinforcements which enabled them to complete the conquest of North Africa.

The year 670 marked an important turning point in the conquest. Caliph Mu'âwiya dismissed Ibn Hudaydj and appointed his ally 'Ukba ibn Nâfi' as commander-in-chief of the Arab forces in North Africa. 'This appointment was to prove decisive for the conquest' (p. 233). He advanced to Kawâr, passing through Fezzân, and then travelled north to Ghadâmes, where he received reinforcements of 10,000 cavalry, attacked the last Byzantine strongholds around Gabes and established a capital he named Kayrawân, meaning 'camp' or 'arsenal'.

It was then that 'Ukba learned of his dismissal (in 675). The appointment of his successor, Dînâr ibn Abû al-Muhâdjir, 'one of the most brilliant minds ever to lead the Arab conquest of the Maghreb' (p. 233) marked the beginning of the third phase. He held office from 675 to 682. In 578, he managed to persuade Kusayla, the Berber chief and all his people to convert to Islam.

However, upon Mu'âwiya's death (in 680), his son Yâzid, who succeeded him, dismissed Abû al-Muhâdjir and replaced him with 'Ukba ibn Nâfi. 'This second appointment of 'Ukba ibn Näfi as head of the conquering Arab army of the West was undoubtedly the most important event in the Arab conquest of North

Africa' (p. 234). In fact, before his death in battle in 683, he managed to break down important Berber alliances with Christians, taking regions that were all equally important: the Awras, the mountain strongholds of the Masâmida, the Wâdî Dar'a and Tafilâlet, pushing as far as the Atlantic coast at Sâfî.

Faced with the Muslim onslaught, the Berber resistance organized itself in two successive phases around two very strong personalities. The first was Kusayla who 'built up a Berber kingdom covering the Awras, the area south of Constantine and the greater part of Ifrïkiya (687-690)' (p. 237). He was killed in 690 by Zuhayr Ibn Kays, who had been sent to North Africa in 688 with a new army to reconquer the territory lost since 'Ukba's death.

The second person was 'a Berber woman whom the Arabs called al-Kâhina, the prophetess...chief of the Djarâwa in the Awras mountains, [who] had assembled all the Zanâta of the region and announced that she would throw the Arabs out of Ifrïkiya' (p. 237). Obviously, she did not succeed, but she did subject them to serious setbacks, particularly in 696, by employing a rare strategy based mainly on the 'scorched earth' tactic. In 711, she was killed in battle.

In the Sahara, the Arab-Muslim armies probably pushed their conquests to Sus al-Aksa, but in practical terms, as told by I. Hrbek and J. Devisse (Chapter 13, pp. 336-366), the expansion of Islam in the Sahara, particularly the west, was the work of the Almoravids. The founder of the movement, 'Abdallâh ibn Yâsîn, who was an outstanding strategist and 'a skilled politician' (p. 348) arrived between 1054 and 1059, aided by the Lamtûna, on whom he relied and, thanks to 'a reform of the traditional tactics of the Berbers' (p. 344), supplemented by persuasion (negotiations, alliances, rallies, diplomatic actions, submission, etc.) and military actions, established an empire that would be expanded by his successors to extend from the Ebro to Senegal.

In sub-Saharan Africa, an important role, the impact of which remains to be measured, was played in the spread of Islam by force of arms, both by the Almoravid movement and by local Islamized states. The regions most affected by these military actions were the Chad basin, Ethiopia and the Senegal River Valley.

Islam's expansion through trade

In Africa, the association between Islam and trade is indisputable. It is evident on two levels. The first is the development of trade, particularly trans-Saharan trade, and the second is the establishment of trading networks.

Generally, Arab-Muslim trade allowed Islam to penetrate many regions of Africa south of the Sahara including Nubia, Nilotic Sudan, the Horn of Africa

and others. Specifically, trans-Saharan trade appears in the authors' editorial logic as a result of the expansion of Islam. It was thanks to this trade in general, and to the Arab merchants who arrived in Sidjilmasa in particular, that the Berbers of the Western Sahara encountered Islam. According to Ibn Khaldûn, these Berbers became Muslims from the second decade of the eighth century.

The Kharijites, through Ibadite traders, had settled at Tadmekka from the ninth century. However, due to hostility of their authors, sources rarely mention the Ibadite's role in the conversions and their presence in the Sudan. Several Sudanese towns bear witness to the presence of the Ibadite traders who eventually ruled Sidjilmasa. They also controlled the routes connecting Libya to the Lake Chad basin. The Ibadite presence is confirmed by several traces left in the religious architecture and the Hausa legend of Daura.

The most important trading networks were those set up by the Dioulas, the Hausa and Diakhanké. Involved in the Sahelian, Sudanese and Guinean extension of trans-Saharan trade, they were the first to convert to Islam. They organized themselves into communities with their own specific neighbourhoods and mosques, in a context of tolerance.

Islam's expansion through the movement of people

Several chapters (for example, Chapter 20 written by E. Cerulli) also note that the continuous arrival of Arabs and Persians from the Near and Middle East, either individually or in entire *kabâ'il* (Banu Hilal, Banu Sulaym), to settle in Egypt, the Maghreb, the Sahara, eastern Sudan, the east coast of Africa and the islands of this region, greatly contributed to the expansion of Islam.

Islam's expansion through the conversion of Sudanese leaders

For obvious reasons of social prestige, diplomatic influence and insertion into the Arab-Muslim global economy, particularly through trans-Saharan trade, Sudanese leaders and courtiers converted to Islam. The first of these was the king of Tékrur, War Djabi, even before the ascent of the Almoravids in 1030. The same was true of Chief Dya Kosoy in Gao in 1009/1010 and the King of Mallal, who was given the nickname *Al-Muslimâni*.

Characteristics of Islam in Africa

Z. Dramani-Issifou (Chapter 4, pp. 92-118) describes Islam 'as a social system in Africa'. He notes that, despite the diversity of legal schools, Maliki law has

prevailed in the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa. One of the characteristics of this African Islam is the emergence of mystic currents or Sufism, which shows that this was a meeting between peoples.

He also notes that social and cultural tensions within African societies, linked to the success of Islam after the mid-eleventh century, took two forms. The first: African societies, which are essentially agrarian and oral in culture, and based on the extended family, have a special relationship with local religions leaders. The second is that these societies, which are slow to change and have a strong sense of solidarity, have ways of life that are very different from those of the Arabs, hence the tension caused by pressure from Muslim clerics to convert. The situation can be seen as a confrontation between traditional religions and Islam. But even within the Muslim empire, some conquered regions would be quick to regain their independence.

The emancipation of North Africa

The authors (T. Bianquis, Chapter 7 and I. Hrbek, Chapter 12) pass over the progressive reasons for emancipation in North Africa somewhat too quickly. In Egypt, it was due to centrifugal forces such as the Tulunids, Ikhshidids and Kafur (969), which heralded the successive arrival of the Fatimids and Mamluks.

In the Maghreb, explains Talbi (Chapter 10, pp. 246-275), the injustices suffered by Muslim Berbers under the Umayyads, particularly in the distribution of spoils and the payment of taxes, were the main factors behind 'the revolt and independence of the country' (p. 246). Kharidjism, as a political theology advocating equality among all Muslims and the choice of the best among as Imam, quickly gained widespread support among the Berbers. After a few military successes punctuated by rare setbacks, between 740 and 743, the Kharidjites conquered practically all of central and eastern Maghreb and established different kingdoms. Tâmasnâ still known as the 'Kingdom of Barghawâta' (p. 251), Tlemcen, the Kingdom of the Banû Wâsul or Banû Midrâr were Sufrites; Tripoli and Tâhert were Ibadites. From the mid-eighth century, Shi'ism began to challenge Kharidjism for control of the Maghreb with clear successes for the Idrisids. Around 800, after negotiations with Ibrâhîm ibn al-Aghlab, Harûn al-Rashid decided to grant independence to Ifrîkiya, and this was the birth of the Aghlabid Kingdom (800-909).

Trade dynamics

Chapters 11, 14 and 27 focus on trade issues. In Chapter 11, T. Lewicki explores the role of the Sahara and Saharians in relations between north and south. This is the story of a vast desert that played an important role in interactions between North Africa and the Sudan from the eighth to the twelfth centuries.

This desert is bordered by the Nile in the east and the Atlantic Ocean in the west.

> In the north the Sahara extends as far as the Libyan Plateau, the Syrte Desert, Djabal Nafūsa, Shott Djarīd, Shott Meghīr, the Saharan Atlas and Wādī Dar'a, thus taking in the trade centres in the north of the Sahara. As for the southern boundary ... it passes roughly through the mouth of the Senegal River, the top of the loop of the Niger River and through the Chad basin ... joining up again with the Nile at around 16°N latitude (p. 276).

The region thus defined is populated mainly 'by peoples of Berber stock, sometimes mixed with black African blood'. These Berbers were divided into two main branches: the Sanhâdja and Zanâta. In the southern part of the eastern Sahara, there were 'negroid people belonging to the various Tubu groups, such as the Zaghäwa, the Teda and the Dawa' (p. 277). Here and there, some Arab elements supplemented this population.

These populations played an important role in trans-Saharan relations. The authors examine these groups, looking in detail at the links, routes, roads, terminals and stages, based on a division of the Sahara into five regions: the Libyan desert, the region between Fezzân and Lake Chad, the northern Sahara, the central Sahara and the western Sahara.

In Chapter 14, J. Devisse focuses on 'trade and trafficking routes in West Africa'. By cross-referencing sources (Arabic, archaeological, numismatic sources, etc.), he draws a number of relatively important conclusions:

- Well before the fifth century, there was activity in the south, particularly in the Bandiagara – Tolloy region and in the Senegal River Valley, confirming an introductory point made by the author: 'a local trade economy... existed' (p. 367) along with a regional one, 'without taking note of influences from across the Sahara' (p. 376) that had a history of proven technological mastery.
- The dynamism of the ancient towns (Azûkî, Awdaghost, Kumbi Saleh, Sintiu-Bara, Niani, Jenné-Jeno, Begho, Igbo-Ukwu, etc.) is recognized in the Sahara, Sudan and Guinea region, in relation to local, regional and trans-Saharan trade.
- The confirmed trans-Saharan trade from the eighth century (previously there were only fragmented relationships), which reached its peak in the

tenth century, found its momentum in an economic law with obvious rules: 'A long-distance trade economy involving merchants rested on the existence of a demand for certain rare and costly products (such as salt, kola, gold, wheat, fabrics and copper) which had to come from "elsewhere". These and many other commodities formed the basis of a trade that only became trans-Saharan when demand in the north irreplaceably complemented that in the south' (p. 367).

- More is known about the products of trans-Saharan trade which are analysed successively and individually in terms of their flow, freight, processing, quantity, and so on, and particularly in terms of demand, which is greater in the North than the South: salt, slaves, wheat, dates, raisins, glass, oil lamps, ceramics, silver, precious and semi-precious stones (agate, amazonite, garnet, chalcedony, etc.), cowrie shells and especially gold.
- A little more is known about the control of the trade routes, which provoked rivalry and envy between Berber tribes, political hegemonies and Muslim dynasties, who, depending on their interests and circumstances, did not hesitate to form alliances.

In Chapter 27, A. Bathily and C. Meillassoux study the 'relations between the different regions of Africa'. The authors highlight the long history and importance of the mobility of African populations, as well as the scale of long-distance trade across the continent in all directions; all of which brought Muslim expansion back to its true role, which is no more or less than that of an economic stimulant. For the period in question, we note, in turn, progress in means of communication; expansion of the commercial network; and an increase in the volume of trade (p. 736). The first aspect owes much to the use of the camel and merchant ships; the second to urban growth, and the last to 'the keen demand created by urban development, population growth... and the expansion of foreign markets.' (p. 738).

The products of this trade can be placed into four categories: raw materials (iron, flax, cotton, gum, indigo, etc.); subsistence products (wheat, millet, sorghum, rice, shea butter, olive oil, smoked and dried fish, salt, etc.); luxury items for domestic use (slaves, horses, etc.) and luxury goods (textiles, precious metals, pearls, ivory, etc.).

In turn, trade and the movement of people drove the spread of technology. Notable progress was made in 'mining and metallurgy; agriculture; crafts; trading techniques; and techniques of war' (p. 742). The same period was marked by social transformations in three areas: 'major population movements;

acceleration of the process of social differentiation, as a result of the division of labour; development of the class struggle, as manifested in revolts and civil wars in several states' (p. 746).

Ethnolinguistic entities

Four chapters are organized according to ethnolinguistic logic. F. de Medeiros (Chapter 5) looks at the peoples of the Sudan with a focus on the Berber nations of the northern border, the Pulaar and the Soninke. He refutes the Hamitic and diffusionist theories as explanations for the movements of peoples, and demonstrates the role of the Sudanese people in the emergence and development of political entities and hegemonies. S. Lwanga-Lunyiigo and J. Vansina (Chapter 6) focus on Bantu-speaking peoples (over 400 dialects) and their expansion across a vast territory comprising 'the southern third of the African continent, from the Cameroon-Nigeria sea coast in the west to the Somalia-Kenya coastline in the east and southwards as far as Port Elizabeth' (p. 141). For their part, B. W. Andah and J. R. Anquandah (Chapter 17) focus on the peoples of the Guinean belt between Mount Cameroon and the Côte d'Ivoire. In this region, the largest linguistic groups in terms of numbers include the Akan, Guang, Gà, Adangbe, Ewe, the Kwa sub-family, Benue-Congo and Tano. Finally, B. W. Andah (Chapter 18), focuses on the peoples of Upper Guinea who extend as far as 'the western half of the coastlands of West Africa, from the Senegal River to Cape Palmas' (p. 531).

These peoples were known for speaking languages that specialists group into three main linguistic sub-groups of the Niger-Congo family: the Mande sub-group, the West Atlantic group and the Kwa group.

Regional entities

Nine chapters feature a regional approach covering Christian Nubia, the Lake Chad region, the Guinean belt, the Horn of Africa, the East African coast, Central Africa to the north of the Zambezi, Southern Africa to the south of the Zambezi, and Madagascar. S. Jakobielski (Chapter 8) presents a Christian Nubia where the Monophysite movement dominated and was particularly successful due to three factors: the union of the Nobadia and Makhuria kingdoms; the establishment of profitable relations with Egypt following the signing of the *bakt,* a non-aggression pact observed for five centuries and secured by a payment of 360 slaves per year by the Nubian kings; and exceptional floods. D. Lange

and B. W. Barkindo discuss 'the Lake Chad region as a crossroads' (Chapter 15, pp. 436-460). Very early on, due to its water resources, the region attracted nomadic and sedentary populations, particularly because of the desertification of the Sahara: Zaghâwa, Tâdjû (Dâdjo), Teda-Daza (Tubu), Bede, Kurî, Kotoko, Kanuri, Sao (Soo), are grouped into different language families, mainly Chadic (Afro-Asiatic) and Nilo-Saharan languages. Agricultural and technological mastery sustained the emergence of different political hegemonies, the most remarkable of which was the Kânem, from the Zaghâwa dynasty to that of the Sêfuwa. The relatively successful gamble by T. Shaw (Chapter 16), with regards to the Guinea zone, was to re-establish its fundamental contributions to the periods under review: agriculture, diseases, metalworking, trade, the centralization of power – all things studied in succession and correlated in their almost natural interdependence.

The author is also interested in the study of a 'change of fundamental importance', a shift that took place gradually during this period. This was the change from an economy

> whose subsistence base was in hunting, gathering and fishing to one in which it depended upon agriculture and stock-raising – or at least depended most upon these activities – because even with fully fledged farming systems, hunting, gathering and fishing continued to contribute to the food supply, even if not in a major degree (p. 462).

The Horn of Africa, which is studied by T.-T. Mékouria (Chapter 19) was dominated by the Aksum kingdom. It emerged at the end of the first century CE, before declining from the seventh century onwards and disappearing in the eighth century. The Bēdja, organized into several kingdoms (Nakîs, Baklîn, Bâzîn, Djârîn, Kata'a and Tigrai), were among those who contributed to the weakening of Aksum.

Archaeological research shows that 'the East African coast and the Comoro Islands' (Chapter 21), studied by F. T. Masao and H. W. Mutoro, were populated by 'Early, Middle and Later Stone Age societies' (p. 592). The beginning of this population can be dated back to at least the 'first quarter of the first millennium of the Christian era' (p. 593). Arab geography can be used to back the ethnographic data of this region, with the land of the Barbars (Somalia) to the north, the land of the Zandj between the Webi Shebele River and a point on the coast somewhere near Zanzibar, and the Sofala country to the south.

'The East African interior' (Chapter 22), studied by C. Ehret, was mainly populated by the Cushites (Dahalo, Mbisha, Asa, Mbuguan, Ma'a, etc.) and the Bantu (Kilombero, Nyakyusa, Jombe, etc.) supplemented by Nilotic, Khoisan and Central Sudanic-speaking peoples. The author is mainly interested in the processes

of assimilations of peoples by the Cushites and the Bantu, the demographic and economic pressure on the environment, the resulting movements of people, as well as 'the correlation [which exists] between ethnicity and the type of food production' (p. 631). For example, the Southern Nilotes were pastoral people with some cultivation of grains; the Southern Cushites were 'more pastoral' (p. 632); and the Bantu were specialists in 'planting agriculture' (ibid), while sowing a variety of seed crops (sorghum, millet, etc.) and yams and keeping cattle. Some societies, such as the Bantu community of the Sonjo, opted instead for intensive cultivation, combining irrigation with animal manure.

D. W. Philipson looks at the 'Central Africa north of the Zambezi' (Chapter 23). At the start of the period under consideration, this region was populated almost exclusively by Bantu peoples from the first Iron Age, also referred to as the 'Early Iron Age Industrial Complex' (p. 643). This complex is further divided into two currents: one eastern and one western. 'On the basis of the typology of the various pottery wares, several geographically restricted groups are recognized within each stream' (p. 643). The western stream includes the Leopoldian neolithic, whose main characteristic is pottery vessels with a fluted decoration on the neck; the (cemetery) site of Sanga on the shores of Lake Kisale; the Lamilamba site, which dates from the sixth to the seventh century CE; that of Katoko; the Chondwe group; the Kapwirimbwe group; and so on. The eastern stream includes the Mwabulambo group in the north, the Nkope group in the south and the Dabwa group.

Towards the beginning of the eleventh century, gradual changes took place in the region, marking a transition period between the first and second Iron Ages: 'a sharp break in the local pottery traditions' (p. 657), the use of copper to make bracelets, a decline in hunting, the cultivation of sorghum, cattle breeding, intense trade relations with the east coast of Africa with cowrie and cone shells, etc.

In Chapter 24, which covers 'Southern Africa to the south of the Zambezi', Thomas N. Huffman focuses on the Zimbabwe culture that emerged during the Iron Age, a thousand years ago, in an area covering south-western Matabeleland, central-eastern Botswana and the northern tip of the Transvaal, and which was created by Bantu-speaking peoples. These peoples included the Sinoia, Zhizo, Leopard Kopje, Maxton, Gumanye, Eiland and others. Together, these peoples practised diversified agriculture, livestock farming (sheep, goats, etc.), hunting, gathering and other activities. Structures were made from stakes and *daga* (a mix of mud and dung). Between 1000 and 1075 CE, driven by foreign trade, the Zimbabwe Culture experienced a certain development. From the east coast of Africa came glass beads, ivory objects, Persian pottery, Islamic glassware and

fabrics, which were traded inland for gold and ivory, and contributed to the strengthening of central power and the prosperity of Mapungubwe, Zimbabwe's first capital (1075-1220).

On Madagascar (Chapter 25), B. Domenichini-Ramiaramanana manages to draw a number of conclusions, first through archaeology and then by cross-referencing sources. Archaeology reveals that between the seventh and fifteenth centuries, populations with a culture characterized by 'the styles of its pottery... and the consumption of Pyrazus palustris' (p. 691) probably lived on the coast. These populations, probably fishermen, ate shellfish and were connected to an Arab-Persian trade zone. They disappeared around the fifteenth century 'without leaving any trace in the region' (idem). In the south, the abundant vegetation made it possible to practise copper and iron working. In Andaro, they reared sheep, cattle and goats. These animal proteins were complemented by those obtained through hunting (birds, hedgehogs, other small rodents), fishing (fish, crabs, sea urchins, shellfish) and by a certain number of edible plants (yams, taro, calabash gourd, etc.).

Cross-referencing the sources allows us to draw the following conclusions:

- 'Man was present in Madagascar... long before +1000 (p. 696).
- The Austronesians certainly played a role in deep-sea navigation of the Indian Ocean, particularly as builders and users of rafts and outrigger canoes, but especially large sewn boats with woven sails, measuring 50 metres long on average and able to transport 500 to 1,000 people, well-known through Chinese sources. It is by these means that the Austronesians settled on the big island in the first millennium CE.
- Very certainly, from this period onwards, the island was involved in interregional trade, providing products supplied by gathering: timber, caulking gum, herbs, spices, cinnamon and so on.

In summary

Chapter 28, written by J. Devisse and Jan Vansina and entitled 'Africa from the seventh to the eleventh century: five formative centuries', appears to be a summary chapter. '[While the author's recognize that] there are even good grounds for questioning the broad limits – the seventh and eleventh centuries of the Christian era – chosen for this volume" (p. 750), they adapted it to study the sedentary organization of the space in Africa, region by region, from the outset.

In Central and Southern Africa 'appropriate food production complexes were established' (p. 752) in relation to the Bantu expansion, which ended around the sixth century. In East Africa, the most striking development was the spread of humped cattle breeds. In West Africa, the forest receded due to population growth and advances in agriculture. In the savannahs, climate change was involved in the shift southwards of the populations and the domestication of plants. In addition to the high demographic concentration in the valleys of the Senegal and Niger, a few characteristic areas can be identified: 'the Sahel was an area of stock-raising' (p. 756), and 'the valleys were areas of complex organization' (p. 757), combining fishing, various forms of cultivation and cattle. 'Systems of transhumance' (p. 758) prevailed in the Sahara. In North Africa, the data are more complex. We can simply note that the Barghawâta of Morocco managed to export wheat, that the Sûs produced sugar cane, that Ifrîkiya managed to produce surpluses and export them by sea, and that Egypt experienced 'profound crises of wheat supply' (p. 758).

After the sedentary organization of the space, the authors address the question of techniques, noting in passing that 'none of them was unchanging' (p. 762) and that it was much more a case of raising problems than resolving them, since that history is still to be written in Africa. There are many technologies to be studied, ranging from basketry to tanning, woodworking and stoneworking, salt extraction, the manufacture of fishing nets and more. Faced with this multiplicity, the authors wisely choose to focus on three technologies: pottery, metals and weaving. This triptych is completed by a study of salt production and consumption techniques.

The next section focuses on the 'various forms of trade' (p. 777). It has the merit of emphasizing the existence of local and regional trade, well before the period studied here. What happened in the Sahel and from the Sahel is a revealing example: 'some internal Sahelian trade existed as no doubt did links with the Nile Valley and North Africa, especially along a link between Lake Chad, Kawar and the Fezzân' (p.778).

The final section is dedicated to the study of religions, ideologies and arts as collective representations. Unlike Christianity, which was in decline in Africa, Islam, both a religious and cultural entity, was triumphant. It spread everywhere and influenced many areas, although this was felt more in urban centres and royal courts than in the countryside. Behind these revealed monotheisms, African religion is beginning to be better understood for what it was, particularly in its intertwining with political power, which it created and established.

Critical analysis and perspectives

As shown in the summary above, in its concept and content, Volume III of the *General History of Africa* focuses on Islam. International dynamics (expansion of Islam, Arab-Muslim world-economy) are given far greater prominence than internal dynamics on the African continent (construction of large communities, internal trade). In this volume, Africa gives the bland impression of existing only because it is anchored to Islam and its global economy. It is difficult to understand why so many chapters and pages are dedicated to the birth of Islam, the biography of the Prophet, Muslim worship, its hegemony around the Mediterranean and its penetration into Africa. This emphasis on Islam is so strong that its expansion is studied without regard for the chronological framework, since incursions were made as late as the sixteenth century in Songhaï and Senegambia. As a result of this focus, there are many overlaps and repetitions from one chapter to another concerning the origins of Islam, its expansion, trans-Saharan trade and Berber resistance. This also results in North Africa being overrepresented in the publication. On questions of detail and methodology, it is necessary to put into perspective the expeditions of Ukba Ibn Nafi, since in reality 'its purpose was rather to reconnoitre' (p. 307) as T. Lewicki rightly points out; the discrepancies between authors, particularly on Berber and Tuareg identity, should be corrected; and oral tradition should be better used to restore the role of the Gangara, Azer and other Bafurs in the Sahara.

With the exception of Chapter 27, the relations that the Africans maintained with the rest of the world, particularly across the Indian Ocean, are minimized and barely studied. However, research in this area has increased significantly in recent years.

It is also surprising that certain Anglo-Saxon historians, considered to be the leading specialists in the subjects covered here, are absent from the book: N. Levtzion, J. Hunwick and so on.

It is difficult to follow the Bantu question because it is spread across several chapters. It is clear that the geographical breakdown adopted for writing the chapters does not correspond to ethnographic realities – far from it.

Lastly, the following topics deserve special attention in order to complete Volume III of the *General History of Africa*: the Jewish communities of Africa, the Saharan slave trade, African religions, the history of Wagadu/Ghana, as well as that of little-known peoples such as the Lamlam, the Falashas, the Bafours, the Azes, the Gangara and others.

CHAPTER 4

AFRICA FROM THE 12TH TO THE 16TH CENTURY

General History of Africa Volume IV

Alexis Adandé

Introduction

The introduction to Volume IV, written by the volume's editor D. T. Niane, introduces the content of this work, which covers an important period in the history of the African continent (from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries). During this time, political formations emerged, evolved and collapsed within a variety of socio-economic and political contexts, while intracontinental and international trade relations played a key role in political, social and technological developments. In parallel, religious issues, during the period in question, underpinned the strengthening of state and non-state institutions, whether within the context of traditional religions, or the spread of Islam among ruling aristocracies and medium and long-distance merchants such as the *Wangara* (of Soninke and Maninke origin) in West Africa, for example. In East and Southern Africa, historical and archaeological research, relaunched and refocused after decolonization, allowed the record to be set straight, dispelling myths surrounding the real builders of the fabulous stone sites erected with building materials sourced from the coast and islands off Swahili and in the interior, from Zimbabwe and Mapungubwe, which bear witness to preliterate cultures that nevertheless left enduring traces of their presence. In North Africa, this era saw the formation of regionally unified entities, including more or less

the part of the Iberian Peninsula that remained Muslim (Andalusia), but also the emergence of centrifugal forces that encouraged the disintegration of the Maghreb into multiple autonomous, if not independent, states. Successive and rival Almoravid and Almohad movements were key moments in this history of the north-west of the continent and of the western Mediterranean. At the end of this period, the region witnessed an influx of people marginalized by the Reconquista, the Christian kings of Castile and Aragon (Muslims and Jews from Spain), and the seizure of ports by the Portuguese and Spanish (Ceuta and Mellila are contemporary remnants dating back to this time). In the eastern Arab lands (Al-Mashriq), a Muslim revival occurred under the Ayyubids, and in particular under Mamluk rule (thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) that restricted and then curtailed the expansion of Christian crusaders from Europe. Meanwhile, Christian Nubian kingdoms and Coptic Ethiopia continued to develop an African style of Christianity before experiencing incursions by their Muslim neighbours, with the former falling and fading away, and the kingdom of the Negus entering a period of relative decline during the sixteenth century. This period ended with Egypt under Ottoman rule.

The editor of the volume sets the tone for the work and sketches the outline of a period when 'Africa was standing', to borrow what we feel is an apt term from a teaching fellow. For it was only in the sixteenth century that the real nature of the *stimuli* behind the frenzied activities of navigators in the service of Portuguese royalty, exploring our coastlines and circumnavigating our continent, suddenly came to light. In the same vein, the quality of the writing of intermediary chapters from Chapter 2 to 24 seems to be inconsistent in regard to regional coverage, as well as in terms of data, particularly in chapters that adopt a decidedly questionable and even mistaken positioning on the subjects of historical knowledge, geographical locations and even unexplained omissions. A critical appraisal, chapter by chapter, allows us to substantiate this statement and also provides the opportunity to recommend corrections or further study.

Chapters 2 to 5

Chapter 2, written by Omar Saidi, provides a suitable framework for a clear understanding of the political evolution of the Maghreb under Almohad rule, while M. Talbi in Chapter 3 shows how the Maghreb and its scholars, doctors, philosophers, historians, lawyers, geographers and so on, not only contributed to the development of knowledge but also played a crucial but often unacknowledged

role in the transmission of literary, scientific and technological knowledge to Europe. This paved the way for the *Aggiornamento* (spirit of open-mindedness), which heralded the cultural, scientific and technical Renaissance in that continent. In contrast, chapters 4 and 5, written by I. Hrbek and H.R. Idris, respectively, depict the conditions that led to the disintegration of the Maghreb into three regions (ruled by the Marinid, Wattasid and Hafsid families) and then into a multitude of political states. They also describe the composition of society at the time: predominantly rural and Berber-speaking, nomadic with Bedouin Arab intrusions and city-dwelling peoples. The latter featured a clearly stratified society with tight demarcation between free-men and slaves (white Christian prisoners of war, victims taken by pirates and captive Blacks from the Sudan). The *Reconquista* of the Iberian Peninsula saw Jews fleeing Christian persecution flocking to cities in the Maghreb, where depending on the local situation, they were either welcomed with open arms, as in Ifrikiya, or repulsed and persecuted, as in Fes in Morocco and Touat. The influx of Spanish Muslims during the mid-thirteenth century and at the tail end of the fifteenth century, which included some talented and business-minded individuals, is of interest because of the repercussions, including the settling of the fleeing Andalusians in ports in particular and for the role that they were required to play with Sultans. They were also the vectors of a certain lifestyle and cultural sensitivity in the Maghreb. Moreover, the influx of Black slaves of both sexes favoured a melting pot in cities, just as it had in some rural communities and nomadic societies. This fact nods to the intensity of commercial, religious and cultural exchanges across the Sahara with Sudano-Sahelian states. It also explains the historical origins of the three dominant components of contemporary Maghrebian society: Berbers and Arabs (Arab-Berber roots), Andalusian (European roots) and sub-Saharan Blacks (Negro-African roots). These chapters can be refreshed using the results of work carried out in recent years on both sides of the Sahara, in particular under the aegis of the Institute of African Studies of Mohammed V University in Rabat, and by other researchers. At least this work was known to the author of this text and does not preclude the existence elsewhere of other works that are equally, if not more, relevant.

Chapters 6 to 8

Chapters 6, 7 and 8, written by D. T. Niane, M. Ly and S. M. Cissoko, benefited from light shed by experts on the cultural fields in question and the optimal use of available documentary sources, whether oral, written or

archaeological, along with various visual aids (maps, photographs, engravings, manuscripts, drawings, etc.). In fact, this collection of chapters harmonizes well and the recent reconstruction of the *Kurukan Fuga charter* (1236/1240 CE?) should be considered as being a key contribution to *jeli* historiography, in other words, the oral tradition that remains alive and well today. Similarly, the publication of further historical work, such as archaeology focused on states like the Tekrour/Takrur or the Great Wolof Empire (thirteenth-sixteenth centuries) calls for some consideration of these contributions.

In keeping with the aim of deepening and illustrating the characteristics of the civilization that emerged from these political formations, it is desirable that data from other archaeological investigations that have multiplied over the past two decades in the inner Niger Delta region and around Timbuktu and Gao be integrated into this updating of the *General History of Africa*. In fact, archaeological research clearly confirmed what oral tradition had already stated: ancient urban centres like Dhar Tichitt, Tegdaoust/Awdaghast, Kumbi-Saleh and Wagadu/Awker (cradle of the Ghana Empire) and those in the inner Niger delta such as Jenne-Jeno, Sila, Jenne, and so on, experienced forms of socio-economic development that preceded the relationships maintained across the desert expanses with merchant cities and towns of Islamized Maghreb and Tripolitania. It is important to take into account here the findings of assured historical and archaeological methods that demonstrate once again the futility of colonial assumptions, explaining the emergence of the Sudano-Sahelian civilization as initiated by long-distance trade and Islam, introduced into this part of West Africa. Certainly, the establishment of comprehensive trading routes across the Sahara had an undeniable impact on integrating West Africa into global trading initiatives from the ninth century to the sixteenth century and beyond, thereby giving pre-existing intra-regional commerce a boost. The flow of gold, salt, kola nuts, slaves and luxury goods from both sides of the Sahara, religious books and other epigraphic documents (marble steles from Almeria in the eleventh century to Gao-Saney, for example), and horses resulted in consistent trading initiatives between the Western Sudan and the Maghreb, and further East, the Mashreq. It is also important to note the African peoples' ongoing quest for stability and security. After the fall of Ghana to Almoravid rule, Western Sudan experienced both political turmoil and considerable socio-economic chaos, which deeply marked the collective consciousness. The precise significance of the actions of blacksmith king Sumaoro/Sumanguru Kante, King of Sosso, are put into context, as are those of Sundjata Keita/Maridjata, who presented himself as his rival prior to defeating his forces at Kirina in 1235 CE, which was followed by the proclamation of

the Manden Charter at Kurukan Fuga. This Charter formalized links between clans, peoples and leaders of the Sudano-Sahelian zone from Senegambia to the Niger Bend. This region would be defined by peace and security for centuries, as attested by traveller Ibn Battuta during his trip to Mali in the fourteenth century. The *sanankuya ('cousinage' or joking relationship)* is one of the highlights of the intangible heritage from this period.

Finally, it is worth noting and commenting on the dual perception of a great ruler like Mansa Kanku Moussa, whether he is glorified in the writings of Arab and Sudanese scholars (authors of the tarikhs or chronicles), or decried by traditionalists who accused him of squandering the public treasury by being excessively generous during his pilgrimage to Mecca (in 1325), especially in Cairo, where his munificent gold gift-giving endeavours permanently devalued the price of this precious metal on the market at the time. As far as the Songhay Empire is concerned, we can note the long-lasting evolution of a state that was run by three dynasties from the ninth to the sixteenth century. The small kingdom of Kukya, which was dependent on Mali at its apogee, was able to regain its autonomy and exert its hegemony from Gao over much of western Sudan. Sonni Ali or Ali Ber (1464-1492) was the builder of this new empire on the Niger Bend. Upon his death, one of his generals, Askia/Askiya Mohamed, usurped the ruler's legitimate successor and continued with his expansionist enterprises, while appeasing the ulemas (religious leaders) and other scholars in the great cities of Timbuktu, Jenne, Gao and others. A devout Muslim, he undertook the pilgrimage to Mecca, returning with the prestigious title of Caliph of Sudan. This ruler is remembered as an efficient administrator who conquered the cities of the Hausa and tried in vain to integrate the Borgou/Borgu/Bargu/Baruwu into their political space. The discovery of several manuscripts from that time in Arabic and *ajami,* has made it possible to envisage the writing of an intellectual history of the cities in the Niger Bend region, including Timbuktu. However, in the sixteenth century, the Songhay fell victim to internal power struggles and the hegemonic will of Moroccan Sultan Al Mansour ed Dehebi (who attempted direct control of saltworks and gold mines). Here again, the decline (Tondibi, 1591) of a regional structuring power opened the floodgates to a new period of insecurity and instability, both for trade and for the people living in the region. It is also important to note that the instruments of this Moroccan hegemonic enterprise were Spanish Christian renegades (led by Judar Pacha) and their use of firearms for the first time in the Sudanese Sahel, in a context of internal political strife within the Songhay Empire.

Chapters 9 to 14

Chapter 9, written by M. Izard, seems to be well-informed on issues relating to the so-called northern Mossi states – the historical identification of which remains problematic – and those further south, notably the ancestors of the existing *Moose (Mossi)* living in the *Moogo* region. He has less to say, however, about other populations or communities, even ones that were familiar. In fact, this chapter displays some gaps that are difficult to comprehend, even taking into account the period in which this report was compiled. In addition, it is crucial to address these shortcomings, as they are a source of frustration for young people of cultures that have been forgotten or excluded by researchers. Besides the many peoples in non-state societies (from the Togo-Atakora mountains or southwest of present-day Burkina, for example), whose traditions indicate an origin in the Volta Basin or the Niger Bend, there are states like the Gourma/Gurma/*Gulmu* and the Borgou/*Bargu/Baruwu*, which feature on numerous maps (e.g. pp. 244, 315, 372, 374) without any discussion attributed to them. Taking into account the numerous recent academic and other works that have studied them, there is no longer any excuse for this oversight. The Gonja should also be added to the list of states from this period. Here, as in other regions on the continent and elsewhere, there is a significant mass of *grey literature* languishing in African and other universities containing critical aspects of knowledge, including historical, linguistic and archaeological information in dissertations for Master's degrees and unpublished theses, reports and articles. We must find a cost-effective way of accessing this bank of knowledge which is currently inaccessible.

Chapter 10, written by D. Lange, is a scholarly piece that provides a panoramic picture of the 'Kingdoms and peoples of Chad'. In order to update the documentation, consideration should be given to the many archaeological investigations carried out in recent years in the localities of the ancient states of Kanem, Bornu and the kingdom of Baguirmi, and their surroundings. An effort should also be made to compile a significant iconography, along the lines of the chapters devoted to the empires of Mali and Songhay.

Chapter 11, written by M. Adamu assisted by A. Salifou, is easy to read, but it is unfortunate that, apart from the map (p. 287), there is a lack of illustrations to help readers visualize the cities mentioned. It should also be noted that an archaeological research unit at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria has begun work on the oldest sites (Turunku) in the Hawsa culture area.

Chapter 12, by Y. Person, takes us to the West African coastline from Casamance to the Côte d'Ivoire lagoons. The text is scholarly in nature but written in a style that is accessible to all. In terms of documentation, it is comprehensive, even if the author points out some areas of ambiguity and possible avenues for further research, particularly regarding the first settlements on the Cape Verde archipelago, closely linked to the Cape Verde coastline in current Guinea-Bissau.

Chapter 13, by P. Kipre, extends the previous study to the Volta. While the text provides detailed coverage of the lagoons in present-day Côte d'Ivoire as well as the Akan country to contemporary Ghana, it is virtually silent on the Ga country and their neighbours in the Accra Plain, and on the establishment of the first Portuguese fort on this coastline in 1482, a prelude to the string of forts, fortlets and castles built along the Gold Coast in the centuries that followed. Yet the University of Ghana is one of the most ancient in sub-Saharan Africa with the oldest archaeology department (founded in 1951). It has produced and trained top quality researchers whose work has been diffused to some extent, but documentation is available *in situ* at Legon campus. In short, there is a need to update and complement our body of documentation on this section of the Gulf of Guinea.

In Chapter 14, by A. F. C. Ryder, there appears to be an imbalance in available documentation between, on the one hand, part of what is now southern Nigeria inhabited by the Yoruba and their ancient cities, and by the Edo, creators of the famous city of Benin and its bronzes, and on the other hand, the peoples of the Niger Delta and the Ibo, who produced the stunning artefacts of Igbo-Ukwu dating back to the ninth century. The final sub-chapter on the Ijo and the Ewe highlights the difficulty of accurately locating the latter, who are better contextualized in the Aja-Tado cultural zone further west, with the cities of Tado and Notse as centres that must have existed at least as early as the thirteenth century. It is important, therefore, to make corrections and additions to the data in line with the current state of investigations in Ghana, Togo and the Republic of Benin.

Chapters 15 to 19

Chapter 15, written by J.C. Garcin, places Egypt in the Muslim world from the twelfth to the early sixteenth century. During much of this period, the country was effectively in the hands of the Mamluks (1250-1517), who ensured internal and external security, especially against Christian and Mongol threats. Until the fifteenth century, Egypt controlled the trading routes for spices and other

Asian goods passing via the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, and its geographical location made it a natural stop for numerous pilgrims, including those from Central and West Africa (the *mansa* and *askiya,* among others). The sultans were great builders of public buildings, including mosques, and provided the capital, Cairo, with its current administrative structures. Culture flourished during this period, as evidenced by the Egyptian Historical School, amongst other institutions (Al-Makrizi, Al-Suyuti), known as far away as Takrur (Tekrur). But Egypt witnessed changes to the international context at the end of this period, caused by the rise of Ottoman power following the capture of Constantinople in 1453. In 1517, the Ottomans extended their dominance over Egypt, installing an Ottoman governor in Cairo and once again shaking up the country's fate. This chapter is important insofar as it sheds light on a period that witnessed this African country play a role as a regional power and as a protector of Islam, despite being home to a Coptic Christian minority. Moreover, we witness here reversal of the strategic economic position of the Red Sea with the arrival of the Portuguese, and their desire to shatter the monopoly on spices and other Asian products in demand in Europe. It is a shame that, after having sub-titled a section of the chapter as 'Egypt facing the Christian danger: the struggle against the Portuguese', the author does not focus more on the Portuguese presence and its conflict with Egyptian interests in the North East of the continent (p. 425).

Chapter 16, by L. Kropacek, takes us to the heart of Nubia: from the late twelfth century to the Funj conquest in the early fifteenth century. This is the story of the process by which the centuries-old Christian states of Nubia, Al-Makurra (Makuria in Graeco-Coptic, with Dongola as its capital) and 'Alwa' (Alodia, with Soba and its huge cathedral as its administrative centre) existed for numerous centuries surrounded by Muslim powers and Islamized peoples. Here we have a case of 'peaceful' management of long-term inter-religious relations between the Muslim Fatimid State and the two Christian kingdoms of the South, through a non-aggression pact called *bakt* that lasted for 600 years. Furthermore, our knowledge of the history of these states owes much to an archaeological rescue operation coordinated by UNESCO during the 1960s (construction of the Aswan High Dam). For these and other reasons, this chapter on the little-known continental history of modern Africans deserves our attention, without obscuring the religious and/or cultural and political factors involved in the destabilization of the country. The author relates what is known about the decline of the two Nubian Christian kingdoms, their conquest and the progressive Arabization and Islamization of the Nubian peoples from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries.

Chapter 17, by T. Tamrat, introduces the reader to the relatively complex political and human geography of the Horn of Africa. In this region both Christian and Muslim states were established and had to maintain relations (trading, political and either peaceful or conflict-ridden interaction depending on the circumstances) with traditional African religious communities. During this period, the Ethiopian empire experienced a dynastic change, with power passing from the hands of the Zagwe to the so-called 'Solomonids', founded by Christian ruler Yekuno-Amlak (1270-1285) institutionally, economically and territorially (its centre of gravity gradually sliding from Tigray to the highlands of North Shoa without an established capital city). The rule of Zera-Yakob (1434-1468) marked the peak of Ethiopian power associated with a certain revival of Christianity, prior to the onset of a decline in the last three decades of the fifteenth century. An opportunity therefore arises for an analysis of factors that ensured the greatness of the African State, as well as those explaining its eventual decline during the period concerned. The author of this chapter mentions, without discussing it in detail, the impact of the arrival of the Portuguese in the region in the last few centuries, covered by Volume IV (p. 428).

Chapter 18, by V. V. Matveiev, examines the expansion and rise of the Swahili civilization from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries along the eastern coast of the continent and on the islands of neighbouring archipelagos from Somalia to the coast of Mozambique. He does justice to the proven historical process that produced this unique civilization from an African Bantu substratum with influences and intermingling from Arab, Persian, Indian and Islam influences, among others. However, his viewpoint that the Swahili community was not ethnically or socially homogeneous is debatable. In fact, when this chapter was written, studies had been undertaken on the entire Swahili coast indicating that the Swahili civilization was much older than anticipated. The author cannot argue, therefore, that 'our knowledge of this civilization, however, is incomplete for want of sources' (p. 456).

In the Lamu archipelago alone, there are many sites that can be dated prior to the tenth century, including the urban site of Shanga, which already existed around the eighth century and, at the time, had a small community of Muslims less than a hundred years after the founding of Islam. There is no doubt that these human settlements were inhabited by Indigenous African populations who subsequently converted to Islam to better interact with trading negotiators. Whether this made these individuals 'less Swahili' is not explained in this chapter. The author actually skirts the rather controversial question of who the Swahili are from the outset, jumping straight into a discussion about their economy, trading activities, civilization and political institutions.

While on the topic of agriculture and fishing, the author notes that farming, fishing and the gathering of seafood were 'the basis for the very existence of Swahili society' (p. 456). However, although the above-mentioned activities could have created the basis of the Swahili economy, archaeological findings make it clear that, already by the twelfth century, Swahili society was more multifaceted than first thought, and it was engaged in far more activities than just farming, fishing and the gathering of seafood. It is also apparent that the Swahili were often split into two social groups: there were, and still are, rural folk living in villages such as those on the islands of Lamu archipelago and on the mainland who farmed crops and lived in villages, as well as urban Swahili, both mainlanders and islanders, in Lamu, Mombasa, Zanzibar, Kilwa, Malindi and others. Thus, as early as the twelfth century, there were already several city-states scattered along the east coast of Africa that were engaged in regional trade, and arts and crafts were sufficiently advanced to include fabric manufacture, as evidenced by numerous fusaroles (spindle whorls), boat-building and navigational techniques. These pertinent points are made clear once again by the author. Boat-building and navigation are ancient traditions on the east coast of Africa; even better, there are various words to describe the diversity of boats, which indicates that these activities had been going on for some time. Matveiev emphasized this point, stating that the fact that there were many names for boats in Kiswahili indicated an established tradition of naval construction and navigational practice, and that this 'should cast doubt on the conjecture that the inhabitants of East Africa did not sail the Indian Ocean trade routes' (p. 457). This mindset was common in the early part of the twentieth century, when scientists had Eurocentric prejudices and perceived the continent as being incapable of such achievements until the arrival of foreigners. The towns on the east and west coasts of Africa were not just warehouses, but centres of Islam too. We note that a vast archaeological research programme on 'the origins of towns' in Eastern and Southern Africa, backed by the Swedish agency Sida/SAREC in the 1980s contributed greatly to our knowledge of the beginnings and growth of urbanization in this part of the continent, a topic that was hitherto poorly documented.

Chapter 19, by C. Ehret, presents a picture of the region 'between the coast and the Great Lakes'. The approach focuses on historical linguistics, the author's area of expertise. In addition to the documentation he provides about the people and their activities and movements, this chapter also demonstrates the potential for the study of languages to function as a historical source. The author divided the area being researched in two, the immediate interior from Lake Nyasa to Lake Victoria (l. Nyanza) and the inland zones of Kenya and Tanzania,

including the mountainous regions of Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Kenya. Using linguistic evidence, Ehret identified the different groups that interacted in this area between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries, their relationships, languages, economic systems, and how some were assimilated linguistically and even physically via biological intermixture, whereas others managed to remain intact until the present day.

Therefore, although some migration movements were gradual, others were quick. Linguistics seems to indicate a slowing down of the migration process, whereas archaeology indicates permanent population movements (especially Bantu) on the continent during this period. The Bantu maintained the primacy of the agricultural tradition and their internal migrations have always been determined by the aridity of certain regions. Nevertheless, from the sixteenth century onwards, they intruded into areas that had previously been of no interest. This was due to demographic pressures, as well as new farming methods that could be applied in regions that had previously been considered unfit for purpose. Other groups like the Chagga settled on the slopes of Kilimanjaro, the Taita in the Taita Hills, and the Gikuyu and the Meru in the highlands of Mount Kenya. A new factor therefore came into play: the adoption of new techniques to farm new kinds of land. Some groups relied on irrigation and fertilizer to farm rain-fed crops. The entire area being studied experienced the spread of various groups that was ongoing for some but led to differentiation or assimilation for others. Thus, it is clear that the settlement process in the region from 1200 to 1600 was complex, and led to changes to the landscape that still endure today. Archaeological and linguistic evidence indicates that these lands were occupied when the migrants arrived, which means that conflict must have ensued. However, in some cases, the 'give and take' mindset must have prevailed and been the starting point for new social and political groupings. Changes must also have come about with the development of technological know-how. People tried settling in new surroundings and even shifted to highland agriculture and the utilization of forest zones previously left to hunter-gatherers. This process of major population movements and key technical and ethnic shifts must have led to exchanges of goods between peoples. Hence the notion (and practice) of market trading, which found its roots in these circumstances. The study of this period of African history is important because it helps us to understand how our modern societies evolved. What is more, we can feel inspired by the new and innovative methods that were adopted to exploit the environment at that time, particularly when you consider that some techniques (such as irrigation and rain-fed crop farming) are still in use to this day. Better still, the interaction

between populations demonstrates considerable biological intermixture with not one group that can be described as having a pure ethnicity.

Chapters 20 to 24

Chapter 20, by B.A. Ogot, examines a period when most of the migrations were complete and the states were being formed, particularly in the Great Lakes region. This was a period of creation and consolidation of complex societies, a time of legendary leaders and some exceptionally gifted administrators, but it was also an era, as Ogot points out, for which we have scant oral tradition and linguistic data. Nevertheless, it is a period for which a chronological framework is required to establish the sequences of events necessary to understanding the history of the Great Lakes region.

The author identifies the main problems he faced when writing this chapter, highlighting, among other things, the bias in relations between the agriculturalists and pastoralists, the question of chronology, and what he refers to as 'court-centred' published histories, as well as the scarcity of linguistic data and an oral tradition. Using the term 'complex' to refer to various historical contexts, he chooses four of them for the purposes of his study: the Kitara, Kintu, Ruhinda and Rwanda. These complexes, as defined by Ogot, were used 'to highlight both the multi-ethnic area of the region and the confluence of cultural traditions that constitutes its history' (p. 500). However, Ogot emphasizes that these four complexes are interconnected and merge into a general history of the region. Ogot managed to unravel the complex history of this region by questioning preconceived ideas while attempting to establish a chronological framework in order to contextualize the history of the interlacustrine region. Starting off with Kitara, the oldest state system, he attempts to give a voice to the voiceless. He also questions the theories relating to the formation of these states and subsequent institutions, the relationships between the various groups, the role of each, and their positions and occupations. One area that the author identifies as being problematic and successfully addresses is the issue of the relationships between the different groups within these states, in particular agriculturalists and pastoralists. He points out that this is a problem because, in many published history books, pastoralists were always portrayed as civilizing conquerors who brought law and order where there was only anarchy. This viewpoint assumes that agriculturalists were docile and silent majorities, who neither initiated any developments nor founded any state. This historical bias should be highlighted because it was at the root of the Rwandan massacre a dozen or so years after this

work was published. This fact shows how history, ethnicity and tribalism can be exploited to divide and conquer and to create conflict among peoples. This is an area, which when addressed like Ogot does, can be discussed in class or in awareness-raising sessions to educate adults about peace, harmony and understanding between and within a country's socio-cultural groups.

Although it is clear that myths such as those of 'Hamitic' pastoralists being superior to 'Hutu' agriculturalists were essentially stories created by the colonial powers, promoted by certain scholars and a school of thought, they became engrained in people's minds. Thus, artificially aroused hatred has permeated generations and now requires eradication to change the mindset at the national level. While this approach has never been used in Rwanda and, even though this volume was published a decade prior to the genocide, no one could have imagined that one day the divisions created by myths designed to control the people could have led a nation to massacre. In the discussion that follows, Ogot attempts to dismantle the myth of inferiority/superiority by demonstrating that states in this region were formed by agriculturalists long before the arrival of pastoralists. He then goes on to point out that for hundreds of years, agriculturalists and pastoralists lived together in harmony, both inside and outside the region. However, when states were formed during the fifteenth century, there had to be rulers and the ruled, hence the creation of social classes, which in extreme situations morphed into castes. Ogot's argument that the terms 'pastoralists' and 'agriculturalists' denote occupation and not ethnicity is certainly right for the cases cited, but once institutionalized (instrumentalized), they become ethnic in nature.

From Chapter 21 onwards, the volume examines the southern part of the continent. B. M. Fagan, the author of this chapter, discusses the history of the Zambezi and Limpopo basins (+ 1100 / + 1500) by interpreting archaeological data, allowing us to take a fresh look at the *Great Zimbabwe* development that endured the insults of racist ideologies throughout the entirety of the British colonization period and domination by the white Rhodesian minority. It must be said that serious archaeologists during the colonial period demonstrated the absurdity of theories which attributed the ruins of these gigantic stone buildings to people outside African cultures. The author examines the available archaeological data within its rightful context and in the light of tradition and rare texts, concluding with a rational reconstruction of the history of this part of the continent. He demonstrates the emergence of some states and the probable process of their decline (for example of the Great Zimbabwe state), along with ecological changes. Having chosen, therefore, to reconstruct the past primarily using archaeological sources, he naturally uses the nomenclature of this field

when presenting his evidence. He thus examines the culture and societies of the Iron Age around the year 1000, their economic and social transformations during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the origins of Zimbabwean culture as evidenced by archaeological discoveries, and the study of the oldest settlements in the Zambezi basin, such as Batoka and Kalomo, followed by Leopard's Kopje, considered to be at the origin of the emergence of centralized societies such as Mapungubwe. He retraces the path of political and economic power in the formation of the Great Zimbabwe state, followed by its expansion and regional supremacy. Fagan also investigates commercial ties of this state with the East African coast and addresses the limits of Zimbabwe's influence, as far as archaeological sources permit. The beginning of the fifteenth century is seen as a period of mutations and transformations.

South of the Zambezi other developments were taking place, with new cultures seemingly replacing the Iron Age of the first millennium towards the eleventh and twelfth centuries, represented by the traditions of Leopard's Kopje culture, which spread across the Limpopo valley northwards to the Bulawayo regions, and to the central parts of the Limpopo watershed to the Zambezi. Unusual practices are noted in small villages, where figurines of oxen and cattle bones were found in graves. Fagan interprets these findings as being an indication of new immigrants, but they could simply indicate a change in traditional practices and technology. Although cattle herds were large, millet and sorghum farming were practised as well as hunting and gathering, and Iron Age technology remained simple in nature. These human settlements also revealed glass beads and cowrie shells, which indicate long-distance trade involving the eastern coast of the continent. From the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there are signs of gold mining in what is now Matabeleland, along with evidence of an increase in imported glass beads. This period is also seen as the start of stone terraces and stone buildings initiatives, which later became common features with the emergence of centralized systems. The same period saw, within the same culture, the development of central livestock enclosures and changes in social relations and status with the rich on one side and the poor on the other; the powerful and those who were not; likely clues to the origins of social stratification and formation of the state.

The final phase of Leopard's Kopje culture shows signs of a more diversified and controlled economy based on mining, trading and subsistence farming. It also witnessed the development of a political system where 'political power and wealth was concentrated in the hands of relatively few people, who lived in major population centres of important settlements' (p. 530). From the fifteenth

century, these new institutions were clearly represented at several sites such as Mapungubwe in the Limpopo-Shashe region, where powerful rulers occupied a hill that was probably also a sacred site. This important World Heritage site has produced findings linked to trade and royalty, such as worked gold in pearls and leaves found in graves, along with goods imported from the east coast, such as glass beads. These findings confirm trading links with the Swahili world. The site also offers insights into all the stages of development of a complex society and examples of innovation, as well as the growing needs of people for various goods as they changed status and adapted to time and space. Copper, which became common in this region, was used for ornaments and ritual objects, as well as for trade and commerce. The question is whether the inventors of these new methods came from external migration or if they were the result of internal dynamics within the population *in situ*. In other words, were these new technological innovations introduced by incoming populations, or did the existing people have the capacity to invent them? Several researchers have made the link between current populations (linguistic groups) and these ancient sites. Tom Huffman views the builders of Mapungubwe as the ancestors of the Venda people in the present-day Republic of South Africa, whereas others, including Fagan, see Great Zimbabwe as belonging to ancestors of the Shona.

Great Zimbabwe is a unique site in Africa – its outstanding universal value means that it is a World Heritage site and, as Fagan rightly states, the ruins 'are celebrated both for the excellence of their architecture and also for the extravagant theories that have surrounded their origin' (p. 532). This site gave its name to a nation and, as Fagan confirms, 'all serious scholars now perceive Great Zimbabwe as an essentially African development, built of local raw materials and according to architectural principles that have endured from the use of these media over many centuries' (p. 532). In the same breath he also says, 'the ultimate causes of the emergence of the economic, political and religious organization that lay behind this site and others of this type ... remain cloaked in mystery'.

This last statement might have been valid twenty years ago, when this key contribution was written about cultures of this region in general, and about Great Zimbabwe in particular. Fagan himself examined the evidence piece by piece to try to understand the extraordinary 'myth' of Zimbabwe. He saw how close it was to the preceding culture of Leopard's Kopje and its origin within the Shona group. Furthermore, he eloquently presented two hypotheses regarding the origins of Great Zimbabwe, one religious, proposed by Donald Abraham, and the other as the result of intensified trading activity with the east

coast of Africa, illustrated by both goods as well as early writings, including those of Ibn Battuta relating to gold trading at Sofala. Both views have their strengths, weaknesses and omissions. Fagan goes one step further, discussing in detail the period of deployment of the culture of Zimbabwe and development of Zimbabwean culture activities, including trade within the region, commercial links with the east coast of Africa, the role of religion, the existence and organization of the state, and the power structure, among other things.

Great Zimbabwe fell into disuse and was abandoned at the tail end of the fifteenth century. The forces of economic and political power then shifted southwards and westwards under the leadership of the powerful Rozwi clan. This leads us to the reign of the Mwene Mutapa followed by contact with the Portuguese who, from the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries, controlled part of this formerly extensive kingdom. Fagan thinks that the decline of Great Zimbabwe was as much due to environmental degradation after long periods of over-grazing as it was to a shrivelling of trade with the east coast of the continent. This period saw the region undergo key political and economic changes when there was a degree of political unity and some social stratification, especially in the zone between Zambezi and Limpopo. This was:

> fostered in part by intensified long-distance trading and the demands of remote market-places, but also by the internal development of African societies themselves – the greater concentration of wealth in a few hands, the increased centralization of political power at a level that transcended the village, and the creation of an elaborate panoply of state, whose secular and religious authority was concentrated in the person of the chief, himself considered to be of divine descent. These developments were peculiarly African, and found in many vigorous states in Central Africa and other parts of the continent. But their viability depended upon the maintenance of vigorous trading networks and upon an adequate system of subsistence agriculture to feed the population (p. 550).

Fagan's contribution, and those of other scholars in Volume IV of the *General History of Africa*, play a major part in the understanding of developments that have taken place in the southern part of the African continent from the year 1000 to 1500 and beyond.

In chapters 22 and 23, edited by I. Vansina and L.D. Ngcongco, respectively, in collaboration with the former, we move on southwards to equatorial Africa. Here too, the difficulties of covering the period are noted due to the data available at the time of writing the two chapters, but serious hopes are expressed for the results of future research in historical linguistics, and particularly, archaeology. However, in the equatorial zone and despite the presence of dense forest, we note

the early emergence of states like the kingdom of Kongo, with its royal site at Mbanza Kongo (San Salvador for the Portuguese), Loango in Mayombe, Soyo, Kakongo, and so on, and inland, Lunda and Luba. The history of the peoples south of the Limpopo suffered the negative effects of racist policies and the exclusion of Black Africans. Here we are dealing with a case study rather than the negative impact of a fundamentally racist ideology applied to the scientific process. Although Apartheid has been dislodged by the struggles of the South African people and we have been able to speak about a 'new South Africa' since 1994, with efforts made to get rid of the cultural and scientific nonsense of the previous regime, it is crucial that its effects are not expunged from our memory, nor from the consciousness of our youth. This is a solid example of a topic for educators in particular, and the scientific community in general, to reflect on the reasons for promoting tolerance and equipping our youth with a real democratic and peace-orientated culture.

Chapter 24, by F. Esoavelomandroso, rounds off the collection of regional presentations by focusing on Madagascar and the neighbouring islands in the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries. This period is seen as one of intermingling between ethnic groups of the Great Island and the emergence of the main political entities. The decisive influences for cultural, economic and social evolution of the Malagasy people are reviewed, including those of the Arabs. Similarly, Madagascar and Comoros were integrated into multiple trades routes, including those run by the Swahili before the Arabs got involved. This period is seen as key for the formation of the Malagasy people who, beyond their remarkable ethnic diversity, benefit from a unique language (*malagasy*). Great hopes are placed on extensive archaeological research and a more systematic collection of oral traditions. Since this chapter was written we can confirm that this appeal was heard, as Malagasy researchers are actively participating in the African Archaeology Network. This network publishes a series of books that should guarantee the dissemination of the results of investigations conducted in several eastern and southern African countries and in islands in the Indian Ocean, including, of course, Madagascar.

Chapters 25 to 27

Chapter 25 on 'Relations and exchanges among the different regions' and Chapter 26 on 'Africa in intercontinental relations', written by Djibril Tamsir Niane and Jean Devisse, respectively, with the assistance of Shuhi Labib,

complement each other perfectly. They focus, in particular, on shadowy areas when it comes to the gigantic task of trying to write the history of a continent from as close an internal perspective as possible, that is to say, sweeping aside preconceived ideas inherited by the 'colonial library', an apt term coined by philosopher Valentin Mudimbe. With this in mind, these two chapters should serve as useful guides for those committed to updating and expanding the contents of this volume of the *General History of Africa*. Chapter 27 provides the conclusion for Volume IV and was written by the volume editor-in-chief, D. T. Niane, who comments that the period 'ends with the beginnings of European predominance and expansion… a turning point not only in the history of black Africa but also in the general history of our planet' (p. 673). This observation acts as an unspoken but obvious invitation for readers to make their own conclusions, a dual assessment that goes beyond the four other centuries covered in the subsequent volumes of the *General History of Africa*. It is an assessment of the progress and achievements of holistic historical research, but also an assessment of the significance and impact today of this period of history for the peoples and communities of the continent, as well as for Afro-descendants.

CHAPTER 5

AFRICA FROM THE 16TH TO THE 18TH CENTURY

General History of Africa Volume V

Thiago Henrique Mota

The *General History of Africa* (GHA) collection marks a watershed in global historiography. It remains an ambitious editorial project: an international committee formed of 39 members coordinated the work of around 350 authors contributing chapters to eight volumes published from 1981 to 1993, originally in English, French and Arabic. Created in response to a petition to UNESCO from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, the GHA aimed to provide resources for the teaching of African History, separate from the European colonial interpretation of the past as experienced on the continent. It also sought to determine if such a history was distinct from European national historiographies – more concerned with the building of borders than with the establishment of similarities among their peoples and backgrounds. According to the OAU, Africans deserved a more inclusive history, an aim reflected in the continental scope and the search for dialogue which came to characterize the project. Finally, the work's objective was also to publicize methodological procedures and recent (and not so recent) research, strengthening the field of African, which was establishing itself in the university scene around the same time that the procedures that would culminate in the work began.

This review focuses on the fifth of the eight volumes in the *General History of Africa*, entitled: *Africa from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, which is currently available in English, French, Arabic, Portuguese and Swahili. Composed

of 29 chapters, the volume is edited by Kenyan historian Bethwell Allan Ogot and features contributions by 32 collaborators, 21 of which are African. First conceived in 1971, Volume V was the seventh to be published, as late as 1992. Apart from the time spent compiling the work and the delayed submissions by several authors, a diplomatic issue stalled publication. Delegations from various countries spent years debating with UNESCO on whether to refer to the gulf between the Arabian Peninsula and the Iranian coast in a map used in Chapter 5 as the Persian or Arabian Gulf (with the former selected in the end).[1] These technical and political elements must thus be considered in any analysis of the work's relationship to its time.

These elements do partially account for the relatively outdated nature of the volume in bibliographic terms upon its publication in 1992, combined with the fact that the majority of the works cited were produced in the 1970s and the decades prior. The research presented in the chapters refers to that intellectual context, to the detriment of later advances made in historiography, up to the date of publication. In this sense, it must be mentioned that the cohesive strand running through most of the chapters refers to much earlier historiographic debates, which privilege political themes in the historical analysis. Echoing research initiated at the onset of the twentieth century, such as the work of W. E. B. Du Bois, the framing of politics as the driving force of African history – as per the positivist approach to European history – seeks indicators of civility and progress based on the European paradigm. The aim of almost all of the chapters is therefore to present a history of nations and kingdoms marked by military power and a bureaucratic and administrative apparatus, as well as complex social hierarchies defined according to their proximity or distance from political power. While internal social conflicts derived from social stratification, economics, age and power relations between genders all influenced the debate in the 1970s and 1980s, they are awarded scant consideration in the work.

The historiographic perspective adopted in the volume has a clear Africanist bias, particularly evident in the refusal to attribute regional historical determining factors to the institution of modern slave trafficking, as Ogot affirms in the concluding chapter. Throughout the volume it is instead African elites who are responsible for transformations and the consequent structuring of their nations, whether associated with slavery or not. In light of such an absence, the analytic focus falls on 'populations' – both indigenous and migratory – and their strategies

1 Vansina, Jan. 1993. UNESCO and African historiography. *History in Africa*, Vol. 20, p. 344.

for conquering space. The analyses are very often organized around ethnic factors that cannot nowadays be dealt with in the same way, due to the advances made in cultural and post-colonial studies.[2] Despite this emphasis on internal aspects, the volume maintains paradigms forged in the wake of European colonialism, mainly in terms of the role played by Islam. With many Africans adhering to the faith autonomously and voluntarily since the seventeenth century and in the period under study, it serves as a significant social and political force, appearing as an element external to indigenous religions and cultures, particularly in the sub-Saharan geographical segment.

References are made to Islam in almost half of the chapters, although the idea of a syncretic Islam, inferior to a supposedly orthodox Islam, sets the tone for the analyses throughout the volume, in terms of the religiosity professed by the Black populations. Religion is de-characterized and gauged by means of a political spectrum: either it is seen as a force of resistance to the Atlantic slave trade, or as imposed by Muslim elites influenced by foreign preachers. The concept of 'Black Islam' – a product of French colonialism for characterizing the sub-Saharan Muslim experience in general terms and as a hybrid and heterodox phenomenon – is used to describe Muslims from the region before the advance of the Marabouts.[3] Indeed, the concept shifts from being applied in a wide sense to African Muslims in the beginning of the twentieth century, to a more restricted usage in the period prior to the Muslim revolutions, and to those who strayed from a supposed orthodox ideal comparable to the religious practice developed in North Africa.[4] A useful African Islamic perspective, which considers the participation of Africa's Muslims in the global Islamic community based on their specific location, gives way to the maintenance of an Arab-centric paradigm applied by Europe.

In terms of its structure, the volume's chapters constitute three groups of unequal weight: general summaries, global perspectives and regional studies. There are three general summaries, to which a concluding chapter is added. Here, there is a noticeable disconnect between the characteristics defined by

2 Among works offering theoretical bases on the issue is: Amselle, Jean-Loup. *Mestizo Logics*: *Anthropology of Identity in Africa and Elsewhere*. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1998.

3 Triaud, Jean-Louis. Giving a name to Islam South of the Sahara: an adventure in taxonomy. *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 1, No. 55, 2014.

4 Among other chapters, such an approach is notable in the contribution made by B. Barry and in the conclusion by B. Ogot. The sporadic use of the concept of Black Islam is present in Abitbol, M. The End of the Songhay Empire, in Ogot, Bethwell Allan (ed.). *A General History of Africa, V*: *Africa from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*. Brasilia, UNESCO, 2010, p. 387.

the International Committee that directed the collection and the approach employed. As B. A. Ogot states in the *Description of the Project*, 'the *General History of Africa* is examined here from the inside'.[5] Despite such an assertion, the chapter opening the volume is mostly dedicated to outlining the European presence on the African coast, with a focus on the development of the economic system and the disputes between Europe's monarchies for control of trade. The following chapter then goes on to defend the transformation as a fundamental characteristic of African history in the period. Although in tune with the proposal to provide an African viewpoint, the elements defining the approach are external in order and aligned with a perspective of African opposition to the European presence, despite theories considering the complexity of African social and political relations and Europeans' mobilization by African agents in contexts of domestic dispute.[6]

The summary provided by Jan Vansina, on the other hand, highlights the importance of methodological debate on the possibilities and limitations of the study of populational movements. The analysis proposed in this chapter stands out within the work as a whole due to its methodological contribution and discussion of analytical procedures. The author explores operational issues affecting historical research, such as the approach of harnessing different types of documentation (whether oral traditions, linguistics, archaeology or ethnography), without losing sight of the fact that the central object driving the project is population movement. Generally speaking, the chapter remains relevant with such an approach deserving recognition, given that few chapters attempt to explain the historiographical process, highlighting its sources and contextualizing its discussions. Such a procedure – which also appears in contributions by A. Boahen, E. M'Bokolo and E. Haberland, among others – is significant in terms of the academic readership at which the collection is aimed, prompting as it does reflection on the conditions for building knowledge and on the possibilities for delving into research on the subjects discussed.

The majority of the chapters do, however, have a descriptive or narrative character, in harmony with the collection's aim to serve as a summary. Such a pattern is maintained in the chapters offering global perspectives on African

5 Ogot, B. A. Project Introduction, op. cit., p. xxviii.

6 For more on this perspective, see Feierman, Steven. African histories and the dissolution of world history. In Bates, Robert. H.; Mudimbe, V. Y.; O'Barr, Jean (eds), *Africa and the Disciplines: The Contributions of Research in Africa to the Social Sciences and Humanities.* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1993. Boilley, Pierre; Thioub, Ibrahima. Pour une histoire africaine de la complexité. in Awenengo, Séverine; Barthélemy, Pascale; Tshimanga, Charles (eds). *Écrire l'histoire de l'Afrique autrement?* Paris, L'Harmattan. 2004.

slavery in the modern world and the African diasporas. Within this category, an analysis of the social and cultural relations between the history of Africa and African slavery experienced in the diasporas is notably absent. In spite of this, the contribution by Nigerian Joseph Inikori stands out for its dialogue with Latin American dependency theory and for pondering African and global factors in the production of developed, under-developed and dependent economies. Arguing that the international economic order consolidated in the twentieth century derives from the production of structures determining Latin America and Africa's condition of dependence, was not without precedent upon publication in 1992. Despite criticism from Ogot in the concluding chapter, however, such a return to the question is significant because it facilitates dialogue between regional studies and the global scenario, adding an African dimension to the global perspective.

The remaining twenty-three chapters are characterized by regional summaries or specific case studies. In this group, it is worth reflecting on the concept of 'region' guiding the work, and the paradigms sustained in this approach. One sensitive point is the dissemination of the thesis establishing the Sahara Desert as dividing the African continent, with the chapters on Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Libya and Tunisia largely separate from those referring to regions such as Sudan, Senegambia, Songhay, the Hausa states and the Kanem-Bornu Empire (less so in the latter), despite the fact that all of them employ Islam and the circulation of ideas and people as a narrative topic. Such a paradigm was first questioned with the publication of volume IV of the *Cambridge History of Africa* in 1975.[7] While the initial goal established for the collection was to unite countries, populations and cultures across the continent, this is obscured by the use of a procedure separating the North African condition from that of the sub-Saharan section of the continent. Much has been written recently on relations between regions within the north and south edges of the Saharan Desert, whether in terms of the circulation of people and products or ideas and texts,[8] with such a perspective set to serve as a necessary feature of future summaries of African history.

It must be added that the concept of region applied in the selection of areas for analysis throughout the work is far from consistent, at times appearing to

7 Roland Oliver also draws attention to the issue in his 1993 revision of the volume. Oliver, Roland. Review, *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 108, No. 428, 1993.

8 See, among others Lydon, Ghislaine. Writing Trans-Saharan History: Methods, Sources and Interpretations Across the African Divide, *The Journal of North African Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3-4, 2005; Lecocq, Baz. Distant Shores: A Historiographic View on Trans-Saharan Space, *Journal of African History*, No. 56, 2015.

have little to do with the continent's internal perspective. The inclusion of a chapter entitled 'The states and cultures of the Upper Guinean Coast' is therefore questionable, as is the one dedicated to 'The states and cultures of the Lower Guinean Coast'. The concepts of Upper and Lower Guinea are only relevant within a research agenda defined by the slave trade and the establishment of European warehouses on the African coast, and not in terms of social and political dynamics and local cultures. 'Upper Guinea', for example, encompasses an area stretching from the Casamance River to the Côte d'Ivoire; however, this space is home to internal structural elements which require the incorporation of the portion to the north of the Casamance to the basin of the Senegal River, forming the 'Great Senegambia' proposed by Boubacar Barry in 1988: a region extending to Guinea or Sierra Leone in the south.[9] It is thus a space of social contiguity characterized by internal dynamics, to the detriment of the arbitrary separation of societies to the south of the Gambia, aggregated into another 'region', defined in artificial terms.

Similarly, the chapter on a region characterized by the 'Cameroon grasslands to the Upper Nile' reveals irreconcilable social, cultural, economic and internal policy differences as societies progress. This issue is compounded by the juxtaposition of territories of future nation states and political units of the period as geographic delimitations for the study of the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. Thus, the chapter establishing Morocco as an object of study projects nationalist ideas on the past in terms of cultivated national ideas, political administration and territorial management. The Mid-Atlantic region, and more importantly, the former Kingdoms of Kongo, Ndongo and those in the hinterlands of modern-day Angola, are under-represented, despite being the best-documented area on the continent during this period.[10] The concept of region present in the spatial definition that informed the chapter on 'The Kongo kingdom and its neighbours' could be further developed, and could have been expanded to fill one or two more chapters, given the wealth of available documentation. A variety of parameters therefore guided the construction of spaces selected as objects of study throughout the volume.

The aim of providing an analysis of the African continent required selections sensitive to the political, diplomatic and historiographic context of 1971,

9 The concept of Great Senegambia would be further expanded by Eduardo Costa Dias and José da Silva Horta, incorporating the current region of modern-day Sierra Leone to the south, due to regional social and economic dynamics. Barry, B. 1988. *La Sénégambie du XVe au XIXe siècle* : *Traite négrière, Islam et conquête coloniale*. Paris, Éditions l'Harmattan; Dias, E. C.; Horta, J. da S. 2007. La Sénégambie : un concept historique et socioculturel et un object d'étude réevalués, *Mande Studies,* No. 09.

10 Vansina, Jan. 'O Reino do Congo e seus vizinhos' in Ogot, op. cit, p. 647.

when the volume was conceived, and which were maintained throughout the 1980s, when most of the texts were written. The scant use of the abundant literature written in Portuguese, fundamental to the history of various regions in the African continent from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, reflects Portuguese colonial control of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau up to 1975, with the archipelagoes of Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe completely absent from the analyses. This also reflects the lack of researchers attuned to the African perspective and versed in the language at the time, and the late emergence of Portuguese-speaking African intellectuals, compared with their English- and French-speaking counterparts. Another staggering absence is the complete lack of female researchers – an omission unthinkable nowadays. Apart from the historiographic framework, therefore, the volume reflects the social values, gender inequalities and political and intellectual contexts of the period in which it was conceived.

As a product of its time, Volume V of the GHA makes significant contributions that must be analysed with the critical eye of historiographic practice. The work is invaluable, its overcoming of technical and scientific obstacles establishing it as a paradigm for the production of other General Histories around the globe. The procedural and cumulative character of the knowledge present in the pages of the volume, which is now outdated in many respects, renders it an obligatory point of reference for all those engaged in research on African history from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. The authors of the volume point out gaps present in historical knowledge in the 1980s, and construct arguments that fostered the development of later studies, while also reinforcing several stereotypes that are somewhat incomprehensible in an interpretation that emphasizes a certain organicity stemming from an African essence, such as in the study of the continent's relationship with Islam. But this shortcoming does not so much reduce the quality of the work, but rather points to advances which may be made, by incorporating studies on diversity as cross-cutting issues in the constitution and activities of political elites, the construction of ideas on race within the African continent, age and gender hierarchies, and social inequalities. All of these characteristics demonstrate that the volume does not so much provide a definitive study of Africa from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, but rather serves as a synthesis prompting new points of investigative departure.

CHAPTER 6

AFRICA IN THE 19TH CENTURY UNTIL THE 1880s

General History of Africa Volume VI

Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch

Introduction

This volume, published in 1989 in English by Heineman (and reprinted twice), is still outstanding in terms of intelligence and learning. Almost all of the authors are of high calibre, and many are renowned African historians. Unlike previous centuries, the nineteenth century was explored quite extensively early on, so many fundamental works were already available to authors in the early 1980s. Of course, research has been undertaken since then, but the contributions in Volume VI remain very useful, despite a few gaps due to work performed after the book was written, or the taboos of the time. What is ultimately more questionable is the generally very fragmented choice of chapters, which tend to isolate regional monographs (including several states) or even state by state, especially but not only, for North Africa. This is offset by just three or four more general introductory chapters. What is lacking is the 'global' dimension now favoured by the so-called connected currents of history, more attentive to all the reciprocal interactions involved in the development of the whole.

Chapter 1

The first chapter, provided by the person responsible for the volume, Professor Ade Ajayi, could be republished today almost without amendment. He rightly starts by addressing the century's demographic change, recalling the probable population decrease in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It could be added that the same trend occurred in Europe in the seventeenth century, although demographic recovery started in the eighteenth century, attributed in part to the start of 'proto-industrialization', while the decline intensified in Africa. This disparity is possibly due to the increased drain of the Atlantic slave trade, which caused numerous internal problems. The author clearly demarcates the African demographic recovery of the 1830s-1880s, before colonial conquests and exploitation brought the situation in intertropical Africa to a standstill until the 1920s -1930s. He also highlights the enormous growth in foreign economic trade – a consequence of the expansion of the Western Industrial Revolution.

That said, he is right to focus on the limited direct impact of European transformations on internal agricultural production systems, which resulted not only from fluctuations in the world economy but also internal political transformations. The result was an undeniable diversification of natural resources exploited by the Africans (such as the application of Sharia to the land tenure imposed by the western jihads). He is careful to show the momentum born from within, including the major movements of internal conquests that shook the political landscape. This explains why so many African sovereigns, from Egypt to Lesotho, took the risk of welcoming merchants, adventurers and missionaries from Europe, hoping that importing European techniques would aid the development of their countries. The dynamic of the century is well defined; aspiration for progress dominated this era, and African rulers who tried to take advantage of the growing activity of Europeans during the century, ultimately became victims of this activity and were disappointed in their hopes for success.

There is however, one notable omission from the introduction which persists throughout the volume: the absence of any gender-based analysis or attention to the role of women in societies.

However, with one significant phrase, Ade Ajayi rectifies the publication's partial silence on slavery in West Africa: 'More Africans were involved in the collection of palm fruits, gum arabic, honey, and even ivory than had been in the procurement and sale of slaves to Europeans' (p. 9). Since the growth in the slave system in African societies throughout the century is well studied for East Africa, but almost omitted for West Africa, this would have merited an additional chapter.

Chapter 2

It was a good idea to precede the regional studies with a few summary chapters. Chapter 2 by Immanuel Wallestein presents his well-known thesis on the place of the 'world economy', which he traces back to the 'discovery of America', with the Atlantic world as the centre of the Western economy, and the genesis of capitalism still to come. The thesis is useful and well set out. It recounts the history of Africa's dependency; however, it is somewhat outdated today, insofar as it places Africa 'outside the world economy' prior to European intervention. Yet, before modern-day globalization, there were several 'world economies'. The 'world-system' of the Indian Ocean, superbly explored by the historian Philippe Beaujard for previous centuries,[1] from the east coast of Africa to Indonesia, China, India and Arabia, also played a vital role in the nineteenth century. Crucially, Africa has always been part of such systems, playing a role that was far from being passive and marginal. There would have been no world economy without financing, and African gold was decisive, not only in the western Mediterranean world but also in the world of the Indian Ocean. Western Sudanese gold, which was the primary objective of Portuguese explorations, flooded the European markets until it was replaced by Brazilian gold, particularly in the eighteenth century. Gold from Zimbabwe played the same role in the Indian Ocean. The mass labour of African slaves should also be taken into account; what would have become of the Western economy without the production of sugar cane plantations ensured by the massive use of African labour? Or that of the Industrial Revolution without the use of slaves in Africa, the main producers of raw materials required by industries that developed in the nineteenth century (tropical oilseeds, dyewood, etc.)? Consideration of this effective and ongoing contribution precludes such statements as: 'Africa in no sense constituted a single "economy". However, in many particular areas, there did exist regional "economies" that transcended single political units' (p. 27). Finally, the chapter unduly ignores the role of Eastern Africa and the Sultanate of Zanzibar as part of the global economy, instead focusing on what I prefer to call the 'Atlantic economy' in the nineteenth century. More recent works suggest that the integration of Eastern Africa was much less 'delayed' that the

1 Beaujard, P. 2012. *Les mondes de l'océan Indien, Vol. 1 : De la formation de l'État au premier système-monde afro-eurasien (4e millénaire av. J.-C.-6e siècle apr. J.-C.).* Paris, Armand Colin, p. 648 ; Beaujard, P. 2012. *Les mondes de* l'océan *Indien, Vol. 2 : L'océan Indien au cœur des globalisations de l'Ancien Monde.* Paris, Armand Colin, p. 576.

author believed.[2] In short, the chapter could be rethought from the point of view of 'Africa as the world'.

Chapters 3 to 5

Chapter 3, by Adu Boahen, focuses on 'new trends and processes' in the nineteenth century. While extremely interesting, it nevertheless begins with a statement that is controversial today: 'The nineteenth century saw the most revolutionary socio-economic change in Africa, namely, the abolition and suppression of the slave trade.' However, the abolition of slavery only affected a little of Africa before the 1850s because, for reasons that are now well-documented, the Atlantic slave trade (the only one covered by the author) was maintained at a level comparable to that of the eighteenth century until the 1850s. For a long time, official Western decisions were not or only partially applied, except by the British, and slavery experienced unprecedented growth in Western Africa in the last third of the nineteenth century. This preliminary observation (which seems to be contradicted Ade Ajay's earlier suggestion) leads the author to evade the issue of internal slavery following great political upheavals, which have been well researched, such as the migratory movements of the Nguni in Southern Africa, the Fang in Gabon, the Yoruba in the Nigerian zone and especially the major jihads of West Africa. These are rightly described as 'Islamic revolutions', but their concrete aspect as conquering empires is slightly glossed over. Since then, important publications have updated our knowledge in this regard.[3]

However, the quality of the works used enriches the text in relation to the actions of missionaries, both Protestant and Catholic. They were, on the one hand, founders of the Western 'educated elite', but also, on the other hand, the source of an important movement for African religious and political nationalism in the form of 'Ethiopianism'. Such movements were ready to lead to an intellectual revolution, both in South Africa and in English-speaking West Africa. All of this was in preparation for new political and economic trends.

2 Cheriff, A. 1987. *Slaves, Spices, and Ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African Commercial Empire into the World Economy, 1770-1873,* Eastern African Studies, p. 317; Glassman, J. 1995. *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888.* Heinemann Educational Books; Glassman, J. 2011. *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar.* Indiana University Press.

3 Robinson, D. 1985. *The Holy War of Umar Tal: the Western Sudan in the mid-nineteenth century.* Oxford, Clarendon Press; and particularly Paul Lovejoy.

The following chapter, written by Serge Daget, is the history of the very slow abolition of the Atlantic slave trade by the Western states in their plantation colonies. This is an excellent chapter on European history, which demonstrates in particular the delay in the abolition of external trafficking, and as such is very useful. It analyses the reactions of local leaders linked to the closure of the Atlantic networks. However, nothing is said of the African slave trade or internal slavery, which would only be abolished by the colonizers in the twentieth century. This study remains to be done, based among other things on the work resulting from the International Symposium of Nairobi in 2012.[4] For in Africa, the legacy of the slave trade and slavery is still very much alive, and there can be no doubt about its impact on relations between the different components of society and on the construction of contemporary nation states. The legacies are numerous, diverse, sometimes painful and extremely sensitive. It is impossible to ignore their history, which gestated throughout the nineteenth century.

Chapter 6 to 8: The *Mfecane*

The next three chapters cover the major political and military movements that revolutionized Southern Africa from the end of the eighteenth century and into the next century, treated here under the name of *Mfecane*. L.D. Ngcongco of Botswana conducts a precise, concrete and carefully documented analysis of the emergence, under the combined influence of a population explosion and land scarcity, of a series of small, warring and rival states spread across the northern Nguni region. After discussing the environment and resources, he provides a factual account, based on case studies, largely collected through oral history. The work is highly accurate in terms of local detail and is therefore useful. Nevertheless, there is a notable silence on the role of slavery and the slave trade. More recent studies tend to show that the networks for exporting slaves to the Indian Ocean (Delagoa Bay) or the Atlantic (Namibian coast) were more extensive than previously thought. In addition, the Great Trek of the Boers in 1836, their flight towards the interior veld, was triggered by the ban on slavery imposed in the south by the British in their Cape Colony the previous year. The Afrikaners took all their slaves into the interior... where they also made new ones.

Regarding the Southern Ngoni and Cape Colony, E. K. Mashingaidze of Zimbabwe reiterates the key importance of Shaka's Zulu Kingdom in the

4 Dage, S. 2014. *Esclavage en Afrique : Histoire, héritages et actualité.* International conference, Nairobi (Kenya).

'explosion' of the Mfecane, which led to the migration northward of some of the leaders and their troops fleeing Shaka's authoritarianism. This theory, formerly proposed by the historian Omer-Cooper (1966, 1969) and widely accepted, has since been debated by South African historians. The idea is that Shaka's power, and particularly his ferocity, and the role of his Zulus in the Mfecane were at least partly 'invented' by the (white) Boer tradition to glorify the role of the triumphant settlers. The version put forward must be reviewed in light of these new discussions, and the vocabulary corrected somewhat, such as 'what South African historiography used to refer to as "Kaffir Wars".' (p. 126) – actually the Xhosa Wars. On the other hand, everything that is said about the excessive use by the settlers of the miserable survivors of these wars, the Mfengu, driven out by the Zulus and taken in as 'British subjects' to be used as underpaid workers, is fascinating.

The third period (1850-1880), covered by Ngwabi Bhebe from Zimbabwe, is a detailed account of the relationships between Africans, Boers and British that led to the total defeat of the Xhosa, the abandonment by the British of the interior to the Boer republics, and the complex relationships with African chiefdoms and kingdoms forced to trade their alliances with one side or the other in an attempt to save what little they had left. All of this is based on a quality historiography that has since progressed without requiring any drastic revision.[5] It is worth highlighting the quality of these three chapters, written by African historians while the South Africa *Apartheid* regime was still in power.

Chapter 8 to 11

The next group of chapters (8 to 11) examines in turn the history of the countries of the Zambezi basin (Allen Issaacman), coastal and inland East Africa (A. I. Salim and Isaraia N. Kinmambo), the Great Lakes region (David W. Cohen) and the Congo and Angola basins (Jean-Luc Vellut). These are all texts written by specialists renowned in their field. The complex history of these areas, under increasing pressure from a violent slave trade, has benefited from works by a large number of English-speaking historians and anthropologists. It

5 See for example, South African historian, Carolyn Hamilton: Hamilton, C. 1988, *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Invention*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; Hamilton, C. (ed). 1995. *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in South African History.* Witwatersrand University Press.

certainly deserves to be supplemented by a later bibliography, both in English and French,[6] but as it stands, it is still invaluable.

Northeast Africa

The same applies to the following group of writers, who examine, respectively, Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia. Sociologist Anouar Abdel-Malek's chapter on the rebirth of Egypt highlights the continuity between the genesis of national unity in the eighteenth century and the acceleration of this internal movement in the nineteenth century: it was not Napoleon Bonaparte's brief and vigorously repelled campaign that triggered the change. At most, it contributed to accelerating a movement that was already underway and was energized precisely by the rejection of the French invasion. The two revolts in Cairo in 1798 and 1800 in particular gave the emerging Egyptian national movement the opportunity to crystallize, by giving it an autonomous centre that distanced itself increasingly from the Ottoman empire while expanding its domain to the gates of Istanbul. This was mainly the internal work of Muhammad Ali and his modernist entourage, who were able to create a national economy and culture. Nevertheless, mention should have been made of the Egyptian authority's intelligent use of the contribution of around one hundred scholars originally brought by Bonaparte, many of whom remained in the country long after he left. The deciphering of the hieroglyphics on the Rosetta Stone, thus opening up the great exploration of the country's distant past, is not an event to be overlooked. However, the positive aspects of Ismail's reign are rightly highlighted, including the land reforms and major infrastructure projects (railways, Suez Canal) ensuring the transition from an economy marked by 'Oriental feudalism' to a capitalist economy. The problem is that this transition was hindered by Western colonial advances and influence, which paralyzed the Egyptian revolution of 1881-82, born of the rise of the Egyptian middle class. Finally, the comparison with Japan's Meiji era is apt; Japan remained more in control of its national cultural cohesion, and was thus able to begin the work of modernization 'free of the vice-like grip of geopolitics' of the West (p. 355).

6 Chrétien, J.P. 2000. *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs: Deux mille ans d'histoire,* Paris, Aubier; Médard, H. and Doyle, S. (eds). 2007 *Slavery in the Great Lakes Region of East Africa*, Oxford, James Currey, p. 273; Derat, M. L., Vernet, T. and Ballarin, M. P. (eds). 2013. *Traites et Esclavages en Afrique orientale et dans l'océan Indien.* Paris, Karthala, p. 522; Vansina, J. 2000. *Paths in the Rainforests: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa.* University of Wisconsin Press; Glassman, J. *op.cit.,* to name just some of the main ones.

The following chapter, on Sudan, by A.A. Ibrahim with B.A. Ogot, begins with the country's colonization by Egypt (1821), facilitated by the break-up of the Fundj sultanate which gave way to a series of weak and warring chiefdoms. Consequently, the country was ravaged by wars of resistance: resistance to the Egyptians in the north, resistance to the Turkish and European slave traders in the south, resistance to the great slave trader al-Zubayr Rahal Mansur, a Sudanese from the north, from the 1870s, and resistance to the British advance through Uganda. Rampant Westernization caused widespread xenophobia among the Sudanese which would result, at the end of the century, in the great Mahdist revolt. This was a key period for the country, which helped shed some light on the problems inherited today.

As for the chapter on Ethiopia and Somalia, covered by the specialist Robert Pankhurst, this remains relevant, even if we can refer to several more recent quality studies.[7] The same applies to Madagascar, which benefits from the contribution by P. M. Mutibwa.

North Africa Maghreb

We then move on to the Maghreb countries, where the approach used to structure the successive monographs is regrettable. Algeria, Tunisia and Libya are the subject of a chapter by Mohammed Chérif, and Morocco by Abdallah Laroui, followed by a chapter on European policy in western North Africa by Nicolay Ivanov. The documentation, mostly in French, is excellently used. Most of the major research work had already been published at the time, notably resulting from the many doctoral theses produced under the guidance of the great Maghreb specialist, Charles André Julien (professor at the Sorbonne from 1947 to 1961). Subsequent innovative works concern primarily the twentieth century and the Algerian War.[8] So, factually speaking, these articles are of high quality. But their disjointed nature leads to a certain number of repetitions. Furthermore, frequent reference is made to Mehemet Ali's model of Egypt as a model for leaders of the Maghreb movements of Westernized modernization or opposition to colonization, but then one must refer to the separate chapter

7 Cf. Abbink, G. J. 2016. *Ethiopian-Eritrean studies: a bibliography on society and history, 2010-2015.* Leiden, African Studies Centre.

8 Benjamin Stora and Mohamed Harbi write specifically about the twentieth century and the Algerian War; otherwise: Stora, B. and Harbi, M. 2012. *Histoire de l'Algérie : XIX^e^ et XX^e^ siècles.* Editions La Découverte.

on Egypt. The same regret applies to the chapter on the Sahara (Stephen Baier) which supposedly bridges the gap between North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. It has the advantage of making a dominant space of the Sahara, influenced by the pastoral and military nomadism of its inhabitants. Obviously, it emphasizes the economic and political role of trans-Saharan trade, particularly the increase in the slave trade, but today, a more comprehensive understanding of the West African economic, cultural and social space considered in its entirety, including northern and southern Sahara would be appreciated. An attempt at a connected history would have made it possible to understand the interactive effects of these routes between north and south and vice versa – whereas, since the overall work has not yet covered the western sub-Saharan political formations, the current account only comprises a few veiled references in this regard. For example, it is important to relate the growth in the slave trade and trans-Saharan traffic in general with the expansion of the major conquering jihads of West Africa, mentioning the links between the Libyan Mahdist movement and its expansion to Chad.[9] Similarly, even though the volume covers the period 'until the 1880s', neither the chapter (nor the book for that matter) makes any reference to the transversal transformations from Bahr el Ghazal to Bornu, which would take shape from precisely the start of the 1880s with the expansion of the slave domain of the conqueror Rabah, one of the dominant political figures of the end of the century. In short, it is necessary break, at least with a summary chapter, from the conventional but fragmented presentation of a succession of monographs on states which were, at the time, still partly in formation.

West Africa

We then move onto the West African space with the political revolution caused by the great jihads. Three chapters cover this topic, with the Sudanese historian Aziz Batran dealing with the religious aspect of the movements. This chapter is accurate and informative, but these jihads should form part of a more comprehensive analysis, as such profoundly religious movements also correspond to processes embodying reactions to the world around them. The reasons for social unrest are multiple, especially as religious leaders are largely cognizant of events in the world. Three times El Hadj Omar made the pilgrimage to the

9 Cf. Triaud, J.-L. 1995. *La légende noire de la Sanûsiyya : Une confrérie musulmane saharienne sous le regard français (1840–1930).* Paris, Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 2 vol., p. 1151.

Near East, where he lived for three years. He travelled extensively across North Africa, where Western modernization was underway. Ousman dan Fodio was a great cultural scholar educated about new trading circuits transformed by the Industrial Revolution taking place in the West. Samori was directly confronted with French expansion. This colonial advance by the French and British played a role in the expansion of the Empires towards the East. The history of the Jihads cannot be told without investigating all of the reasons for these mass conversions; changes in the surrounding world are an explanatory factor which cannot be ignored. The same applies to the two case studies: the Sokoto caliphate and Borno (Murray Last) and Massina and the Torodbe (Tukuloor) empire by Madina Ly-Tall. Factually, these are strong chapters, although the incorporation of later works could improve them.[10] What can be both praised and lamented, is that the history of each of these groups is only dealt with in terms of internal politics. Internal competitions, rivalries and incidents are carefully described, but nothing is said about the overall geopolitical context in which these monographic adventures are set. Almost nothing is said either about a major element fuelling the Fula imperial conquests: the considerable growth of the internal slavery system, highlighted in the chapter on the Sahara but here attributed, at most, to the years *preceding* the jihads. Murray Last mentions this briefly in Borno, while downplaying its significance: 'slaves did not pay tax... superficially such settlements were no different from free villages' (p. 624). He makes a debatable assumption: 'Another staple export, those of slaves, seems to have gradually declined…although it is possible that the slave labour force increased in Borno' (p. 578). A few years before Rabah settled in the country, this is unlikely to say the least (neverthless, it is reassuring to note that he is the only one to mention female slaves).

All this must therefore be reviewed and supplemented by the recent volume by Paul Lovejoy, who returns the West African jihads to their pre-eminent role in the world of the time.[11] *Jihād in West Africa during the Age of Revolution* argues that scholars of the Americas and the Atlantic world have not given Africa its due consideration as part of either the Atlantic world or the age of revolutions. It is necessary to examine the jihād movement in a global context, as part of the age of revolutions (commonly just associated with the American and French revolutions and the erosion of European imperialist powers). West Africa, which experienced too a period of profound political change in the late eighteenth

10 Cf. Robinson, op. cit.

11 Lovejoy, P. 2016. *Jihād in West Africa during the Age of Revolutions*. Ohio University Press.

through the mid-nineteenth centuries, was a vital actor in the Atlantic world and has wrongly been excluded from African analyses of the period.

The chapter by Yves Person on the states and peoples of Senegambia and Upper Guinea obviously cannot overlook the major social and political changes resulting from the incursion of the Western economic model which, during the century, would soon substitute slave activity with the production of raw materials required by the Industrial Revolution including arabic gum, palm oil and in due course, peanuts. All this should nevertheless be reviewed in light of the subsequent volume produced by Boubacar Barry.[12] Finally, each of the last three monographic chapters, by the African historians Kwame Arhin and Joseph Ki-Zerbo on the peoples of the Niger Bend and the Volta, by A.I. Asiwaju on Dahomey, Yorubaland, Borgu and Benin, and by J. Alagoa, Lovett Elango and Metegue N'Nah on the Niger Delta and the Cameroon region, tackles in their own way this 'period of major upheavals of various kinds... political and institutional disintegration... [that] stemmed from internal tensions, but also, increasingly, from external causes, particularly notable changes in trade flows' (p. 662). The chapters draw on the wealth of previous personal research. Their only peculiarity remains the same: the lack of connection between all of these diverse spaces with little or no understanding of the same processes for the same reasons. All this would call for a large summary introductory chapter to place this piecemeal history in the historical dynamic of the time, in Africa and elsewhere. This is only found in the conclusion, written by Ade Ajayi.

This 'elsewhere' finally appears in the penultimate chapter of the book in an original form: the 'African diaspora'. Here we are on the fringes of the current project on the global history of Africa. In short, in one chapter, this is the reason why the new UNESCO project is preparing an entire volume. This chapter paves the way; the collaboration by three specialists in different areas, Franklin Knight (on Cuba and the Caribbean), Yusuf Talib (for the Near and Middle East) and Philip Curtin (for the continental Americas), compares developments, their contrasts and their commonalities, across all fields: intellectual, social, political and economic. Thus, the previous shortcomings of the monographic analyses are avoided for the diasporas and the chapter covers a wide area, including diasporic data preceding the nineteenth century, necessary for understanding its development. It rightly reminds us that Africans have long migrated to other continents, but obviously, the bulk of this migration was

12 Barry, B. 1988. *La Sénégambie du XVe au XIXe siècle : Traite négrière islam et conquête coloniale.* Paris, L'Harmattan, p. 432. English translation*: Senegambia and the Atlantic Trade,* Cambridge University Press, 1997.

created by the slave trades, differentiated depending on the continent, including slaves imported into Europe by the Portuguese, and the powerful precedent set by the Mediterranean and the world of the Indian Ocean, where formerly slaves originating from West Africa were also found. Wisely, the figures are only detailed in terms of what is scientifically confirmed: the Atlantic slave trade. The slave trade elsewhere was important, but is still impossible to quantify given the lack of reliable studies on the issue. For example, the often-alleged figure of 12 million slaves that transited via the Sahara was recently questioned by a serious quantitative study that would bring this number to 6 or 7 million (between the tenth and nineteenth centuries).[13]

Be that as it may, the authors are right to explain that slavery, and particularly African slavery, increased greatly in the nineteenth century and not only towards the Indian Ocean. The 'slavery' method of work was in fact encouraged by economic and social changes brought about by the new economic organization of the world, which encouraged African entrepreneurs to direct their slaves to the production of the raw materials now required on the increasingly intrusive international market. In short, what occurred in Africa is what happened with cotton in the United States at the same time: the introduction, in societies devoted to the production of raw materials, of the slavery method *in the service of Western capitalism* which banned slavery in its colonies, but was disinterested in the fate of the slaves belonging to so-called 'traditional' societies.

The volume's conclusion, like the first chapter, confirms Ade Ajayi's excellent ability to summarize. At most, it might be regretted that he makes of all the theocratic formations born of western jihads a world apart, whereas the Muslim faith does not in any way contradict the other constituitive aspects of state powers that manifested everywhere in Africa throughout the century under the pressure of economic and commercial transformations, political instability and population movements. We witness either the breakdown of previous formations, condemned by the surrounding violence to fragmentation and decentralization, or the emergence of 'Empire builders', with their 'modernist' aspects and their shared characteristic of pro-slavery military powers accentuated by the growing importance of European armaments. As Ajahi concludes: 'It was the intensity of the rivalries and the bitterness of the wars that made African rulers slow to realize that tackling the European threat should have taken precedence over their interstate rivalries, and that they should have united to face it' (p. 791).

13 Specific quantitative work by John Wright: Wright, J. 2007. *The Trans-Saharan Slave Trade.* London and New York, Routledge.

Apart from the gaping absence of the question of women, any such gender analysis not being conceivable at the time of production, it remains to rethink what is missing from the work, and to demonstrate for all of Africa what Paul Lovejoy has studied for West African jihads – the active and sometimes decisive role in world history of the African transformations of the nineteenth century, in the west Atlantic, in the East facing the Indian Ocean and in the segregationist south.

CHAPTER 7

AFRICA UNDER COLONIAL DOMINATION

General History of Africa Volume VII

Faranirina V. Rajaonah

Introduction

This volume, dedicated to 'Africa under Colonial Domination (1880-1935)' was published in 1987. However, the most recent bibliographic references cited date from 1981, a significant gap reflecting the difficulties encountered in completing such a major undertaking. The contributions date from the 1970s, a decade after most of the Continent's countries gained their independence.[1]

From a chronological perspective, the 1970s also experienced a second wave of independence encompassing Portuguese possessions from 1973 to 1975 (Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Mozambique and Angola) and Zimbabwe in 1980. Protests against regimes subservient to the former colonial powers also led to revolution, as in Madagascar in 1972. This was the 'second independence', the 'true independence'. More generally, since the late 1960s, Africa has seen growing criticism of the governments of new nation states that have failed to live up to the expectations placed on them in the aftermath of independence. Moreover, some of them readily maintained relations with the Apartheid regime of Pretoria.

1 The only indications concerning the writing are found in the notes for chapters 8 and 15, written respectively in 1976 and 1974, with only Chapter 15 being revised in 1980.

Thus, during the 1970s, people attached to their country's sovereignty emphasized what was supposed to form the basis of its identity. Talk of resistance to colonial conquest and nationalism supported this. At the same time, from 1963, the Organisation of African Unity encouraged closer relations and continent-wide cohesion, even though regional integration processes also began to lead to a reconfiguration of political spaces.

This was the political context and general atmosphere in which the 30 chapters of Volume VII were produced and which, in a way, shed light on its structure. It is understandable that, on the one hand, its perspectives are African and, on the other hand, the work reconciles general and regional approaches. Without being its guiding principle, the idea of a global African identity is present, particularly in culture, in the broad sense of the term, and in politics.

After a reminder of the African perspectives that prevail in the publication, this review follows its progression. It was impossible to consider a full update of the bibliography for such a rich volume and to list all the issues not covered, due to editorial constraints and/or the state of the historiography in the 1970s. Choices had to be made, focusing greater attention on what could be considered global Africanity, without neglecting the essential themes discussed in the contributions.

African perspectives

We will not reflect here on changes in the historiography of Africa in the 1960s and 1970s, nor its specific features, topics that were developed in the section of Volume I dedicated to the methodology. However, we thought it would be useful to say a few words about the authors who, through their work, were able to depart from Eurocentrism and place Africa at the centre of their reflections, without falling into Afrocentrism. In this sense, Volume VII was not an exclusively African affair. Among the thirty or so contributors were a dozen Europeans and Americans, almost all of whom combined a scientific interest in Africa with political commitment. Some of them have openly expressed their anti-colonialism, such as Jacques Berque who, opposed to the exile of Sultan Mohammed V, resigned from the French administration in 1953. In 1963, Terence Ranger was expelled from Southern Rhodesia, where he was a teacher, for 'radicalism'. For a few years, he lived in Dar-es-Salaam, one of the meeting places for anti-apartheid activists and intellectuals in Africa. Walter Rodney taught there in 1966-1967 and from 1969 to 1974. That this

Guyanese historian and passionate pan-Africanist appears among the authors is particularly important for anyone seeking clues to a global African identity throughout the publication. Africans from different regions of the continent (from the Maghreb to Southern Africa) make up the remaining contributors.

The twenty or so African authors include the Ghanaian, Albert Adu Boahen, a student at the University of Ghana, then at the School of Oriental Studies in London for his thesis. He was a professor at the University of Ghana when he was involved in writing Volume VII, which he also edited. Like Adu Boahen, almost all the African contributors were educated at universities on the continent where, in the aftermath of independence, but particularly during the 1960s-1970s, historical schools were formed. The same applies in Antananarivo around the journal *Omaly sy anio* (Yesterday and Today), created in 1975, which drew on the legacy of Cheikh Anta Diop, Marc Bloch[2] and even Makerere (Sicherman, 2003). Adiele Afigbo was the first Ph.D. in history from the University of Ibadan. Eisha Odhiambo, who belonged to the generation of those born in the 1940s, defended his thesis before the University of Nairobi and enjoyed a period of study in the United States where African studies were developing. This broadening of horizons undoubtedly influenced the attention paid to transatlantic relations in this volume.

However, the fundamental point remains the *agency* of Africans. It gives the work its common thread even though, during the period covered, Europeans conquered nearly the entire continent, exercised their domination and dragged Africans into the Great War. Most of the chapter titles reflect this perspective, as stated in the introduction to the first section: 'Africa and the colonial challenge' (Chapter 1). This chapter also presents the volume's structure.

The thirty chapters are subdivided into three major sections, organized on the same model. Each one begins with an abstract on the theme developed and/or an update on the historiographical debates. This is followed by regional analyses. Texts about social change, cultural life and Africa's links to the new world deviate from this pattern, as the approaches concern the whole continent.

2 A quotation by Cheik Anta Diop and one by Marc Bloch serve as prefaces to numbers 3-4 (1976) and 1-2 (1975) respectively.

African initiatives and resistance

Adaptation to innovations introduced by Europeans over the nineteenth century (such as the abolition of slavery or education) and the use of weapons, together with beliefs: these were the strategies implemented by Africans to defend their territories, as discussed in Chapter 1. However, it was difficult for them to prevent annexation by conquerors driven by a 'new imperialism' analysed in Chapter 2 ('European partition and conquest of Africa: an overview'). The text revisits the explanations given to a global phenomenon, with the authors favouring one factor over another, based on their ideological sensitivities rather than their nationality: the weight of monopoly capitalism, the impact of social evolutionism or the exacerbation of nationalism in Europe. Subsequent works examine the advantages enjoyed by Europeans, including relative stability in the West during the 'age of empires' (Hobsbawm, 1987), the superiority of their weaponry and the effectiveness of quinine (Iliffe, 1995). Chapter 2 places colonial conquests in the long history of relations between Africans and Europeans; the author goes back to the beginnings of the slave trade to convey the tensions it created or exacerbated within African societies. However, the 'forces of disintegration' that weakened the continent are not related solely to the slave trade. While this obviously had serious repercussions, the impact of a series of calamities, particularly from the 1860s, was also crucial. Many regions were weakened by episodes of drought, famine, epizootics and epidemics, some of which were imported from overseas (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1999; Iliffe, 1995). The 1890s were 'among the worst' for the continent (Maddox, 2006). Furthermore, continuing the violence that accompanied the emergence of African empires during the nineteenth century, the European conquests were fatal to many societies; genocide being the ultimate form (Reid, 2012; Davis, 2001). However, whether voluntarily for personal reasons or under duress, Africans frequently took part in colonial expeditions at home and in other territories. This enlistment contributed to the creation of diaspora communities across empires. This was the case with the community created by the 'Senegalese riflemen' and their descendants (Bâ, 2012; Echenberg, 2004), a way for Africans to regain the initiative by putting down roots in the countries they were supposed to leave, once the task set by the colonizers had been accomplished.

The word order in the statement of the theme for chapters 3 to 10, 'African initiatives and resistance' reflects the attention paid to the dynamism of Africans. Indeed, while 'resistance' can be passive, the word 'initiatives' is unambiguous;

Africans are shaping the course of their history, whether within state constructions or stateless societies. The chronological boundaries selected are 1880 and 1914, with two exceptions: the Maghreb, where European domination dates back to well before 1880, and Madagascar, discussed once for the entire period covered by the volume (Chapter 10). The summary (Chapter 3) that opens the subsequent chapters emphasizes the importance of ideologies and beliefs, as well as the charisma of religious figures in the resistance movements. The text also revisits certain debates, particularly those sparked by the teleological perspective that these resistance movements led to modern nationalism, independence and the freedom movements of the 1970s.[3] The discussion is now up for debate, with Terence Ranger distinguishing between primary and secondary resistance, on the one hand, and historians' shift from collaboration versus resistance to 'alternative strategies' when conquered, on the other. Nor can resistance be reduced to reactionary struggles waged by defenders of an old order, as certain Eurocentric studies suggest. In a more flexible sense, the term could cover both intentions and actions aimed at opposing all forms of domination.

Each of the following chapters (from 4 to 9) addresses resistance on a larger regional scale (North-East, North Africa and the Sahara, West Africa, East Africa, Central Africa, Southern Africa). Chapter 11, with the suggestive title 'Liberia and Ethiopia: the survival of two African states' has a rightful place in this first section, as these countries remained independent and resisted European intrusion. The chapters distinguish between two periods: the conquests and the implementation of colonization, up to 1914.

The Europeans invaded a continent that was politically complex, even within small territories. Centralized states, chiefdoms and clans could coexist. Rivalries were a reality, as were struggles between factions or opposition to a kingdom's rulers. In addition, resistance to the conquerors was sometimes accompanied by rebellions against governments that were being criticized.[4] Such divisions disadvantaged the Africans, some of whom hoped in vain to take advantage of rivalries between the Europeans. But the formation of coalitions and the possibility of obtaining weapons through regional trade helped to prolong the resistance. Once the conquest was complete, pressures of all kinds and the confiscation of property, particularly land, fuelled protests, some of them similar in nature to the reactions of slaves in the southern United States. The following are mentioned

3 Here, and to the end of the paragraph, we use the analyses on the concept of resistance developed in John Abbink, Mirjam de Bruinj and Klaas Walraven (2003).

4 Cf. for example in Stephen Ellis (1985, 2003).

in regard to Central Africa (Chapter 8): 'social banditry',[5] the destruction of compulsory crops, the slowdown in work, the refusal to pay taxes and exodus.

Religions played a mobilizing and unifying role in the desire to repel the conquerors. Similar or related beliefs hold a primordial place in the overall history of the continent. This includes the religions of the lands (the term that we traditionally prefer) that made diviners and prophets the standard-bearers of resistance. Islam was used in the context of a defensive jihad, sometimes with the temptation to attach itself to pan-Islamism (in the North-East). Finally, some of the elite who had appropriated Christianity protested by creating churches independent of the missions.[6] While the first schisms appeared in South Africa, the attribution of the description 'Ethiopian' to some of these churches is significant. Ethiopia, which by metonymy has come to designate the whole of Africa, prided itself on a centuries-old Christianity which owed nothing to European missionaries. This reference became even more prestigious after Ethiopia's victory over Italy at Adwa in 1896. These Ethiopian churches maintained relations with the Episcopal Methodist Church, founded in the United States in 1816 and attended by Black people. The Zionist churches of South Africa, the first of which dates back to 1904, are affiliated with the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion, founded in the United States in 1896. Their beliefs included that of an African Messiah (Bonhomme, 2009).

South African Christian elites reacted differently. Sharing the views of liberal whites, they were convinced of the possibility of progressive reforms and, ultimately, cultural assimilation. But here too, one of the role models lived on the other side of the Atlantic: the Black American educator Booker T. Washington (Chapter 9).

Finally, despite their desire to keep Indigenous Africans in a state of subordination, the Americo-Liberians, comprising African-Americans, West Indians from Barbados and descendants of freed slaves, were also involved in the construction of a global African space (Chapter 11).

5 The editor of Volume VII disapproved of the use of the expression 'social bandit' but respected the point of view of this chapter's authors. In Hobsbawm's subsequent work on Europe, studies on Africa took an interest in this issue, highlighting that social banditry can be invested with a political character in a context of hegemony of wealth over the poor, cf. John Abbink, Mirjam de Bruijn and Klaas Van Walraven (2003) and Crummey (1986).

6 Bengt Sundkler defends the existence of an identifiable African Christianity, cf. Ogbu Kalu, (2007). The first work in which Bengt Sundkler sets out his ideas dates from 1948. See also his posthumous work published in 2000.

The Colonial movement in Africa

This title of the 1990 republication of certain chapters from Volume VII of the *Cambridge History of Africa* reflects the renewal of perspectives on the history of colonization (Roberts, 1990). Africa was 'under colonial rule', as highlighted by nearly all the titles in the second part of Volume VII of UNESCO's *General History of Africa,* but the continents did not remain isolated from global trade flows and Africans' horizons were even broadened. Europe had its place in Africa, and vice versa. Africa's relations with the 'New World' intensified, and Africans were actively involved in all areas of their lives. Colonial policies themselves were not conceived in the cities alone; on the ground, they were the subject of negotiations between the administrators and Africans of different backgrounds (Clancy-Smith, Gouda, 1999). Colonizers and the colonized shaped each other and adapted to shifting political contexts (Cooper and Stoler, 1997).

This second part of our volume leads into the Great War (Chapter 12). The participation of Africans in the conflict is proof that colonization was well established; its terms were well defined according to the 'indigenous policy' of direct or indirect administration (Chapter 13). Colonial domination is studied from an economic perspective, with Chapter 14 placing Africa in the global economy. Then come the regional studies, divided according to the colonial powers (chapters 15 and 16), except for North Africa (Chapter 17) which is considered separately. 'The social repercussions of colonial domination' are analysed demographically and in terms of social structures (chapters 18 and 19). Finally, chapters 20 and 21 are dedicated to religion and the arts.

The work essentially analyses the increased pressure on Africans during the First World War and points out that 'colonial peace' was not total: revolts broke out in different territories. Publications marking the centenary of the Great War, particularly those dedicated to Africa, provide additional information.[7] We could reconsider the consequences of the enlistment of one million African subjects from the perspective of global Africanity, using the example of Pap Ndiaye's work (Ndiaye, 2008). With the war, 300,000 Black people from Africa and America arrived in France. Some of the recruits returned home. Fear of these veterans prompted white people in the southern United States to start a second Ku Klux Klan, which experienced a wide resurgence in the 1920s.[8]

7 See Marc Michel (2013) and the edition of *Conflits mondiaux contemporains.*

8 Similarly, in the colonies, administrators feared 'returning riflemen' who had had different relationships with the Europeans than they had had with the colonizers at home.

Other demobilized soldiers remained in France, some of them expressing a desire to continue their studies. In the interwar period, migrants skilled in a wide variety of trades joined them. Among them were labourers, dock workers, writers, researchers and even artists. In line with the continuing migration to Europe, and still in the context of global Africanity, it is also important to mention the growing number of students arriving in France. Transcending their territorial affiliations, they established connections among themselves and created associations that served as frameworks for colonial protest (Adi, 1998).

The chapters devoted to the economy describe Africa as the 'periphery' of a world whose 'heart' is in Europe. However, intermediaries, whether African or from Asia and the Middle East, were fully integrated into the transnational networks of financial capitalism. The pressure, most evident in the forced labour required of a large number of Africans (d'Almeida-Topor, Lakroum, Spittler, 2003), contributed to the growth of a 'slave economy', based partly on the import of manufactured goods, and partly on mining and concessions dedicated to cash crops. However, small-scale peasant producers succeeded in integrating into economic channels and eventually, migrant workers participated in the creation of regional spaces and the circulation of cultures and political ideas.[9] These are factors of African globality, as is the rise of cities where individuals from different backgrounds intermingled. It was also primarily in cities that new elites appeared (for example in business and civil service), but the author of Chapter 19 rightly invites us to move beyond the traditional/modern dichotomy in the analysis of social reconfigurations. Finally, while multifaceted exploitation weighed heavily on the populations, progress in medicine and less frequent famines, due to communication infrastructures, resulted in population growth in Africa, albeit with significant regional disparities.

Since the publication of Volume VII, the historiography of the 'colonial moment' has grown richer and more diversified. It is worth noting the importance of the gender perspective[10] and studies attentive to the question of space and environment:[11] major themes for analysing colonial domination.

The chapters dedicated to culture appear to be among those that best advocate for a global African history. The overview of religions partly incorporates facts

9 Migrations have given rise to many works. For example, in the English-speaking world: Paul Nugent and A. I. Asiwaju (1996); Toyin Falola and Niyi Afolabi (2008); and Toyin Falola and Aribidesi Usman (2009); in the French-speaking world, see Daouda Gary-Tounkara (2008) and Issiaka Mandé (2012).

10 Thus, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch (1993); Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda (1999); Anne Hugon (2004); Odile Goerg (2007); and Rachel Jean-Baptiste (2014).

11 Allen Howard and Richard Shain (2005) and Gregory Maddox, *Sub-Saharan Africa* (2006).

covered in regional studies for the first two decades of the twentieth century. The existence of an 'African Christianity', derived from missionary Christianity and traditional practices, is clearly stated as a sign of religious creativity. These hybridization processes are analysed in greater detail in recent writings that speak of a 'village Christianity' on the historical Ethiopian model, a tolerant Christianity, whose community is led by an independent prophet, evangelist or catechist (Maxwell, 2012). This appropriation of Christianity is evident in the proliferation of separatist churches. Similarly, to protect themselves from much-feared witchcraft, even though life was fraught with dangers of all kinds, the colonized joined new, widespread religions that transcended colonial territorialities.

The analysis of the arts begins with music commencing with the choirs inherited from missionary teaching. This is followed by a journey through music, which allows people across the continent to connect with divinities and ancestors. Different societies also share the same musical culture. However, control, in the name of 'Civilization', led to the decline of performances linked to 'pagan' ceremonies. Subsequent works qualify these points of view; in response to mission injunctions, popular theatre adapted, while incorporating new forms circulated by migrant workers (Banham et al., 2010). Meanwhile, Euro-American inspired theatre, introduced by Africans upon their return from overseas, developed during the colonial period – an issue on which which clarifications could be provided. Thus, the elites of English-speaking West Africa (former slaves from Brazil and the Caribbean and their descendants), open to Western culture, took their cues from colonial theatres. However, they met with opposition from a lower middle class attached to more popular forms of dramatic art (Kerr, 1995). In any event, having become a space of protest, theatre was soon under surveillance, as was literature. The place of Islam in cultural life was the subject of specific development, with reference to the West Indian Wilmot Blyden, who was fascinated by Islamic-Arabic civilization.

African nationalism or the Africanity of nationalism

The final section of Volume VII covers the interactions between African politics and nationalism (1919-1935) from chapters 22 to 27. As in the first section, a summary presentation introduces the regional analyses. The importance of relations with African-Americans in the rise of nationalism, together with Liberia's privileged connections with the other side of the Atlantic and the recurring symbolic references to Ethiopia, are used to link this third section

with Chapter 28, devoted to the independent states of Liberia and Ethiopia, as well as Chapter 29 ('Africa and the New World'). This final chapter, before the general conclusion (Chapter 30), is the only one in the volume to explicitly adopt the perspective of global Africanity. Nevertheless, almost all of the preceding contributions mention the support provided by African Americans to those in Africa who were fighting against colonialism. Furthermore, the introduction to this third section (Chapter 22 'African Politics and Nationalism') asks key questions for understanding the meaning of nationalism across the entire continent, regardless of the diversity between regions.

From the outset, the introductory chapter highlights the difference between nationalism in nineteenth-century Europe and nationalism in Africa between the two wars. In Italy or Germany, for example, communities sharing the same cultural identities and a common historical past aspired to live in nation-states. However, in Africa, colonial borders did not necessarily coincide with those of 'cultural nations'. Thus, in these administrative territories that the colonized may have considered 'proto-states',[12] the 'forging of new identities began with the acceptance of the essential African-ness of the various cultural nations.'[13] The policy of differentiation, of 'separated development' (as in Kenya), if not segregation (in South Africa), was intended to encourage the colonized to transcend their differences and to rely on what brought them together to stand up to the colonizers. This was the case of societal values and shared beliefs. From this perspective, the South African approach showed the way, particularly as it set a precedent. In 1912, Pixley ka I. Seme, a Zulu lawyer and the Tswana journalist Sol Plaatje initiated a conference in Bloemfontein, in the heart of Afrikaner country, which was attended by Black people from various regions in South Africa. They collectively founded the South African Native National Congress (SANNC), a name with an obvious colonial overtone, although 'Native' also recalls the indigenousness of Africans, as opposed to the non-nativeness of the Afrikaners, British and Indians. Around ten years later, the SANNC became the African National Congress (ANC); Africanity prevailed over belonging to a particular territory or group, defined by the colour-bar of the colonizers or inherited from a more distant past.[14] ANCs were created elsewhere, such as in Tanganyika and in modern-day Zambia; and the ANC

12 Jacques Berque prefers 'patriotism' to 'nationalism' and talks of the 'proto-nation' (Chapter 24).

13 Olatunji Oloruntimehin, Chapter 22, p. 565.

14 For a history of South Africa, please refer to the summary by Rodney Davenport and Christopher Saunders (2000).

anthem, one of the national anthems of the Republic of South Africa, was also adopted as the national anthem by both of these states. Among other things, this is an indication of the links between nationalism and pan-Africanism.

The regional studies (chapters 22 to 27) address the expressions of nationalism in their plurality and the entities or individuals that were mobilized. Most of the time, the colonized began by seeking improvement in their conditions, if not assimilation, before demanding emancipation. Protests manifested as a refusal to obey orders or fulfil obligations, through escape or migration; later, strikes would be added to such forms of passive resistance attempted from the early years of colonization. There were also violent reactions, such as the Rif War. The colonized would also expose abuses in the press. While some continued to shape their identity within independent churches (Lonsdale, 2012), others did so in secret societies. This was the case in Madagascar where medical students took the initiative by founding the *Vy Vato Sakelika* (Iron, Stone, Ramifications), and were joined by other members of the elite (Rajaonah, 1995-1996). Cultural associations and mutual societies authorized by the administration were also able to serve as frameworks for political initiatives. In addition to the global recession, recruitment for mines, construction sites and plantations fostered the creation of unions within which protest developed. Finally, political parties were also founded, some of which were linked to metropolitan organizations, such as the French Communist Party. While 'new elites', educated during the colonial period and disappointed with the fate reserved for them by the powers that be, were active in nationalist movements, they were not the only ones to be involved. 'Former elites' (leaders and aristocrats) tried to regain their positions, while others were convinced of the value of building nations on different bases. Besides, didn't the significant investment of young people in politics restrict their projects? Indeed, associations of educated young people or those who had been taught in prestigious schools multiplied across the continent. At the same time, student associations were formed in the cities which would contribute to African nationalism, just like the organizations initiated by African Americans. The chapter 'Africa and the New World' is primarily dedicated to their contributions to Africa. Indeed, the sub-section 'The persistence and transformation of African cultural values in Latin America and the Caribbean', focusing in particular on the weight of Black people in terms of population and religious syncretism, occupies just seven of the forty pages of Chapter 29.

Chapter 29 first discusses the 'Back-to-Africa movements', which were also initiated by people established in Africa, such as the West Indian, Edward W. Blyden, who having settled in Liberia, made the journey to the United States.

But the incentives underlying the diaspora came mainly from African Americans. The most well-known and successful approach was that of Marcus Garvey. The volume also considers the ease with which Afro-Brazilians integrated into West Africa, although it should be added that, for their part, they introduced the architecture of the country where they had been enslaved.[15] Finally, syncretism took place between Catholicism and traditional beliefs. The missionary role of African Americans favoured the creation in Africa of churches independent of European missions and attached to their own – an issue raised in different places in the two preceding sections. The third part of the chapter focuses on 'America's contribution to Africans' education'. Tuskegee, the institution of Booker T. Washington, was a benchmark here, and the South African John Dube, founding president of the ANC, created a similar establishment in Zululand. A large number of young people, from countries under British rule, continued their studies in the United States, some at prestigious universities, and the life stories of renowned people who took this path are traced in the chapter.[16] These relationships fostered a political dynamic that was expressed in an organized movement: pan-Africanism. The first conference, then the first three pan-African congresses are reviewed in the volume: meetings were all held in European capitals where African nationalists enjoyed support. It was, of course, impossible to cover this subject in about forty pages, and it has been the subject of more detailed research since the volume was written. Here, we highlight some of the research themes that we believe shed light on global Africanity.

The issue of diasporas is central to the discussion about Africa's relationship with the New World and Europe. The links between Africans and the diasporas imply a recognition that descendants of Africans living in Africa and elsewhere share the same values and, consequently, have similar cultural behaviours. The term diaspora assumes the idea of a return to the almost mythical land of origin; in this instance Africa, however dominated and divided. Faced with this, diasporas can take the initiative; its members then appear as 'agents of modernity'.[17] But in fact, the dynamics come from intellectual communities established on both sides of the Atlantic. Thus, Africans do not simply react to ideas from elsewhere; they participate fully in the circuits of ideas and experiences. They are part of a group that is emerging engaged in a discussion about Africa, race, colonialism and

15 Toyin Falola and Aribidesi Usman (2009).

16 Including J. E. K. Aggrey from Gold Coast, Nnamdi Azikiwe from Nigeria, John Chilembwe from Nyasaland, John Dube from South Africa, Kwame Nkrumah from Gold Coast.

17 Here, we take up the argument developed in the introduction by Geneviève Fabre and Klaus Benesch (2004).

progress (Zachernuk, 2000). Indeed, in the early decades of the twentieth century, there were intense cultural flows between Africa, Europe and the United States.

The passages of Volume VII dedicated to this issue could be expanded. This is also the case with the theme of the Harlem Renaissance. African-American literature is 'truly transnational and part of the Black Atlantic' wrote Pap Ndiaye. The Harlem Renaissance writers spent time in Paris and African-American artists toured Europe.[18] Another example of the cultural flourishing of the 1920s-1930s was Afro-Cubanism, which expressed the desire of the Afro-Cuban elites to promote African heritage, for example through rumba, to protect it against the weight of US culture and the Cuban dictatorship. Rumba also met with success in Europe. Cuban rhythms spread to the heart of Africa, to places such as Brazzaville, due to the mediation of migrants from the French Caribbean (Manning, 2009).

In a completely different field, Anne Julie Cooper, born a slave in North Carolina, was the first Black woman to obtain a doctorate in history from the Sorbonne, in 1924, for a thesis on the question of slavery in France between 1789 and 1848. A few years earlier, in 1935, Léopold Sédar Senghor became the first African *agrégé de grammaire,* a status awarded after passing the most competitive and prestigious civil service examination in France. Senghor was also one of the representatives of the *Négritude* movement (Ndiaye, 2008), a group that was the successor of the Harlem Renaissance and Haitian movements (Lauer and Anyidoho, 2012).

Africans, African Americans and African Caribbeans spent time in Europe, often moving from one country to another. Meetings were an opportunity to see how far it was possible to go beyond the colour bar and rely on effective solidarity (Rosenhaft and Aitken, 2013). Migrants who carried their beliefs created churches, trying to attract members from host societies.[19] But, above all, in the cities, African, African American and African Caribbean intellectuals inserted themselves into networks of anti-colonialist activists, thereby 'conquering the colonial public space' (Lüsenbrink, 2003). From the 1920s, some of them joined associations such as the Ligue Universelle pour la Défense de la Race Noire. Subsequently, the 1930s, considered the 'golden age of black intellectuals' in France, was the period of Kouyaté's Union des Travailleurs Nègres, strongly influenced by the communist movement (Dewitte, 1985). Pan-Africanism is indebted to all these

18 Cf. for example, Pap Ndiaye (2008) regarding the concerts of Louis Amstrong, Duke Ellington, Bessie Smith or shows by Josephine Baker in the 'Revue Nègre' on the Champs Élysées. In addition to Josephine Baker, Patrick Manning (2009) talks about the singer Marian Anderson from Philadelphia.

19 This was the case with the African Churches Missions of Liverpool, under the initiative of the Nigerian Ekarte (Adogame, 2007).

initiatives and different cultural and political trends, even if it does indeed have its African, African American and African Caribbean founding fathers. While the 1900 conference in London is generally considered the pivotal moment in the birth of the movement, Olisanwuche dates the beginning of pan-Africanism to 1893. A week-long meeting was held in Chicago, bringing together African Americans and Africans along with European scientists and missionaries. This was followed by a Congress in Atlanta in 1895 and the creation in England by Henry Sylvester Williams of the African Association in 1897, which advocated that it was time for Black people to make their voices heard (Olisanwuche, 1993).

Chapter 30, a conclusion to the volume, assesses the 'impact and significance' of colonialism. Without claiming that colonization was only a 'passing event' in the history of the continent, since it had decisive consequences for the lives of its populations, the author reflects on the differences between regions. He also highlights the brevity of the colonial period in the continent's long history and the resilience of African societies.

Conclusion

Volume VII of UNESCO's *General History of Africa* responds to the 'seminal challenge' of uncovering a history that breaks with narratives marked by colonization (Diouf, 2002). The authors also take into account advances in historiography in several areas, particularly those of resistance and nationalism – themes that addressed the concerns of African societies in the aftermath of independence. The composition of the editorial team, discussed earlier, also reflects an aspect of these societies after colonization. Indeed, just one woman appears among the authors, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch. The absence of African women is indicative of gender-based differences in their access to higher education during the period of colonial rule. We also lament the very limited focus this volume gives to instruction and, more generally, to education.

We have identified avenues likely to open up global Africanity. From this perspective, the most interesting approaches are those conducted at continent level, particularly in terms of cultures and those focusing on broadening the horizons towards America and Europe. For nearly fifty years, the renewal and proliferation of African historiography has enriched these issues. The fact remains that, whatever the shortcomings noted today or at the time of publication, Volume VII of the GHA has had an important place in the construction of Africanity, as conceived by the Organization of African Unity.

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CHAPTER 8

AFRICA SINCE 1935

General History of Africa Volume VIII

Muryatan S. Barbosa

Introduction

The *General History of Africa* (GHA) collection set itself the challenge of putting together a work that would reconcile three fundamental axes: scientific rigour and interdisciplinarity, greater value placed on African perspectives, and accessibility (Ogot, 2010, pp. xxv-xxvi). These characteristics, particularly the second axis, complicated the writing of its eighth volume, analysed here. What, indeed, would it mean to write a contemporary history of Africa – from 1935 to 1992 – from a more African perspective? In analysing this volume, we examine this particular aspect. We will also endeavour to describe the book's general characteristics, looking at its most notable qualities, shortcomings and omissions, resulting from its specificity as a work of synthesis, its theoretical and methodological choices and its historicity – in other words, the fact that it was written and published on a specific date (1993).

Volume VIII of the GHA is the only one divided into sections, not just chapters. There are seven: a) Africa in a decade of world conflicts, 1935-45; b) The struggle for political sovereignty: from 1945 to independence; c) Underdevelopment and the struggle for economic independence; d) Socio-political change since independence; e) Socio-cultural change since 1935; f) Pan-Africanism: liberation and integration since 1935; and g) Independent Africa in world affairs. It also features an *Afterword* written by the volume's assistant editor, historian Christophe Wondji, in which

he briefly reports on and analyses Africa's recent history, highlighting events that occurred between 1993 (the first edition of the book) and 1997 (the year he wrote the *Afterword*).

Shortcomings and omissions

Certain shortcomings and even thematic omissions of this eighth volume of the *General History of Africa* need to be highlighted. Regarding the former, we would emphasize: gender issues, African diasporas, the rural environment, and studies on the specific trajectories of African countries in the period between the First and Second World Wars and during Decolonization.

The first theme cited, gender, appears from a more analytical point of view only in the Introduction and final essay by the volume's main editor – Kenyan political scientist Ali Mazrui (*Towards the year 2000*) – and the contribution by Ghanaian anthropologist M. Osuwu (Chapter 12: *Agriculture and rural development*). Unless I am mistaken, it appears only sparingly in Chapter 19 by A. Mazrui et al. (*The development of modern literature*) and Chapter 22 by A. Habte and T. Wagaw (*Education and social change*). What is more, only one female author, the French historian C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, features among the forty-three participants in this volume (authors and collaborators). This is an undeniable shortcoming of the book, both analytically and in terms of representation.

Another shortcoming concerns the African diasporas. Aside from a few passages from Chapter 24 (E. Kodjo and D. Chanaiwa, *Pan-Africanism and liberation*), the theme is dealt with only in Chapter 23 of the volume (J. E. Harris et al., *Africa and its diaspora*). The focus here is nevertheless on the diaspora in the United States. The interrelationships between Africa and its diasporas in Latin America and the Caribbean in the twentieth century are presented only sparsely and summarily. Even in relation to pan-Africanism, which occupies two chapters, there is a lack of data on the participation of

women[1] and communist organizations[2] in the movement, both topics better understood today. This limitation stems in part from the relative scarcity, at that time, of academic research on such interrelationships (Africa-Caribbean-Latin America in the twentieth century). It could also, however, be attributed to the intrinsic difficulty of summarizing such a vast history within a limited space.

Another weakness of this eighth volume of the *General History of Africa* is its examination of rural Africa. This topic is only really investigated in the interesting contribution, already cited, by M. Osuwu (Chapter 12: *Agriculture and rural development*). This lack of information is most acute when it comes to 1935-45, referred to as the 'pre-statistical' period (Kipré, 1993, p. 381). This omission is acknowledged by the authors themselves, including historian Elikia M'Bokolo (1993, p. 196). This is significant because even today, despite the continent's rapid urbanization, about two-thirds of the African population live in rural areas or in intermediate zones between rural and urban areas.

1 In this section of the review, we have chosen to cite only bibliographies on specific lesser-known topics (notes 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6). Today's readers will find ample specialized bibliographical material on the more general topics cited (women in Africa, African-diaspora interrelations, rural population, African 'ethnicities'). See the CODESRIA website for example: http://www.codesria.org/spip.php?rubrique88&lang=en.
On the subject of this particular note (women's participation in the pan-Africanist movement) see, among others: African Department. 2015. *African Women, Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance*. Paris, UNESCO; Abdulmelik, N. (ed.). 2013. Pan-Africanism & the women's movement. *The African Women´s Journal*. Nairobi, FEMNET; Mama, A. (ed.). 2014. Pan-Africanism and feminism. *Feminist Africa*, No. 19; Mama, A. and Abbas, H. (eds). 2015. Pan-Africanism and feminism. *Feminist Africa*, No. 20, September; Simon, E. D. and Obeten, M. I. 2013. Impact of Pan-Africanism on African feminism: A study of Buchi Emecheta's Destination Biafra. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. Vol. 3, No. 8 Special Issue, April; Ampofo, A. A., Beoku-Betts, J. and Osirim, M. J. 2008. Researching African women and gender studies: New social science perspectives. *African and Asian Studies,* Vol. 7, pp. 327-341; Wallace, B. D. 2016. Accessing Pan-African feminist humanism: Unlocking the metacolonial in the poetry of Una Marson and Dionne Brand. *Women, Gender, and Families of Color*. Vol. 4, No. 2, Fall, pp. 222-249; Harris, B. 1996. Caribbean women & Pan Africanism. *African Journal of Political Science New Series*, Vol. 1, No. 1, June. Martin, T. 2007. *Amy Ashwood Garvey: Pan-Africanist, Feminist and Mrs. Marcus Garvey No. 1 or a Tale of Two Amies*. Dover, MA, Majority Press; Nkealah, N. 2006. Conceptualizing feminism(s) in Africa: The challenges facing African women writers and critics. *English Academy Review*, pp. 133-141; Farmer, A. D. 2016. Mothers of Pan-Africanism: Audley Moore and Dara Abubakari. *Women, Gender, and Families of Color*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Fall, pp. 274-295; Taylor, U. Y. 2002. *The Veiled Garvey: The Life and Times of Amy Jacques Garvey*. Chapel Hill and London, University of North Carolina Press.

2 On this subject see, among others: Adi, H. 1998. *West Africans in Britain: 1900-1960*, *Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Communism*. London, Lawrence & Wishart; Adi, H. 2013. *Pan-Africanism and Communism: The Communist International, Africa and the Diaspora, 1919-1939*; Trenton, NJ, Africa World Press; Derrick, J. 2008. Africa's *'Agitators' – Militant Anti-Colonialism in Africa and the West, 1918–1939*. London, Hurst; Mankalani, M. 2011. *In the Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from Harlem to London 1917–1939*. Chapel Hill, NC; Univ. of North Carolina Press; Weiss, H. 2013. *Framing a Radical African Atlantic: African American Agency, West African Intellectuals and the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers*. Leiden, Brill.

The fourth shortcoming is the limited space devoted to the period between 1935 and 1960, examined in *Africa in a decade of world conflicts, 1935-45* (92 pages) and *The struggle for political sovereignty, from 1945 to independence* (210 pages). This has led the editors (and authors) to promote somewhat confusing connections in an effort to cover the whole of Africa. The first section in particular contains only three chapters: a) *The Horn and North Africa; Tropical and equatorial Africa under French, Portuguese and Spanish domination*; and *Africa under British and Belgian domination*. This confusion reoccurs in the next section (II) on African independence. Moreover, in the present section, this limited coverage has rendered the narratives on the specific trajectories of Decolonization in African countries incomplete. In most cases, they have been restricted to two or three pages. This volume of the GHA, therefore, can only be seen as a general reference on this subject. Only a few independence movements received greater attention in this and other sections – Algeria, Angola, Congo, Ghana and Egypt.

Given these circumstances, we should be grateful to the authors who, in their introductions, were able to summarize and clearly explain the premises of their work (among others, Majhemout Diop and his collaborators in Chapter 3: *Tropical and equatorial Africa under French, Portuguese and Spanish domination;* J. Suret-Canale and A. A. Boahen in Chapter 7: *West Africa*; and D. Chanaiwa in Chapter 10: *Southern Africa*. Had this been the rule, it would have diminished the structural problem of the first two sections.

In addition to these shortcomings, it is necessary to highlight certain notable omissions. The first of these is the revolutionary experience of Thomas Sankara in Burkina Faso between 1983 and 1987. This event was contemporaneous with the publication of the work and, therefore, could have been featured. There are also few references to the specific trajectories of ethnic groups. The second important absence is the issue of disease and public health, on a local, national and international level.[3] The third is the issue of sexuality, in the contemporary sense of the term.[4] Specific studies on childhood and youth are another unexplored theme.[5] All of these themes already existed embryologically as study

3 On this subject see, among others: Sama, M. and Vinh-Kim Nguyen (ed.). 2008. *Governing Health Systems in Africa*. Dakar, CODESRIA; Feierman, S. and Janzen, J. M. (eds). 1992. *The Social Basis of Health and Healing in Africa* (Comparative Studies of Health Systems and Medical Care). Berkeley, University of California Press; Azevedo, M. J. (ed). 2017. *Historical Perspectives on the State of Health and Health Systems in* Africa, Volume I and Volume 2. Jackson, MS, Palgrave Macmillan.

4 On this subject see, among others: Egodi Uchendu, E. 2008. *Masculinities in Contemporary Africa*. Dakar, CODESRIA; Jane Bennett, J. and Tamale, S. (eds). 2017. *Research on Gender and Sexualities in Africa*. Dakar, CODESRIA; Tamale, S. (ed). 2011. *African Sexualities: A Reader*. Fahamu, Pambazuka Press.

5 Mwenda Ntarangwi, M. 2014. *Children and Youth in Africa: Annotated Bibliography 2001-2011*. Dakar, CODESRIA.

subjects at the time this volume of the GHA was published (1993). However, it is true that they have deepened and expanded since then and can now be more appropriately addressed and included.

Other topics, also missing from Volume VIII, that could be considered and have become relevant to studies in the social sciences and humanities since the 1990s, include individual trajectories, micro-powers and discourses. In this sense, Volume VIII of the GHA leans more towards structures and conjunctures as a field of History than the micro-histories and cultural history that were prevalent in the 1980s and 1990s. Firstly, speaking of a more structural history does not mean a 'structuralist history', at least not in the way European (and in particular French) intellectual history has employed this term. Secondly, this theoretical-methodological choice should not be regarded as less scientific than any other. In fact, quite the opposite. At the very least, they should simply be considered different approaches to dealing with reality.

The fact that the GHA is a work of synthesis goes a long way to explaining such observations. There is, however, also an element of theoretical-methodological choice at play. In this sense, this volume only consecrates what was agreed upon in the project, aiming at a more structural history, 'above all, a history of ideas and civilizations, societies and institutions' (Ogot, 2010, p. xxv).

Merits

In this analysis, four merits of the eighth volume of the *General History of Africa* stand out: a) the resumption and expansion of the interdisciplinary nature of the work; b) the collective work carried out; c) the quality and heterogeneity of the interpretations of the period between 1960 and 1960; and d) the cohesion and organicity of the volume.

The primary objective of Volume VIII was to revive the interdisciplinary spirit of the GHA collection, which was present in the project's conception and early stages (Volume I) but which had been restricted in subsequent volumes. Section V of this eighth volume (*Socio-cultural change since 1935*, pp. 500–701), the most extensive, makes a particular point of reinforcing this way of working. This section expands the dialogue between History and the various areas of the field of social sciences and humanities: Anthropology, Political Science, Literature, Philosophy, Linguistics and Sociology.

This section (V) thus has a particular relevance in widening the scope of the GHA beyond the field of History, providing thought-provoking summaries

of topics treated secondarily in the other chapters of the work. The titles speak for themselves: a) Chapter 17: *Religion and social evolution* (T. Tshibangu et al.); b) Chapter 18: *Language and social change* (A. Sow and M. H. Abdulaziz); c) Chapter 19: *The development of modern literature since 1935* (A. Mazrui et al.); d) Chapter 20: *Arts and society since 1935* (J. Vansina); e) *Trends in philosophy and science in Africa* (A. Mazrui and J. F. A. Ajayi et al.); and f) *Education and social change* (A. Habte and T. Wagaw in collaboration with J. F. Ade Ajayi). Any specialist in the topics covered in Volume VIII would be able to list a dozen issues and facts that have not been analysed in sufficient detail. From our point of view this was nevertheless a good editorial choice, since it made the GHA (and its educational content in particular) more accessible and meant it could be circulated to a wider readership.

Another merit to be highlighted is the collective work undertaken in this volume. This was only possible thanks to the authors' commitment to the project and the democratic nature of the work.[6] This produced some celebrated collaborations, which are rare in reference works of this magnitude. This is the case, for example, in Chapter 3 (M. Diop, in collaboration with D. Birmingham, I. Herbek, A. Margarido and D. T. Niane), Chapter 16 (J.Ki-Zerbo, A. Mazrui and C. Wondji, in collaboration with A. Boahen), Chapter 19 (A. Mazrui, in collaboration with Mario de Andrade, M. A. Abdalaoui, D. P. Kunene and J. Vansina) and Chapter 21 (Ali Mazrui, J. F. Ajayi, Adu Boahen and T. Tshibangu).

It is also worth emphasizing the quality and interpretative diversity of Volume VIII, especially sections III, IV, and VI which deal with the historical period between 1960 and 1980 in Africa. There are two main reasons for this statement.

The first is that, if read together, the essays contained in the work provide a balanced critical view of nation-building attempts during the period in question, taking into account certain substantial differences (political-ideological, economic policies), as well as common goals: economic development, modernization of the state and cultural homogenization (or at least the formation of a minimum level of national cohesion). Thus, both the positive and negative aspects of this endeavour can be better evaluated. Of note among the former are: investment in formal education, falling mortality rates, economic growth and control of endemic hunger. The latter include: continued economic marginalization, subordination of the rural world and women to the urban and masculine worlds, and neoliberalism.

6 On this subject, see J. Vansina (1993).

This is fundamental, as views on Africa, even among experts in the subject, often have a tendency to lean towards Manichaeism.

The second reason behind such praise for the volume is that, from our perspective, these articles have succeeded in building into their analysis and narratives a successful mediation of the dialectic between more internal and external factors in this period of contemporary African history. Among the former, it is worth mentioning: a) accelerated urbanization, b) population explosion, c) rural exodus, d) national projects, e) political authoritarianism, and f) industrialization. Among the latter: a) the Cold War, b) Non-Alignment, c) the role of the UN, d) insertion into the interstate order of world capitalism, e) the international division of labour, and f) the New International Economic Order. This is not an obvious or simple assessment to make, especially given the fact that the work also sought to value African perspectives in its research.

This finding leads us to the last point in our analysis: volume cohesion. Taking into account the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the work, an admirable facet of this eighth volume of the GHA is its degree of overall organicity. I believe there are two explanations for this. The first is that most of the volume's authors did indeed rise to the challenge of writing a new history of contemporary Africa (combining world history, scientific rigour and more African perspectives). There is no single theoretical-methodological approach to this end. But a concern in this regard can be observed, which leads to the second explanation: the editor's ongoing participation in the work. He appears seven times in total, which exceeds the norm for the GHA, as a single author in the Introduction, Chapter 5 ('Seek ye first the political kingdom') and Chapter 30 (Towards the year 2000); as a co-author in Chapter 21 (Trends in philosophy and science in Africa) and Chapter 16 (Nation-building and changing political values); as a 'collaborator' in Chapter 15 (Nation-building and changing political structures); and as a section 'revisor' in Adebayo Adedeji's perceptive chapter (14) on (Comparative strategies of economic decolonization in Africa). While this level of involvement demonstrates willingness on the part of the editor, it also shows the openness and commitment of the other authors in the volume.

Contemporary Africa: the difficult dialectic between African perspectives and 'globalized Africa'

As editor, Mazrui was obliged to attempt an explanation of this new vision of contemporary African history outlined in Volume VIII. This is what he sought to do in the Introduction. The author states that, as the economy and politics

took on truly global dimensions in the twentieth century, the history of Africa could not be fully understood outside this global context. It would thus be accurate to speak of a new historical dialectic between factors inside and outside of Africa. African dynamics would, concomitantly, be catalysts in transforming the dynamics of the world outside Africa, and vice versa. The author gives numerous examples, emphasizing one in particular: Europe's role in the 'pan-Africanization' of Africa (pan-Africanism, *Négritude*, liberation struggles), and Africa's role in the 're-humanization' of Europe (decolonization and the end of Nazism and fascism) (Mazrui, 1993, p. 7). Moreover, this example demonstrates how such a dialectical view would inform an African perspective, insofar as it would focus on the active role of Africa and Africans in the metamorphosis of the world. According to the author, the very starting point of this volume of the GHA, 1935, reflects this perspective, as the invasion of Ethiopia would mark the beginning of the Second World War for Africa.

Constructing this global vision of Africa was a difficult and controversial task within the GHA project, and the associated debate is far from complete. This can nevertheless be observed, for example, in several passages from the minutes of the work's organizing bodies (*International Scientific Committee for the Drafting of a General History of Africa* and *Executive Council*). In particular, it is worth citing a passage from the minutes of the Cotonou meeting (1975), which reads: '*The Executive Board expects the Volume Editor (A. Mazrui) to strive to characterize the issue handled from a more African rather than a purely postcolonial viewpoint*' (UNESCO, 1975).[7]

We could ask whether this 'purely postcolonial' position did indeed prevail in Volume VIII when it was published in 1993. Or did it already contain a modified vision, seeking to construct a 'more African point of view'? Regardless of these questions, the fact is that Volume VIII of the GHA provided answers to the challenge of building a new history of contemporary Africa. We would argue that such responses, despite their heterogeneity, had a common point: contemporary Africa must be understood within a dialectic between Africa's internal factors and other more external factors. This makes the eighth volume of the GHA particularly relevant today, because as African historical-social reality continues to be internationalized, the theoretical-methodological dilemma remains valid.

The inevitable deepening of this internationalization is a process that, if not autonomously controlled, could reduce the strength of the internal elements of

7 On this subject, see Muryatan S. Barbosa (2012).

this dialectic to a minimum. This would not be the first time in history, given the reality of the colonial era in Africa. It was Decolonization that qualitatively changed this dialectic for Africa. In this, it is part of the historical process of affirmation of the peoples of the Global South, which has already lasted for over 200 years. It is no coincidence that Kwame Nkrumah, in advocating for the immediate construction of a single African government, re-enacted the dream of Simon Bolívar, 130 years later. After all, the greater the degree of unity and strength of a nation, albeit federalized, the greater its autonomous space in this contemporary historical dialectic.

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SECTION III

THE INITIAL HISTORY OF AFRICA: AN UPDATE

INTRODUCTION

Augustin F. C. Holl

Introduction: a challenge

Volumes I and II of the *General History of Africa* dedicated to the Initial and Ancient History of the continent were published in the early years of the 1980s, almost four decades ago. The substantial scientific content of the papers in these volumes reflected the state of research in the 1960s and 1970s. Since their publication there has been signification expansion, intensification and acceleration of archaeological research and field projects. The density and coverage of fieldwork vary considerably from one part of the continent to the other, but all the major regions have witnessed groundbreaking projects. Up-to-date regional and thematic syntheses have been published in the last few years, but global coverage of the entire initial history of the continent is particularly difficult and limited to very few works (Connah, 2001; Holl, 2015; Phillipson, 2005). Updating four decades of accelerated archaeological research for such a massive continent is clearly a Herculean task. It is made even more challenging by the space limitations; stringent sampling was therefore a necessity. There is no claim at anything approaching complete coverage of the initial history of the continent – that history started several million years ago with the emergence of humanity. This initial history featured in this section encompasses topical entries ranging from paleoanthropology to the archaeology of visual representations.

Major archaeological research programmes

Aside from individual and strictly local research projects, a few major long-term archaeological programmes were launched and implemented in different parts of the continent during the last half century. These well-planned projects have completely changed our understanding of the initial history of the continent. The Leakey family's search for human origins in East Africa shaped the course of paleoanthropology, for example. It is Louis Leakey who suggested to Jane Goodall that she study chimpanzees in the search for clues on hominins' behaviours. The dynamic field of primatology that emerged afterwards completely changed our understanding and assumptions of hominins' organizational features and patterns of sociability.

Starting from the 1960s, a number of field projects were organized by African and Euro-American universities and research institutions. This was the case for the Tegdaoust Mission, launched in 1960 by the University of Dakar to locate and shed light on the ancient Saharan city of Awdaghost. It resulted in the publication of at least five monographs on different parts of the city, synthesized in a more recent book (Holl, 2006). The University of Algiers *Centre de Recherches Anthropologique, Prehistorique, et Ethnologique* (CRAPE) launched an ambitious programme on the settlement history and social anthropology of the central Saharan mountain range – Tassili-n-Ajjer, Ahaggar, Tefedest – and published the impressive series *Mémoires du CRAPE*. The University of Rome mirrored their efforts for the Libyan portion of the Sahara, with a special focus on the Tadrart-Acacus. The programme is still ongoing with a younger generation of daring scholars. Thanks to these sustained, long-term projects, the settlement history of the Libyan Sahara, starting from the early Aterian time around 95,000 BP, to the rise and fall of the Garamantes kingdom in the first millennium BCE, is better known. The 'In Gall-Tegidda-n-Tesemt programme archeologique d'urgence', launched in the 1980s in Niger, published a series of groundbreaking monographs and opened a window on the archaeology of African metallurgies. The British Institute in Eastern Africa sponsored sustained archaeological projects along the Swahili coast, as well as further north, in Sudan. Its monograph series includes important entries on the research projects and excavations carried out during the last thirty years. Sweden, through the University of Uppsala African archaeology programme, coordinated international projects in Southern Africa, particularly in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Tanzania and Madagascar. Several volumes have been published in the Uppsala African Archaeology Monographs series.

All things considered, the most impressive achievements are those of the 'Combined Prehistoric Expedition' led by F. Wendorf and R. Schild. It was launched in 1962 through the UNESCO International Campaign to salvage Nubian monuments – especially the Abu Simbel Temple complex – from the retention lake resulting from the construction of the Aswan high dam. The expedition carried out research in Upper and Lower Egypt, the Eastern Sahara, Sudan and Ethiopia, and discovered and excavated hundreds of prehistoric sites dating from the Early Stone Age to the Late Pre-dynastic and Bronze Age. According to Schild, 'The work of the Expedition over the past half century has provided comprehension as never before of human settlement, beliefs, social interaction and adaptation to the natural environments along the main Nile Valley, the deserts of the Eastern Sahara and Sinai, as well as the rift valleys of Ethiopia' (SMU News Archives, 2015).

This having been said, the general picture of archaeological research presents significant regional and thematic differences. Paleoanthropology and research on human origins are largely predominant in Eastern Africa, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and part of South Africa. The Nile Valley, from Sudan to the delta, is a relatively well investigated part of the continent. Central Africa, from the Chad Republic to Angola, including the Central African Republic, Congo and Democratic Republic of Congo, is clearly the least investigated region of the continent. Despite these differences, there are significant new discoveries almost everywhere, allowing for a provisional and certainly patchy new synthesis on the initial history of the continent.

General topics

Among the possible general topics of interest, paleoclimatology, population genetics and language classification, are particularly relevant for a better understanding of the initial history of Africa. The continent has witnessed a boom in paleoclimatological and paleoenvironmental research during the last four decades. Almost all major lacustrine formations and major river drainage, in the deserts as well as the equatorial rainforest, have been investigated. Past and present climatic fluctuations govern the nature and distribution of phyto-geographical zones, and as such have significant impact on short- and long-term social change. A. M. Lezine's contribution, a genuine tour de force, provides an accurate synthesis of the burgeoning paleoenvironmental research fields.

Thanks to the International Human Genome project, genomics is now an essential component of historical research, and provides a powerful tool to

decipher the genetic makeup of human populations. S. Keita's contribution looks at the history of African populations through the lens of the Y-chromosome and the branching of haplogroups. Counter-intuitive results from population genetics are today parts of weekly scientific publications. Some of the findings have, however, to be put into proper historical contexts to be understandable. Headlines like 'The first genome data from ancient Egyptian mummies: Ancient Egyptians were most closely related to ancient populations from the Near-East' (*Max Planck Institute,* 30 May 2017), summarizing the results of Schuenemann, et al. (2017), are misleading. West Asians from Canaanite origins were present in Egypt as far back as 1800 BCE. The Hyksos, also of Canaanite origin, conquered and ruled Lower Egypt from 1650 to 1550 BCE. During the New Kingdom (1550-1077 BCE), particularly under the nineteenth and twentieth dynasties, Egypt conquered and dominated the whole Levant. West Asians as officials, princesses, merchants, travellers and also war prisoners were a constant part of the Kingdom's population. It is therefore not surprising to find their genes in sampled mummies, but extending the implications of these interesting findings to the whole history of Pharaonic populations is an error. It is important to avoid this new kind of emerging reductionism (Callaway, 2015a, b). Gene marker transfers are not equivalent to large-scale population movements. A single individual – a lone adventurer, for example – with high reproductive success (polygamy and polyandry) can have a significant impact on the genetic makeup of a local population, without any mass migration. In their analysis of the genome of a 4,500-year-old male from Motta Cave in Ethiopia, Gallego Llorente et al. (2015) initially suggested a vast, extensive, ancient migration of Eurasian farmers in Africa. That stunning conclusion was altered six months later:

> the geographic extent of the genetic impact of this migration was overestimated: the Western Eurasian backflow mostly affected East Africa and only a few Sub-Saharan populations; the Yoruba and Mbuti do not show higher levels of Western Eurasian ancestry compared to Mota. Hence, the title and abstract of the published paper did not accurately represent the geographical extent of the admixture, and both have been corrected accordingly (Gallego Llorente et al., 2016).

In varying degrees, there are strong correlations between global genes and language distribution. Understanding the classification and history of languages is an additional powerful tool for research into the history of human populations: four of the major world linguistic families are found in Africa. R. Blench's contribution showcases the state of the art in the classification of African languages. There are many other general topics that could have been

taken into consideration, but the three selected are clearly the most pertinent for the assigned task.

Revolution in paleoanthropology

There has been a profound change in paleoanthropological research across the continent during the last four decades. The territorial ranges of the earliest hominins were extended considerably to include North-central Africa. Research was intensified in Eastern Africa – Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania – and South Africa. The reconstructed human phylogenetic tree is bushier than ever. Three contributions provide up-to-date information on the fascinating research on human origins. Brunet et al. presents the remains and environmental context of the oldest hominin so far, dated to 7 million years (Myrs) and found in the Djourab desert in northern Chad. J. Lewis offers a synthesis of early hominin lifeways, subsistence patterns and group dynamics. And finally, H. Roche synthesizes all available data on the oldest stone toolmaking traditions. The correlation between a particular hominin genus and early lithic complexes is less and less reliable.

The current human phylogenetic tree is particularly interesting in terms of genus diversity, locations and chronology. *Sahelanthropus tchadensis* and *Orrorin tugenensis* are the oldest hominin genus fossils on record. The former, also called Toumai, found in northern Chad, is dated to 7 Myrs, and the latter, Millennium Man, found in Tugen Hills in Central Kenya, is dated to 5.8-6.2 Myrs. A new genus with two species, *Ardipithecus ramidus* and *Ar. kadada,* emerged between 6 and 4 Myrs. Their remains are found exclusively in Ethiopia, in the Middle Awash and Gona Valley. *Ar ramidus* is dated to 4.4 myrs, and *Ar kadada* to 5.8-5.2 Myrs. These four early genera, *S. tchadensis, O. tugenensis, Ar. Kadada* and *Ar. Ramidus,* are generally assigned to the *Ardipithecus* group. They appear to have lived in wooded environments. The time segment between 4 and 2 Myrs witnessed a significant diversification of hominin populations, distributed into two main genera: *Kenyathropus* and *Australopithecus*. *K. platyops* and *K. rudolfensis*, dated respectively to 3.5-3.3 and 2.6-2 Myrs, which are found exclusively in the Lake Turkana basin in Kenya. Australopithecines are much more diversified and widely distributed. *A. anamensis* (4.2-3.9 Myrs), *A. afarensis* (3.8-2 Myrs) and *A. garhi* (2.5 Myrs) are found in East Africa from Ethiopia to Tanzania. Remains of *A. africanus* (3-2.4 Myrs) and *A. sediba* (2-1.9 Myrs) are from South Africa, and finally, *A. bahrelghazali* (3.4-3 Myrs) was found in the Chad basin in North-central Africa. The genus *Paranthropus,* probably

derived from *A. afarensis,* emerged around 2.5 Myrs with *P. aethiopicus*, and *P. bosei* (2.2-1.6 Myrs) and *P. robustus* (1.9-1.7 Myrs) in East and South Africa.

The emergence of the genus *Homo* is a hotly debated topic in taxonomic as well as environmental terms. What are the environmental conditions that led to the emergence of the genus *Homo*? And how many early *Homo* species are represented in the fossil record? New fossils attest to the presence of multiple groups of early *Homo* with overlapping body, brain and tooth size. These discoveries do not support the traditional interpretation of *H. habilis* and *H. rudolfensis* as representing small and large morphs, respectively (Anton et al., 2014). New finds from Ethiopia also shed new light on the origins of the *Homo* genus. 'The identification of the 2.80 to 2.75 Ma Ledi Geraru mandible as representing a likely phyletic predecessor to early Pleistocene *Homo* implies that phylogenetic schemes positing the origin of the *Homo* lineage from *A. sediba* as late as 1.98 Ma are likely to be incorrect' (Villmoare et al., 2015, p. 1354). Accordingly, early *Homo* remains can be arranged into four groups, found exclusively in East Africa: the new non-specific early *Homo* sp. from Ledi-Geraru (2.75-2.8 Myrs), an African *Homo erectus*, *Homo habilis* and *Homo rudolfensis.*

Contrary to the model of steady and sustained increase in aridity that led to the formation of savanna and grasslands, new evidence shows the environment to have been highly variable in East Africa, with unpredictable fluctuations during the time of emergence of the genus *Homo*.

> In the face of a dynamic and fluctuating environment… the unique combination of larger brain size, the potential for diverse body sizes, inferred dietary flexibility, and cooperation enabled *H. erectus* to attain a level of niche construction and adaptive versatility that allowed this species to outpace its congeners (Anton et al., 2014, article 1236828).

There is a dearth of fossil evidence for the time period stretching from ca. 1.3 to 700,000 BP. *Homo mauritanicus/antecessor* remains, probably derived from *Homo erectus,* are recorded in Morocco and Spain. *Homo heidelbergensis,* supposedly the last common ancestor of modern humans and Neanderthals, is dated to 600,000-300,000 BP. Its remains have been recorded at Jebel Irhoud in North Africa, Bodo, Kibish, Ndutu, Eyasi, Ngaloba and Kabwe in East Africa, and Florisbad and Elandsfontein in South Africa.

The emergence of modern humans, *Homo sapiens sapiens,* initially considered to have taken place in Eastern Africa and followed by a second emergence 'out of Africa' is accepted as the most parsimonious explanation of the latest phases of human expansion all over the planet (Scerry et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2007).

Recent works show the scenarios to be much more complex. New evidence of a *Homo sapiens sapiens* skull and jaw from Jebel Irhoud, dated to 300,000 years ago, points to a complex evolutionary history of *Homo sapiens* involving the whole African continent. At the southern end of the continent, L. R. Berger and his team of 45 researchers discovered a new species of small-bodied figures with the *Australopihecines* brain size in the Dinaledi chamber of the Rising Star Cave system near Swartkrans in Gauteng province, South Africa. Here, 1,550 bones belonging to some 15 individuals were recorded. *Homo naledi*, dated 335,000-236,000 years ago, buried the dead (Berger et al., 2015). *Homo sapiens sapiens* and *Homo naledi* thus co-existed in the southern part of the continent for several millennia.

Early *Homo sapiens* remains were excavated at different sites all over the continent: at Rabat, Sale and Jebel Irhoud in North Africa; Bodo, Omo Kibbish and Herto in Ethiopia; Kabwe in East Africa and at Florisbad, Cave of Hearths, Border Cave, Klasies River Mouth, Blombos, Saldanha and Elandsfontein in South Africa. The earliest *Homo sapiens sapiens* specimens are dated from 315,000 to 259,000 years ago, respectively at Jebel Irhoud in North Africa and Florisbad in South Africa. The Ethiopian specimens are dated to 195,000-160,000 years ago (Berger et al., 2015; Hublin et al., 2017; Stringer and Galway-Whitam, 2018). The earliest *Homo sapiens sapiens* remains found so far, out of Africa, at Skhul and Qafseh in Southern Levant, are dated to 120,000-90,000 years ago. However, genetic analyses of Dinosova cave (Siberia, Russian Federation) and Hollenstein-Stadel (Germany) Neanderthals remains suggest 'at least one earlier phase of introgression from *Homo sapiens* into Neanderthals. This event has been estimated at -219,000 to 460,000 years ago' (Stringer and Galway-Whitam, 2018, p. 390). *Homo sapiens sapiens*' exit from Africa was, accordingly, a much earlier event. I. Herkovitz's (2018) team's recent discovery of *Homo sapiens sapiens* remains dated to 180,000 years ago at Misliya, Israel points to an earlier but still relatively recent presence in the Near East. Older, and earlier, *Homo sapiens sapiens* remains are therefore expected to be found in the Levantine corridor in the future.

Pleistocene hunter-gatherer communities

Hunting and gathering were the sole subsistence system for 99.99 per cent of humanity's history. 'Man, the Hunter' as an evolutionary hero and civilizing agent was shown to be a modern myth (Binford, 1981). Hominins were part of a more encompassing community ecology, relying more on scavenging strategies

and tactics to avoid predators having access to meat. Nesting in trees was very likely the optimal option for group safety. The development of technical skills that resulted in the manufacture of stone tools is now firmly dated to 3.3 Myrs with the Lomekwian complex of West Turkana (Harmand et al., 2015). It is not yet known if this early shift to stone tool production and use lasted to be transmitted to other groups or was an isolated event. The Oldowayan complex that followed was 700,000 years younger. This chronological gap may be filled in future research, but it may also have been real. Stone tool assemblages arranged in five successive modes (I to V), shifting from core tools to microliths, are characteristically the toolboxes of Pleistocene hunter-gatherers. The almost century-old taxonomy of African initial history, with Early (ESA), Middle (MSA) and Late Stone Age (LSA), is simple, robust and perfectly adequate for the task. Concepts like Middle and Upper Palaeolithic derived from European systematics are more confusing than helpful in Africa's contexts. Regional tags –Sangoan, Aterian, Iberomaurusian, etc. – are certainly justified as they refer to time drift and technological diversification of human cultural repertoires. They are, however, not taken into consideration, or kept to a strict minimum, in the updates presented in this section. O. Bagodo's contribution presents a robust synthesis of recent research on the oldest post-Lomekwian lithic complex of the continent, from the Oldowayan to the Middle Stone Age. L. Sari reviews the material from the Late Stone Age when blade debitage techniques and the production and use of microliths became the norm. Hunting gear and resource-extracting technologies were very likely versatile. With the hand-axe, pick and cleaver, hafted spears were probably part of the standard toolkit of the earliest toolmakers. Woodworking, products for pounding and grinding, and plant processing equipment in various combinations were part of the repertoire of most Middle and Late Pleistocene hunter-gatherer communities. Mobile, small-sized groups were the norm, within territorial ranges that may have fluctuated with shifts in climate. A cognitive breakthrough took place among African *Homo sapiens sapiens* around 100,000 years and manifested itself through different guises: through the bone harpoons of Katanda dated to 90,000-95,000 years BP in Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the engraved ochre, engraved bone, ochre processing kits and sea-shell beads from Blombos in South Africa, dated to 100,000-70,000 years ago.

The Aterian techno-complex characterized by the consistent presence of tanged tools has now been firmly dated to 145,000-30,000 years ago. To mention but a few examples, Aterian sites are found at Ifri n'Ammar, Smugglers' Cave, Taforalt, Rafas, Dar es Soltan and El Mnasra in Morocco, Oued Djebbana in

Algeria, Oued el Akarit in Tunisia, Tadrart Acacus and Jebel Gharbi in Libya, Kharga Oasis in Egypt, and Adrar Bous and Seggedim in Niger. The wide distribution of Middle Stone Age Aterian hunter-gatherers, thus documented to stretch from the Moroccan Atlantic coast to the Eastern Sahara and as far south as the Ténéré and Air in Niger, reflects aspects of the expansion of *Homo sapiens sapiens* as well as successful desert adaptation (Garcia, 2012; Spinapolice and Garcea, 2013).

The pace, timing and extent of human expansion can also be ascertained through analysis of archaeological sites. Eastern and Southern Africa witnessed the initial stages of human settlement, before populations expanded northward to North-east Africa (Sudan and Egypt), the Maghreb (Morrocco, Algeria), and the Sahara between 1 million and 2 million years ago. West and Central Africa appear to have been settled much later, probably during the last 500,000 years. The Late Glacial Maximum (20,000 – 11,000 BP) – the Ogolian in West Africa – characterized by a strong and durable shift to aridity, resulted in a significant population drop in Africa's northern hemisphere, and the equatorial rainforest disappeared. Late Pleistocene hunter-gatherers settled in a limited number of refuge areas along the Mediterranean littoral in North Africa, in the Nile Valley, where there is evidence of inter-community violence at Waddy Kubbaniya and Jebel Sahaba, in south-west Cameroon's grassfields at Shum-Laka, and in coastal Côte d'Ivoire at the Bingerville Highway site. The advent of the Early Holocene Humid episode triggered a new continent-wide re-expansion of the population, as well as trends toward the development of new subsistence strategies.

The emergence and expansion of food production

It was initially thought that the shift to food production resulted from an idea that spread from the Near East core area to its periphery, but it is actually much more complex. The massive continent of Africa straddles the equator and hosts more or less parallel phyto-geographic zones in both hemispheres. Hunter-gatherers know about the growth cycles of plants and animals, and where and when to collect honey, dig for tubers, catch fish and pick fruits in their territories. The shift to food production is therefore not the result of discovered knowledge about the physiology of plants and animals, but of combined contingent evolutionary forces, including demography, territoriality, belief systems and climate fluctuations (Chorin and Holl, 2013). Holl's contribution presents the state of research on

the emergence of food production with a stronger emphasis on the genesis of African agricultural systems. S. di Lernia's chapter focuses on the pastoral and livestock husbandry side of the equation, including a short excursion through Saharan visual representations research. Finally, F. Chami presents the current state of knowledge in Eastern and Southern Africa. There are interesting patterns in the archaeological record on this and related topics. Livestock husbandry long preceded agriculture on the continent. From the middle of the seventh millennium BCE, the African Mediterranean coast and North-east Africa, including the Horn, received wheat, barley, lentils, cattle, sheep and goats from Western Asia. In the Early Holocene, cattle pastoralism and husbandry expanded initially from the Eastern Sahara in two directions: westward to the Central Sahara, first through the Acacus plateau, then the Tassili-n-Ajjer mountain range, and finally the rest of West Africa; and southward along the Nile Valley to East Africa, then Southern Africa. Wild non-domesticated sorghum was cultivated in the Eastern Sahara Nabta Playa basin during the Early Holocene. Grain impressions from pottery collected from KG23, the largest Butana group site near Kassala in Eastern Sudan, provide convincing archaeobotanical evidence for the emergence of domesticated characteristics in sorghum, as well as its sustained cultivation during the fourth millennium (3500-3000 BCE) in Eastern Sudan (Winchell et al., 2017). Horticulture, agro-forestry and grain agriculture co-existed in West and Central Africa from 2000 BCE onwards. The introduction of new plants from Asia and the Americas have shaped new landscapes and foodways during the last 2,000 years.

Cross-views on Ancient Egypt

Integrating Egyptology into the mainstream of African ancient history has proven an extremely difficult task. However, thanks to the Combined Prehistoric Expedition to salvage Nubian Monuments, led by F. Wendorf and R. Schild, older non-monumental and modest archaeological sites have paved the way for a better understanding of the area's initial and ancient history. As the main conduit to Eurasia, North-eastern Africa has an extremely complex population history, consisting of constant inward and outward movements. Pharaonic Egypt has its roots in Early Holocene cultural innovations in the Eastern Sahara and Nile Valley – a long-term perspective offered by D. Wengrow's contribution, which explores the genesis of symbolic systems that blossomed in later dynastic periods. One of the key moments in the formation of Pre-Pharaonic symbolic

systems is represented by the megalithic complex of Nabta Playa. Examined in H. A. A. Ibrahim's chapter, it is considered the oldest 'astronomical observatory' in world history. Population genetics, as summarized in J-P. Gourdine's contribution, offers another entry – still tentative – into Egypt's ancient history. Finally, kinship terminology used in hieroglyphic texts discussed in K. Nehusi's chapter opens a window onto actual Pharaonic Egypt social structures. Taken together, these views present a more balanced multidisciplinary take on ancient Egypt. The old stereotypes are still present, as illustrated by the paper discussed above by Schuenemann et al. (2017), in the general topics segment of this contribution. Patterns of preferential alliances, hypergamy and endogamy, can result in the preservation of specific genetic signatures in some population segments. The strong presence of Levantine groups during the second Intermediate Period (13th Dynasty to the 17th Dynasty, 1780-1550 BCE) and the New Kingdom (18th Dynasty to the 20th Dynasty, 1550-1069 BCE) is well documented in the historical record. The fact that their genes were recorded in the mummies sampled by Schuenemann et al. (2017) is therefore not surprising. However, the derived claim that 'the study found that *ancient Egyptians* were more closely related to ancient populations in the Levant, and were also closely related to Neolithic populations from the Anatolian Peninsula and Europe' (*Max Planck Institute*, 30 May 2017) is a questionable 'blanket assertion'.

About technologies: inventions and innovations

How and why do technical inventions and innovations occur? If one adheres to the utilitarian principle, the simple answer is a non-explicit component of social evolutionary taxonomies. Through the Age system (Stone – Bronze – Iron Age), human history is read as a long-term quest for best technological fit through the sustained invention of increasingly efficient tools. From this vantage point, technological systems tend to be dealt with as 'self-driven autonomous' components. But technology is not an entity in itself. It is better thought of as a field of interaction (Adams 1996, p. 277). Two crucial inventions and innovations are presented in the contributions from E. Huysecom and H. Bocoum: Huysecom discusses the invention of pottery making and the emergence of early potting traditions in Africa, and Bocoum reviews the state of research on the archaeology of African metallurgies.

In the literature on African Holocene societies, the assessment of technological inventions/innovations is generally based on an intuitive

appreciation of the efficiency of new tools and materials. They are supposed to enhance the harnessing of a greater amount of energy, streamline productive processes, increase productivity and generate important economies of scale. Pottery is accordingly asserted as having enhanced sedentariness, and enabled greater storage capacity and better nutrition, while ironworking is viewed as a technical innovation with quasi-revolutionary consequences.

> In the Southern half of Africa, the story is completely different. Here the coming of iron was a catalyst which woke up half of a continent from the slumber of the Stone Age. The food-producing revolution of the Near East, which set the stage for the ensuing Bronze Age, had penetrated only as far as North Africa, the Nile Valley, and the Red Sea coast (Van der Merwe, 1980, p. 464).

This formulation of the utilitarian principle is based on a number of assumptions: that the greater efficiency of iron tools in productive activities was a feature of universal and immediate perception; that the new technology was contagious, and once known, easily transferable from one society to the next, and indifferently from group to group; and that metal tools were accessible to anyone to be used in productive activities. These assumptions are debatable at best and are not supported by the archaeological record of early great civilizations.

> Agricultural tools generally remained primitive in the early civilizations. The Inkas, Aztecs, and Shang Chinese relied on wooden digging sticks equipped with foot-bars to turn the soil, while their cutting tools were made of stone. The Mesopotamians and Egyptians employed light, ox-drawn plows to conserve soil moisture and prepare the soil for planting; Mesopotamian plows were also equipped with drills to plant seed. While Mesopotamians began to use copper hoes and sickles during the Early Dynastic Period, as late as the Middle Kingdom the Egyptians continued to edge their cutting tools with chipped flint (Trigger, 1993, p. 33).

Welsby (1998, p. 170) notes that 'the earliest evidence for the use of iron by Kushites for utilitarian objects dates to the earliest part of the sixth century BC. An iron spear, found in the tomb of Taharqo, was originally wrapped in gold foil, indicating the very special nature of the object and suggesting the great value attached to it'. Data from the Chalcolithic Negev show that copper was initially used essentially for the manufacture of status objects like sceptres and crowns, weapons like mace heads and only later for domestic tools like awls.

Despite its prevalence and common-sense appeal, the utilitarian principle does not hold in the case of the production and use of the earliest metal artefacts. Scarce and precious metals were turned into status objects – weapons, items of personal adornment, symbols of power – used to display ascribed and achieved

social positions. It took a few centuries, very likely more, for these technologies to be mastered and routinized enough for the manufacture of tools used in productive activities. In the remote past, the initial discovery of a 'transformational' action on natural matter was very likely a serendipitous by-product of another activity. Such an accident could then guide the curiosity of those interested, become the subject of successive 'experimentations', and result in failure or success. In each case, however, the discovery/innovation had to make 'social sense' and find a 'niche' in society in order to last and spread. In most cases – the laser and the Internet, for example – there are significant time lags between the initial discoveries and the generalized use of their derived products.

What happened during these early time lags? Technological innovations were very likely conducted on a trial-and-error basis, independently, in different sociocultural contexts. Three options can be singled out at this juncture: the adoption of an innovation can be delayed for different reasons, political and/or ideological; an innovation could be ignored, rejected and discarded; or it could be mastered rapidly and widely adopted after a short period of trial-and-error. The total social and economic value of a discovery/innovation is often unpredictable at its initial stage, even within modern advanced technological societies. Technological systems are always embedded in social systems. The advent of new technology may create new and unsuspected social demand or satisfy a pre-existing one. In summary, craft specialization develops in constant feedback with social demand. Initially, and in virtually all cases, such demand is narrow and specific, geared to satisfy a small segment of society. After a relatively long stasis, it evolved to encompass society as a whole. In the case of metallurgies, it is at this final stage that 'utilitarian' models are applicable. Looking at the emergence of technological innovations only from the techno-engineering perspective is clearly misleading. As the chapters by E. Huysecom and H. Bocoum show quite well, there is sound evidence for local African innovation in pottery making and copper and iron metallurgies.

Emergent complexity and its aftermath

At a certain point in history, humans started to congregate in larger numbers at certain nodes of the landscape, increasing the degrees and frequency of interaction between growing numbers of individuals, with 'a great many independent agents interacting with each other in a great many ways' (Waldrop, 1992, p. 11). Such interaction on a wide scale enabled systems as a

whole to undergo spontaneous self-organization. In addition, these complex, self-organizing systems are adaptive, referred to as Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS). Change is neither constant nor gradual; it is punctuated and proceeds in sudden shifts succeeded by stasis. Similar developmental processes can take place independently, simultaneously and at different times.

The concept of complexity is particularly tricky when used to investigate emergent stages. In standard archaeological usage, 'complexity most frequently implies pronounced and institutionalized patterns of inequality and heterogeneity, (Adams, 2001, p. 346). As an abstraction, complexity is assessed through trial and error, and sustained improvement of methods. 'Levels of inequality in status, wealth, and power come to light in tombs furnishings, in discontinuous classes of settlement size, domestic architecture, and monumental construction, and in localized concentrations of costly or exotic material from distant locales' (Adams, 2001, p. 346). As used in this context, complexity refers to the increasing diversification and pace of social differentiation indicated in the material record by a broad array of variables: the elaboration of burial and other archaeological features; the presence of imported goods and objects, as well as high value-added artefacts; and the differentiation of subsistence and technological systems into more or less specialized subcomponents. The internal differentiation of social systems along occupational lines is equally a key characteristic of the movement towards increasing complexity.

Archaeology of early states in Africa

The earliest and most pristine cases of the emergence of complex society are documented in North-east Africa, along the Nubian and Egyptian portions of the Nile Valley. As noted in G. Connah's contribution, these early stages took place between the fourth millennium BCE and the fourth century CE. The other parts of the continent, Northern, Western, Eastern and Southern Africa, followed different trajectories later.

Different kinds of state formation have emerged in Africa during the last four millennia. Egypt is clearly the only clear-cut case of an Archaic state, an instance of pristine state formation. All the other cases documented in the African record, archaeological, historical as well as ethnohistorical, are non-pristine but secondary state formations. They are, however, divided into generations, certain areas resulting from successive cycles of coalescence, growth and collapse. This dynamic model (Ibn Khaldun, 2005) takes into account the repetitive cycles of conquest, consolidation, expansion and disaggregation, and

how these processes affect the territory, population and power of early states. Such a model fits the African record well and will be used to summarize the complex history of past African polities, chiefdoms, states and empires.

Pharaonic Egypt, with the Old Kingdom – First Intermediate – Middle Kingdom – Second Intermediate – New Kingdom – Third Intermediate – etc., is a 'textbook' case for the 'cycling model' of the evolution of complex societies. The formation of the Egyptian state resulted initially from the coalescence, through alliance and conquest, of interacting Late Neolithic and Pre-dynastic peer polities. Upper and Lower Egypt kingdoms were united to form Pharaonic Egypt. Such processes operated independently later, in different parts of the continent. The background of the rise of the Ghana kingdom is documented through processes of settlement aggregation and centralization that took place in the Dhar Tichitt-Walata from 2000 to 300 BCE (Holl, 1985). The ensuing dynamics of West Africa's major kingdoms and empires, from Ghana and Takrur kingdoms (500/600–1200 CE), the Mali Empire (1200-1400), the Songhay Empire (1400-1600) and the Kanem-Bornou Empire (1600-1800), provide clear indications of cycling and regional shifts of power. Similar processes operated in Eastern and Southern Africa, as shown in the contributions by Curtis and Schmidt, P. Beaujard and P. Robertshaw.

The archaeology of visual representations

Research on African visual representations – also known as rock art research – is steadily and persistently moving away from the descriptive-taxonomic approach that predominated after the Second World War. Explorations have continued and numerous new sites are still being added to the record. The Sahara in the north and South Africa in the south have the highest density of visual representation sites in cave and rock shelters. In general, higher concentrations of these sites are found in mountains, plateaus, rock shelters and caves. In north tropical Africa, including the Maghreb, high concentrations of visual representation sites are found in the Atlas mountains in Morocco, the Dhar Tichitt-Walata cliffs of Mauritania (Holl, 2004), the Adrar-n-Ifogha in Mali, the Aîr and surroundings in Niger, the Tassili-n-Ajjer in Algeria, the Tadrart Acacus in Libya, the Tibesti in Chad Republic, the Djebel Uweinat along the Egypto-Sudanese border, as well as the Nubian sandstone cliffs along the Nile River valley (Muzzolini, 1995). In the southern part of the continent, visual representation sites are found mostly in Drakensberg and the high plateau of

South Africa, in the Branberg in Namibia, and the rocky parts of the Zimbabwe and Zambia plateaus. Visual representation traditions are also documented in Highland Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya and Tanzania along the eastern side of the continent, as well as Angola, Gabon, Central African Republic, and Cameroon in the west and mid-north, and finally, Burkina Faso in the West African Sahel.

The Northern Hemisphere

African visual representation traditions are diverse and consist of images pecked on a rock surface – engravings or petroglyphs – or painted in the open air, in rock shelters or caves. There are also combinations of both techniques. The engraving techniques, much more frequent and widespread, include grooving, grounding, pecking, smoothing and virtual sculptures. Painting, on the other hand, seems to be much more localized, frequently found in rock shelters and caves, which has certainly enhanced their preservation. The debate on chronology has involved much discussion among researchers. T. Monod and H. Lhote organized the Saharan material into four main stages. The first and earliest stage, the 'Bubale period', comprising images of large-bodied wild animals like elephant, giraffe and hippopotamus, was supposedly created by Late Pleistocene foragers. It was followed by the 'Bovidian period' with images of livestock, first cattle and later sheep and goats, indicative of early to Mid-Holocene pastoral-nomadic societies. The 'Horse period', third in the sequence, presents horses in different contexts and situations, with and without carts. Finally, the 'Camel period', the latest, shows dromedaries in different postures, in war or hunting scenes as well as travelling caravans. Monod-Lhote's chronological system was adopted with modifications and adjustments to local situations. Muzzolini (1995) devised an alternative chronology, fitting all Saharan visual representation traditions within the Middle and Late Holocene period. The documented regional traditions were subsequently divided into 'schools' based on a range of morphological and pictorial attributes. Recent approaches attempt to explore the cultural meanings of the images pecked and painted on the rocks. Elaborate pictorial compositions concentrated in the central part of the Sahara, in the Tassili-n-Ajjer, with engravings generally used for typological and classificatory purposes. However, rigorous analysis of the images, from the Dhar Tichitt in Mauritania for example, can reveal interesting information about the image makers.

Visual representations from the Dhar Tichitt, Mauritania

The visual representations from the Dhar Tichitt region are intertwined with dwelling features. The Dhar Tichitt region in the southwestern part of the Saharan desert was settled by Late Stone Age (LSA) agro-pastoral communities from circa 2000 to 300 BCE. They raised cattle, sheep and goats, cultivated bulrush millet, and relied also on hunting, fishing and the gathering of wild grain (Holl, 1985). The settlement system(s) developed all along the LSA agro-pastoral occupation consisted of main villages and intermittent dry season camps, with surface scatters of cultural remains. The main villages were generally located on top of a sandstone cliff, overlooking the sandy lowlands that included small lakes and freshwater ponds. Depending on their size, the sites are partitioned into hamlets, small villages and large villages. The region was abandoned in the second half of the first millennium BCE, following the onset of particularly arid climatic conditions. The details of the process are still poorly investigated. It has been suggested that Proto-Berbers, with a hunting and warrior ethos, later expanded in the area. These groups opportunistically used features of earlier settlements without initiating a building style of their own.

A new methodology: modus operandi and image-making

The use of the concept of *modus operandi* – the scheduling and sequencing of any technical set of actions – derives from a processual analysis of past visual representations. Images are made, using a range of more or less elaborate tools, techniques and knowledge. The focus is narrowly on the process of making an image, on what gesture is required, and how it is articulated with the preceding and following ones. Following this rationale, and keeping techniques constant, the length of the operational sequence is a function of the time invested in the production of the image. One can arrange the rock images found in a panel or a site according to the time required for their completion. Each of the recurrent series is then considered to be a *modus operandus*, a more or less common way of making rock images. The issue of variability at both intra- and inter-sites levels is then considered, hypotheses are formulated and evaluated with the data at hand, and suggestions made for further investigations.

All Dhar Tichitt engravings belong to two families. The first, the earlier family, consists of images with Dark Patina (DP), while the second later family comprises representations with Light Patina (LP). Both families' images, with a certain amount

of variation, are made with pecking techniques of two kinds: one with the use of hammer-stones, the other without. In the first, the tool has to fit in the hand of the artist and be heavy and hard enough to impact the chosen rock surface. In the second, a hammer is used in tandem with an intermediate tool, a flake, a blade or a piece of metal, to impact the selected surface. As all the recorded images are two-dimensional, one can rely on simple principles of Euclidean geometry. Pecking can generate patterns of distinct dots, lines, surfaces, and diverse combinations of some or all of these. There is a slight methodological difficulty at this juncture: what is the most relevant yardstick to decipher the implemented *modus operandi*? Ideally, the obvious elementary analytical unit is a dot made by a single blow of a pecking tool. In practice, however, it is far from easy to figure out the number of individual dots involved in the drafting of a well-made line. Consequently, the yardstick to be used consists of a more or less straight line between a major direction change. Any major change in orientation, depending on its angle with the previous line, requires the repositioning of tools, and the re-adjustment of the hands, arms and ultimately the whole body of the artist. Thus, a straight line will be used as the proxy unit equivalent to a technical sequence. The new methodology was applied to the corpus of visual representations from different sites, seasonal camps, hamlets, small villages and large central villages.

The Dhar-Tichitt iconographic traditions: a generative model

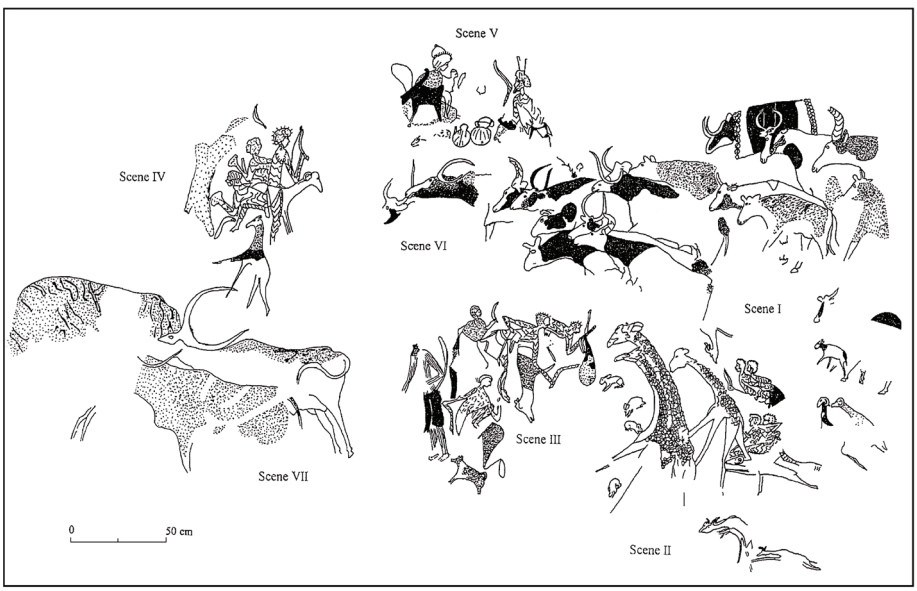
The reconstitution of the *modus operandi* implemented in the creation of the Dhar-Tichitt visual representations highlights the specificity of each of the sampled sites. Fourteen *modus operandi* were reconstructed. The recorded *modus operandi* can be divided into two major categories based on a combination of techniques, represented motifs and the nature of patina. One category includes strongly homogenous small-sized images representing isolated or clustered horse-riders, camel-riders, dromedaries, wild bovids and ostriches. The images, made through pecking/hammering, have a light patina (LP), and are partitioned into three classes. The other category, much more diversified, consists of dark patina (DP) images of different size, with oxen as the predominant representation. This category is partitioned into at least eleven classes. If the recorded *modus operandi* is arranged according to their length – a proxy for the time required for the creation of an image – light patina images required much less time to be completed. They are found in all of the sampled sites with only one exception.

As far as the time dimension involved in the creation of visual representations is concerned, the corpus from the Dhar-Tichitt is partitioned into fourteen *modus operandi* arrangeable into a tree diagram with two major branches. Each branch

represents an iconographic mode with a narrow selection of motifs and drafting techniques. Nine of the reconstructed *modus operandi* are at the lower end of the time requirements scale. Three required more time and are set in the middle of the scale. Finally one, indicating an incomparably longer time and effort invested in the making of an image, is at the upper end. Some images range from relaxed playful activities to more symbolically charged ones.

Tassilian pastoralists iconography: the case of Tikadiouine

A new and robust iconographic approach was developed to explore the multiple meanings of Central Saharan prehistoric paintings. Detailed analyses of the paintings from Tikadiouine, Uan Derbuaen and Iheren (Holl, 1995, 2004) indicate that they are allegoric representations of pastoralists' life cycles. Tikadiouine painting encapsulates and recapitulates the key stages in the herders' social life, from childhood to elderhood. Different versions of the painted narrative can be worked out depending on the connections one is able to draw between the groups of images delimiting a scene (Figure 1).



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Figure 1. *Visual representations from Tikadiouine in Central Tassili-n-Ajjer. Source:* Holl, 1995.

The Tikadiouine narrative summarized here comprises seven scenes arranged in a spiral, starting from the bottom-right end of the composition (Figure 1). Scene I, with four images representing cattle (cow and calf) and sheep in movement, points to standard herding activities that are part of every boy's education. Scene II portrays wild animals in different postures, with two couples of young herders along the right flank – a transparent reference to the wildlife young male herders have to learn to cope with. Once their knowledge and herding skills are deemed sufficient, the young boys undergo a process of social metamorphosis, the rite of passage, drafted in Scene III at the bottom centre of the painting. The initiated boys jump into the social category of young adults who start to look for wives, a quest outlined in Scene IV in the top left and Scene V in the top centre. In the former, a group of three young men from the same age set with a sheep, is on a special mission, the goal of which is depicted in Scene V, which shows a seated young woman holding a child and facing an old patriarch. A dowry of an impressive cattle herd, and one ox for riding, is ready to seal the matrimonial transaction as well as full access to the adult world. Finally, the adult world of a successful young herder implies an independent family with its own herd, depicted in the bottom left, concluding the metamorphosis from the pledging, crouched young boy of scene III, to the young man with his dog, bow and new cattle herd (Figure 1). The Iheren grand composition is a more intricate choreography, with more than 500 individual images arranged in a number of tableaus. The seasonal transhumance, aggregation, packing, celebrating and defending livestock against predators, are all staged in a grand allegory (Holl, 2004). The elaborate compositions of Saharan visual representations belong to an overtly narrative genre.

The Southern Hemisphere

The reinterpretation process is much more advanced and radical in the southern part of the continent. D. Lewis-Williams and his colleagues have initiated a profound reinterpretation of ancient San visual representations in Southern Africa. This reinterpretation is based on two distinct but complementary lines of evidence: a neurological one, with emphasis on the universality of entoptic phenomena; and an ethnographic one, based on the nineteenth-century compilation of San practices and customs. According to this new interpretation, ancient San visual representations feature shamans in the multifaceted aspects of their dealings with misfortune, healing and the over/under-world (Lewis-Williams, 1983, 2003). The 'interpretative' approach

adopted in this case provides an entry to the ancestral San worldviews and prominent cultural practices (Figure 1). It is, however, not clear how far back in the past these views capture ancient San practices. Southern African visual representation traditions date as far back as 27,000 BP, as indicated by the painted stone slabs from the Apollo 11 Cave in Namibia. Did the religious practices remain unchanged during all that time? Or does the relevance of the nineteenth-century's ethnography stretch too far back?

The debate on the relevance of Shamanism in the explanation and understanding of ancient image-making traditions is extremely interesting. There are four aspects to consider: (1) on epistemological grounds, it emphasizes the use of multiple strands of evidence in crafting a plausible explanation of past behavioural features; (2) it suggests a more focused scale for what can qualify as representations of 'shaman's acts' and asserts that all images are not shamanistic (but some are); (3) the chronological background of the shamanistic argument is still vague; and (4) semantics and the definition of words that generally plague the issue have never clarified a research problem; what is important is a working definition.

The new trends currently developed in African visual representation research emphasize the social use of icons featured on rock surfaces (Holl, 1995, 2004; Lewis-Williams and Pierce, 2004). The most elaborate compositions of African past imagery, in the Sahara as well as Southern Africa, appear to refer to a world of ideas and symbols; none is a 'naturalistic' rendering of foragers' or pastoralists' life scenes. Unfortunately, the strong drive toward the search for deeper meanings tends to erase imperfections. It is as if any visual representation composition, provided it is ancient, is a masterpiece by the simple fact of existing. There is scarcely any room left for improvisation, unfinished works, or leisurely unplanned composition. There is a significant risk of over-determination; everything seems to fit marvelously, without unsuccessful trials, errors, mishaps or mistakes. That is why the term 'art' has to be avoided as much as possible, to be replaced by 'visual representation'. In the past, as in the present, situations were certainly diverse, fluid and unpredictable. In the years to come, archaeologists will have to devise new research strategies to address and document this fluidity in the social use of images.

Concluding remarks

The contributions assembled in this section reflect the current state of archaeological research in Africa in 2017. The task is immense. It is simply hoped that dominant research trends have been taken into consideration. Some well documented regional sequences could not be mentioned, for different reasons, but predominantly because of space limitations. Archaeological research in Africa is on a good, healthy trajectory today. It is hoped that the effort will be sustained, with more Africans scholars carrying out fieldwork and producing new knowledge on the initial history of the continent.

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CHAPTER 1

PALEOCLIMATIC AND PALEOENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH IN AFRICA

Anne-Marie Lézine

The expansion of savannas and the environment of the first hominids in Africa

The debate about the extension of savanna zones in Africa in relation to hominid evolution has been spurred predominantly by R. Dart's work, published in 1925. In 1997, studies by Cerling et al. on the isotopic composition of paleontological remains and palaeosols demonstrated a major change in the isotopic composition of the teeth of herbivorous mammals (*Proboscidea* and *Equidae*) in East Africa between 8 million and 7 million years ago (Ma). This paleoenvironmental change was interpreted as reflecting the replacement of a forest ecosystem characterized by C3 carbon-fixation photosynthesis, which had dominated since the Ecoene/Oligocene periods, by the C4 photosynthetic pathway in the grasses of open savanna ecosystems. The contemporaneity of identical observations in different regions of the planet would suggest a linked global event that, according to the authors, was due to a drastic decline in CO_2 levels unfavourable to C3 plants (Cerling et al., 1997; Pagani et al., 2005) and to climate conditions marked by increasing seasonality at low latitudes – with the lengthening of the dry season (Pagani et al., 1999) – or indeed an increase in outbreaks of fires attributable to arid conditions (Beerling and Osborne, 2006).

Grasses that dominated xerophytic herbaceous biomes (steppes and savannas), with a C4 isotopic signature, existed in Africa since the Maastrichtian Age but later developed substantially, depending on the region concerned, during the recent Eocene (Strömberg, 2011). In fact, genetic analyses performed on plants characteristic of the Guineo-Congolian forests (Couvreur et al., 2008) suggest that the dense African forests experienced multiple fragmentations during arid periods dated successively at 33 Ma, 16 Ma and 8 Ma, during which the grasslands developed. At the Loperot sites in Kenya, dated 25 Ma (Vincens et al., 2006), and Chilga in Ethiopia, dated 28 Ma (Kappelman et al., 2003; Yemane et al., 1985), a variety of pollen taxa from the flora of moist semi-deciduous forests and woodlands have been found, similar to what we can observe today on the fringes of the humid Guinea-Congo forest and forests of the Zambezi river basin. Significant percentages of grasses with levels of up to 20 per cent have been observed there. This helps demonstrate the presence of open, moist mosaic-type vegetation, very different from the vegetation on steppes today.

Recent paleobotanical research carried out at Chilga confirms the extreme heterogeneity of landscapes, where mature forests and open areas co-existed side by side (Currano et al., 2011). At Bukwa, on the slopes of Mount Elgon (Pickford, 2002), a comparable heterogeneous landscape has been identified and dated to 17.5 Ma, with large expanses of grassland ecosystems, even at Nyakach (15 Ma) and Fort Ternan (14 Ma) in Kenya. Research by Morley and Richards (1993) on phytoliths from an oceanic core sample collected off the Niger River delta in the Gulf of Guinea confirmed earlier results from continental sites and showed the first significant indications of the extension of grasslands in tropical Africa going back to 16 Ma. A second and much more significant extension phase was dated at 8.2 Ma, confirming work by Cerling et al. The date of 8 Ma is also indicated by Poumot (1989), who goes on to note, following pollen analysis of a marine core sample from the same area, a third extension phase from 2.9 Ma.

Whether originating from the eastern Atlantic Ocean (Dupont, 1989; Dupont and Leroy, 1995; Dupont et al., 2005), the Indian Ocean (Van Campo, 1991) or the Mediterranean Sea (Fauquette et al., 1998), pollen records all indicate increasing aridity between 2 Ma and 3 Ma, which worsened over the past million years. At the same time, indicators of increasing wind activity appear in marine records. As the savannas expanded along the Gulf of Guinea, the desert extended northwards, and steppe ecosystems removed from Mediterranean regions tropical plants that had hitherto been widely present.

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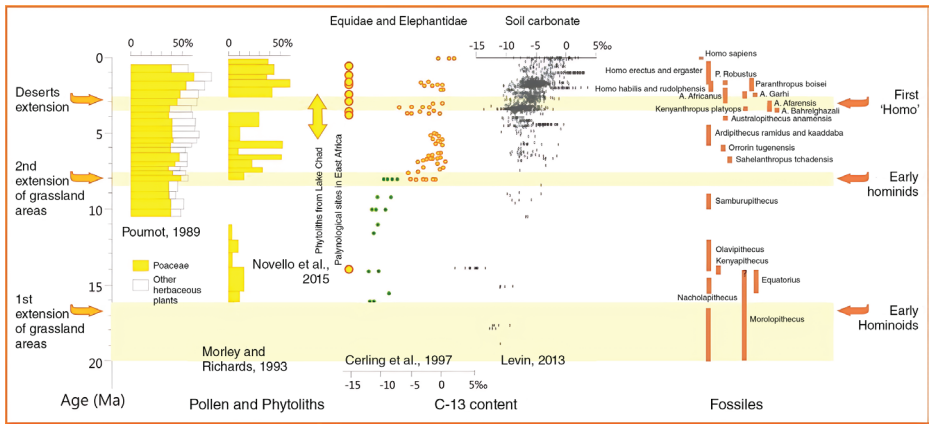


Figure 1. *Hominid environment: pollen and isotopic data showing a rise in grasslands (C4), presented alongside the chronological status of paleontological evidence from the early Hominids to the first Homo genus*

Hominid sites in Central and Eastern Africa

Environmental data from the study of pollen grains and fossilized phytoliths from mio-plio-pleistocene periods directly linked to hominids are rare and interpreting them poses a number of challenges. The first is their extreme scarcity: there is often only one sample with sufficient usable material. The second is the tectonic context of the East African Rift, which influences the distribution of high-altitude ecosystems regardless of climate. The third is the significance of assemblages (pollen and phytoliths) in terms of reconstructing the local and regional environment: sites suitable for the conservation of pollen grains are mainly lacustrine or fluvial in nature. In an arid environment, lakes and rivers are often bordered by dense vegetation and an abundance of trees: these are gallery forests. The plants in these areas can be quite different from those growing in dry soil just a few metres away. It is not uncommon to observe today, for example, trees from dense humid forests along rivers in savanna zones, as the humidity of the soil partially offsets the lack of humidity in the air. In this context, interpretations drawn from pollen analysis, providing access to records with tightly intertwined local and regional scales, may deviate from those drawn from palaeontology, the study of phytoliths and soil science geochemistry favouring local records of the depositional environment. The interpretation of pollen data should also consider the transportation processes, since pollen

grains originating from considerable distances away may have been transported by rivers or wind and thus become intermingled with elements of the local flora.

In the case of Bol in Chad, there is only one sample of pollen grains dating to 4.2 Ma. Taken into consideration with phytoliths found in sediments dated between 6.3 Ma and 2.6 Ma, these grains indicate an open savanna type environment with gallery and mountain forest zones (Novello et al., 2015). In East Africa, all the palynological sites associated with hominid occupation, such as Koobi Fora (Vincens, 1979), Olduvai (Bonnefille, 1984), Laetoli (Bonnefille and Riollet, 1987), Shungura (Vincens, 1987), Hadar (Bonnefille et al., 1987), Peninj (Dominguez-Rodrigo et al., 2001), Fort Ternan (Bonnefille, 1995), Fejej (Umer et al., 2004) and Dikika (Bonnefille, 2010), are at low or medium altitudes, and are now covered with arid or semi-arid vegetation. These are open grasslands with rare trees and thorny shrubs including *Acacia* and *Commiphora*. Palynological and paleontological data indicate that these plant communities have always grown here in arid to semi-arid areas with a high herbaceous component. As at Bol, edaphic forest formations of a gallery forest type were well-developed, as phytolith associations demonstrate (Ashley et al., 2010). Mountain forests were also present in the regional environment. All this suggests a diverse mosaic ecosystem.

Although scarce, these data indicate a close relationship between environmental changes and the evolution of humankind in Africa (Bonnefille, 2010). The appearance of early hominids, the ancestors of the great apes and of humankind (*Moropithecus*), is placed within the context of the decline of the great tropical forests and the spread of grasslands during the early Miocene. After 8 Ma, the first hominids (*Sahelanthropus tchadensis, Orrorin tugenensis, Ardipithecus kadabba*) who, despite being quadrupeds, had the option of adopting bipedal postures to varying degrees, appeared in an even more open environment. It is likely that the environment in which *Sahelanthropus tchadensis* lived was very similar to the gallery forests of the Okavango in the Kalahari Desert. Finally, around 3 Ma, the first humans whose bipedal posture is incontestable (*Autralopithecus, Kenyanthropus, Paranthropus* then *Homo*) appeared in an even more accentuated context of aridity that ended with the spread of desert ecosystems in Africa's tropical north and around the fringes of the Mediterranean.

Environmental changes in tropical North Africa during the last climatic cycles

At the end of the 1980s, Dupont (1989) advanced the thesis that the southern boundary of the Sahara had fluctuated as a result of global glacial–interglacial climate cycles. The Sahara would have spread well beyond its current limits during glacial periods to cover a section of today's Sahel and would also, on the other hand, have significantly shrunk during interglacial periods. Therefore, particularly humid periods during isotope stages 5 (circa 125,000 years: ka), 11 (ca. 420 ka) and 13 (ca. 490 ka) would have seen the boundary between the Sahara and the Sahel (currently not exceeding 21°N) pushed back to at least 25°N. The development of analytical techniques and dating methods has improved the chronology of these environmental changes and wet phases, enabling us to identify the presence of large lakes and the spread of forest zones in areas that are currently desert, not just in tropical Africa (Smith, 2012) but also in Arabia (Petraglia et al., 2011) and the Levant (Petit-Maire et al., 2010). These approaches have provoked key debates related to the history of human migration out of Africa (Drake et al., 2013 and references therein). Unfortunately, pollen data are scarce over such long periods. Accordingly, new 'proxies' have been developed, such as isotopic analysis of leaf waxes, which have made possible the biome reconstruction of C3 and C4 grass subfamilies in North Africa (Castañeda et al., 2009) and variations of temperature and hydrology of East African lakes (e.g. Tierney et al., 2008). Two C3 plant extension phases have been identified in North Africa during the last climatic cycle: the first corresponds to the great humid period of isotope stage 5; the second corresponds to a humid period during isotope stage 3, a topic of controversy for some time (Szabo et al., 1995). Nevertheless, this finding has now been acknowledged for many areas of tropical North Africa thanks to information from lacustrine (Smith et al., 2004) and marine records (Casteñada et al., 2009; Kuechler et al., 2013; Lézine, work in progress; Matsuzaki et al., 2011; Tjallingii, 2008). In East Africa, the situation is far more complicated. The high lacustrine levels of stage 5 are widely accepted and have been dated at between 145 ka and 120 ka at the following lakes: Natron, Magadi, Naivasha, Suguta and Turkana (Trauth et al., 2001 and references therein), whereas a 'mega-drought' has been recorded between 135 ka and 70 ka at Lake Malawi (Cohen et al., 2007; Scholz et al., 2007). Highly variable hydrological conditions have been subsequently recorded at Lake Naivasha, with a succession of high levels at 90 ka, 80 ka and 66 ka (Trauth et al., 2001), whereas Lake Malawi and

Lake Tanganyika (Tierney et al., 2008) recorded dry periods, particularly circa 55 ka, 47.5 ka and 37 ka, coinciding with H6, H5 and H4 events in the northern hemisphere. At Lake Challa (Moernaut et al., 2010), a generally humid period has been recorded between 97 ka and 20.5 ka; that is, covering the end of stage 5 as well as the following two stages.

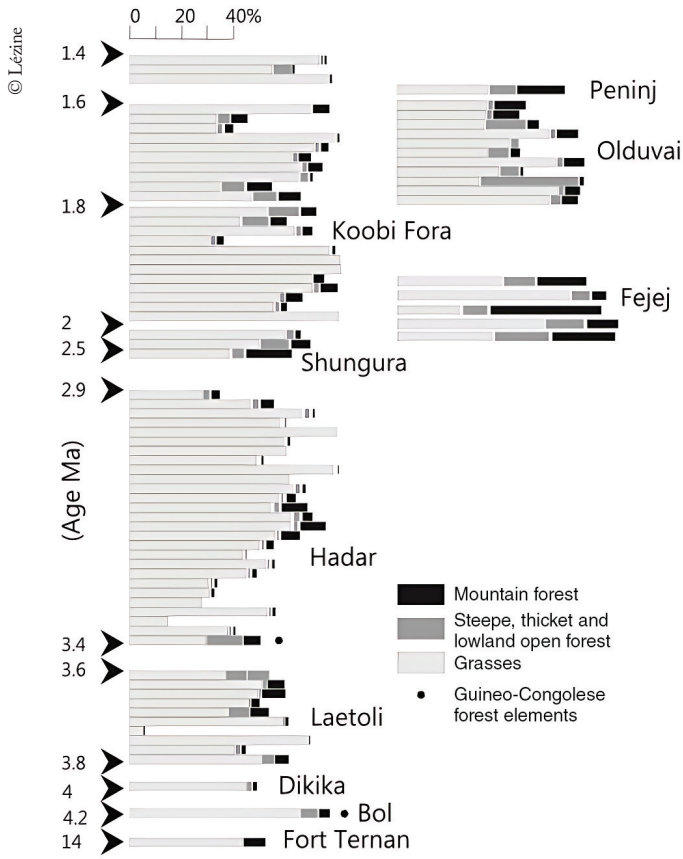


Figure 2. *Simplified pollen data from hominid sites in Africa*

One of the major difficulties of past paleoenvironmental reconstructions in the last glacial maximum is that the period was so dry that many lakes practically dried up (Gasse et al., 2008). The wind then altered or eroded subsequently exposed lacustrine sediments. This is the case mainly for dry African regions, such as the

Sahara and the Sahel. By calculating the pollen influx of core samples taken from the coast of West Africa, Hooghiemstra and Agwu (1988) were able to assess the intensity of wind flow and drought during this period, corroborating the earlier work of Sarnthein (1978). The latter, based on an analysis of dust transported from the continent towards the nearby Atlantic Ocean, indicated that 50 per cent of the land surface was covered in sand between the latitudes of 30°N and 30°S during the last glacial maximum, whereas they currently represent only 10 per cent.

Tropical Africa during the last glacial maximum

Mountain zones

During the last Ice Age, the high African massifs were covered in glaciers (Osmaston and Harisson, 2005). It is estimated that the latter covered an area of approximately 1,500 to 2,000 square kilometres (km^2), with altitudes varying from several hundred metres to up to 1,000 metres (in the case of Ruwenzori and Mount Kenya), lower than their positions today, relegating forests, thickets and afro-alpine shrubland to lower elevations. East African pollen sequences, such as those of Lake Tanganyika (Vincens, 1991) and Sacred Lake (Coetzee, 1964), show that this expansion was accompanied by an extreme reduction of high-altitude forest formations, which all but disappeared from East Africa in favour of grasslands (at Sacred Lake) or ericaceous shrublands (Lake Tanganyika), now characteristic of a supra-forest stage. We also find mountain forest elements such as *Podocarpus*, *Olea and Ilex* in glacial pollen spectra from low- and medium-altitude sites of the Guinea-Congo forest massif, such as Bilanko (Elenga and Vincens, 1990), Barombi Mbo (Maley and Brenac, 1998) and Bosumtwi (Talbot et al., 1984). It is likely that current relict populations of *Podocarpus* from 'inselbergs' in the west of the African continent – from Angola to southern Cameroon (White, 1993) – date from this period.

The presence of plants (now growing at altitude) in the equatorial forests at low altitude during the last Ice Age is not unique to Africa; they have also been observed in the Amazon at the same time (Colinvaux et al., 1996). We can thus posit that the biodiversity of the equatorial forest massif was more significant than it is today, and that climate change has fostered the co-existence of plants with disjoint generations in mountain forests and the dense forests at low and medium altitudes.

Guinea-Congo forest block

In comparison to East African mountain areas – the subject of numerous paleoenvironmental studies dating to the 1960s (Lézine, 2008) – the Equatorial Guinea-Congo forest block is far less known. Most of the paleoenvironmental information, whether related to pollen data from lacustrine or soil isotopes, is focused on the Holocene. A few isolated samples from the Democratic Republic of Congo (Osokari–Runge, 2000) and Congo (Ngamakala–Elenga et al., 1994), dating to between 37 ka and 16 ka, indicate a dense forest environment. Only the northern fringes of the forest at Lake Bosumtwi, in Ghana, and Lake Barombi Mbo, in the north-west of Cameroon, have provided accessible, ongoing data since the last glacial period. At Barombi Mbo, a mature forest with both humid and dry forest elements (Lebamba et al., 2012) has been identified from the beginning of the sequence, dated from 33 ka to 23.4 ka. Scores of forest biomes and the percentages of trees (Maley and Brenac, 1998) subsequently drop dramatically between 23.4 ka and 17 ka, suggesting a mixed landscape and degraded forest cover as lake levels dropped by several dozen metres (Shanahan et al., 2006).

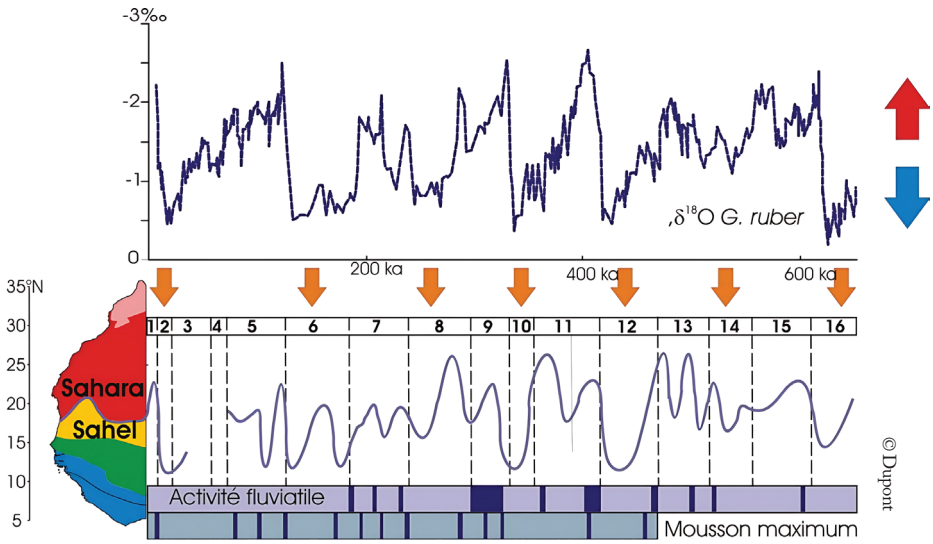


Figure 3. *Fluctuation at the Sahara-Sahel boundary during the last 16 marine isotopic stages (MIS) and their correlation with the marine isotopic curve: the peaks show warm phases (red arrow), troughs show cold phases (blue arrow)*

Since the 1960s, the paleoenvironmental observations mentioned above, plus biological data – in particular genetic data – have fed the debate on the stability of the Guinea-Congo forest during the Ice Age and the theory of 'forest refuges'.

According to this theory, the forest massif would have fragmented and would not have subsisted, except in some isolated areas located mainly along the Zaire-Nile ridge east of the Congo Basin and along the Atlantic coastline in the west (Hamilton, 1982; Maley, 1987). These 'refuge' zones would thus have concentrated forest biodiversity and would have allowed the forest to recover as the climate improved. In 1949, Aubréville asserted that the northern fringes of the Guinea-Congo forest would have extended to approximately 3°S, to the centre of the Congo Basin, and would have disappeared from the edge of the Gulf of Guinea, except for extremely compact 'bastions' located along the coast and mountains of Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and near the Niger delta. Aubréville (1949) observed that *Acacia* in the Sahel had also shifted southwards. The migration of biomes from tropical North Africa and the contraction of forests would have accompanied the aforementioned spread of deserts, taking advantage of the intense drought that characterized the last glacial period. The lack of an adequate bank of paleoenvironmental data makes it impossible to verify this theory, even if the genetic data (e.g. Hardy, 2013) show patterns that suggest the repeated isolation of forest species. If the occurrence of forest refuges and *a fortiori* their location cannot be pinpointed, it is certain that the important river system in the Congo Basin played a key role in the survival of forest areas, even during the Ice Age (Colyn et al., 1991).

Eastern Arc Mountains of Tanzania and Kenya

The Eastern Arc Mountains are home to exceptionally diverse flora, with key links to the equatorial Guineo-Congolian forest – an area of rainforest with mountain elements (White, 1983). Paleoenvironmental data that Mumbi et al. (2008) and Finch et al. (2009) obtained show that, contrary to observations made elsewhere in Central Africa, the forest environment has remained remarkably stable since at least 48 ka, the period that pollen records cover. Several hypotheses can be made here: owing to the proximity of the Indian Ocean, climate change would not have had significant effects on the forest, either in terms of biodiversity or in terms of physiognomy. Taking into account the local context, the rainforest would not have been responsive to changes of the magnitude that marked the history of the climate since 48 ka elsewhere in

Africa. Unfortunately, no other forest sites exist in equatorial Africa comparable to these exceptional sites that would permit a debate on the vulnerability or resilience of the equatorial forest to climate change.

Quantitative reconstructions of a glacial climate

Reconstructing temperature and precipitation levels during the last Ice Age by comparing fossil data and current data is a complex task. Following work by Jolly and Haxeltine (1998), Wu et al. (2007a) demonstrated that the low CO_2 levels in the atmosphere during the last Ice Age (180 parts per million by volume: ppmv) in comparison to interglacial periods (280-300 ppmv), linked to a dry climate, could play a significant role in explaining the drop in treeline elevation in the mountains. They therefore minimized the drop in temperature (-3°C to -8°C), previously deduced from the current distribution of plants and the existing relationship between temperature and altitude (Farrera et al., 1999). According to Wu et al. (2007a), the average difference in temperatures between the last glacial maximum and the present day would not have exceeded 2°C. These results are comparable to temperature anomalies on the sea surface (1.5°C ± 0.2°C) of the tropical Atlantic recorded by the Multiproxy Approach for the Reconstruction of the Glacial Ocean Surface (MARGO) programme (Kucera et al., 2005). The drop in temperature was accompanied by a decrease in rainfall, which had been calculated using pollen transfer functions (Bonnefille and Chalié, 2000) as 450 millimetres (mm) compared to current annual levels in East Africa. This is consistent with reconstructions by Wu et al. (2007b) indicating values of approximately -200 mm, or -1,000 mm for the whole of East Africa.

Climate variability during the Ice Age

In addition to long-term glacial-interglacial variability, the causes of which are essentially orbital (Braconnot et al., 2008), faster climate variability had a profound effect on tropical Africa during the glacial period. The link of the latter with the North Atlantic Ocean has now been established: the sudden coldness of the Atlantic Ocean during episodes of melting icebergs (Heinrich events) and weaker meridional overturning circulation (AMOC) resulted in phases of severe aridity on the African continent owing to the migration of the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) to the south. The above-mentioned Heinrich event 4

(H4) to H6 events are exemplified by low lake level phases in Tanganyika (Tierney et al., 2008). The 'Younger Dryas' (H0) event is now well-known (Gasse, 2000) but it was the H1 event, dated between 16 ka and 17 ka, which was undoubtedly the most distinct (Stager et al., 2011). During this period, the levels of all inter-tropical African lakes dropped, from Lake Bosumtwi in the west (Shanahan et al., 2006) to Lake Victoria in the east (Stager et al., 2002). The latter, one of the largest lakes in Africa, completely dried up. The intense aridity of H1 was accompanied by increased wind strength (Bouimetarhan et al., 2013), responsible for intense upwelling off the coast of West Africa. It is hard to evaluate the impact of Heinrich events on the plant environment, however (Hessler et al., 2010), since the glacial environment was already degraded and dominated by grassland species in semi-arid and mountainous areas.

Post-glacial warming and its effects on hydrology and vegetation

By enhancing the thermal contrast between the ocean and the land, post-glacial warming caused a huge surge of humid monsoon flow, subsequently leading to the formation of large lakes (Lézine et al., 2011) and the activation of a dense river network in present-day desert regions of the Sahara (Drake et al., 2011). Hoelzmann et al. (1998) estimate that lakes and wetlands covered 2.8 per cent and 4.6 per cent of the land in tropical North Africa and Arabia, respectively, between 10°N and 30°N at the peak of the 'African Humid Period' (AHP) (deMenocal et al., 2000). The chronological and structural basis of this humid period has been the topic of debates, often originating from the diversity of sedimentary archives and depositional environments. Based on the study of marine sediments, deMenocal (2000) and then Tierney and deMenocal (2013) suggested the abrupt onset of the AHP around 14.8 ka in West Africa and around 14.68 ka in East Africa. However, an improvement in the climate is recorded around 17.5 ka in the desert expanses of the Namib (Shi et al., 1998). Lake Challa, on the border between Kenya and Tanzania, recorded water levels at 16.5 ka ± 0.3 ka (Verschuren et al., 2009), as did Lake Bosumtwi in Ghana around the same time (shortly after 16.3 ka) (Shanahan et al., 2006). Water levels were also noted around 15.76 ka for Lake Tanganyika (Tierney and deMenocal, 2013) and around 15.3 ka for Lake Tana in northern Ethiopia (Marshall et al., 2011). Conversely, the abrupt nature of the wet-dry transition is rarely brought up elsewhere (Marshall et al., 2011).

There has not been a continuous lacustrine succession since the last Ice Age in the desert areas of the Sahara and semi-desert regions of the Sahel. For this reason, hydrological conditions have been reconstructed by analysing dated lake samples, originating from truncated or discontinuous sedimentary deposits that are often outcrops of bedrock (Lézine et al., 2011). Highly varied evolutionary patterns are identified in latitudes spanning 10°N to 28°N, and between the east and west of the Sahara and the Sahel. Wet conditions are therefore detected around 15.5 ka in the Lake Chad and Nile watershed, but it is only after 13.5 ka that wetlands were truly established, mainly in the centre and in the east. The latter gained a foothold along the Atlantic coastline around 11.5 ka. During this era, the humid period referred to as the 'green Sahara' was active (see next section).

Increased precipitation during the glacial-interglacial period was punctuated by brief but intense arid spells. The Younger Dryas (H0) event has been widely accepted due to the widespread drop in lake levels (Gasse, 2000), increased dust flows to the sea (Lézine, 1998) and the development of arid grasslands (e.g. Umer et al., 2007). It was probably not the only 'arid' spell in inter-tropical Africa during the last glacial-interglacial transition, as work by Shi et al. (1998) suggests: the latter note a second arid spell between 10.9 ka and 9.3 ka in the Namib Desert.

Migration of plants from the equator to the tropics: the 'green Sahara'

All pollen research (Hély and Lézine, 2014; Watrin et al., 2009) and anthracological studies (Neumann, 1989) relating to Holocene sediments in the Sahara indicate that tropical trees currently growing in regions receiving several hundred millimetres of rainfall per year in the Sahel, or further south in the savannas and woodlands of the Sudan and the Guineo-Congolese forests, were on lake shores. Taking into account that zones of vegetation had been pushed southwards during the last glacial period (see text above), one can imagine the long migration tropical plants undertook to reach the confines of the present-day desert, no doubt facilitated by the presence of the dense river system mentioned above (Drake et al., 2011). Forests developed around Lake Barombi Mbo, 4°39 N of Cameroon, around 17 ka (Lebamba et al., 2012) and reached maximum extension during 11.5 ka (Maley and Brenac, 1998). Tropical trees then penetrated the Sudanese zone (Tilla–Salzmann 2000) around 11 ka, followed by the Sahelian zone in the Niayes–Potou, Lompoul, Diogo and Touba

N'Diaye regions (Lézine, 1988) and in the Manga region in Nigeria, notably the Kuluwu, Kajemarum, Kaigama and Bal oases (Salzmann and Waller, 1998) between 10.5 ka and 9.5 ka. Finally, tropical trees reached the Sahara in 10 ka (I-n-Atei–Lecuyer et al., 2015) and established themselves around 9.5-9.3 ka, for example in Selima, El Atrun and Oyo (Ritchie et al., 1985; Ritchie and Haynes, 1987), and in Chemchane (Lézine, 1993). Recent work by Hély and Lézine (2014) shows that, during the AHP, the whole of tropical North Africa nevertheless experienced a seasonal Sudanese-type climate, despite the substantial rainfall that generated this migration. Three latitudinal bands were distinguished. South of 20°N, the wettest Guineo-Congolese elements were present and coexisted with Sudanese and even Sahelian elements. Guineo-Congolese elements were absent in the northernmost area, located between 20°N and 25°N, which is defined as being Sahelo-Sudanese. Finally, north of 25°N, only the most arid Sahelian and Saharan elements were present. This all points to a mosaic landscape with forest elements confined to the fringes of wetlands in a more arid regional environment. The humid zones, initially restricted to the highlands (central Saharan massifs) and watersheds fed from the south (the Nile and the Lake Chad basin), gradually spread throughout North Africa, forming a continuous humid front from 11.5°N to 28.5°N.

Post-glacial regrowth of forests at altitude

Alongside the latitudinal migration of tropical plants in the lowlands, the recolonization of forest ecosystems at altitude has also been demonstrated. Although identified very early in the highlands of the East African Rift (Lézine, 2013 and references therein), it is only recently that forest colonization of the mountains of Central Atlantic Africa has been proven in the west of the Congo basin at the Bambili site in Cameroon (Lézine et al., 2013a). Evidence of a forest succession at Bambili starts around 18.4 ka, with slowing spells dated to the H1 and Younger Dryas periods. In 14.5 ka, the two key elements of mountain forest regions, *Olea* and *Podocarpus,* established themselves at altitude in areas where they had taken refuge during the Ice Age: at medium altitudes for *Podocaprus* and low altitudes for *Olea*. The availability of light in the canopy indicates that this was a developing forest environment. The forest reached maximum extension around 11.7 ka and lasted until 3.3 ka. After 8.2 ka, however, we can see the gradual opening of the forest canopy, interpreted as an early sign of forest destabilization that ended around 3.3 ka with the sudden disappearance of over half the forest.

The date of 8.2 ka marks a major event during the Holocene, corresponding to an arid spell. This has been recorded in the vegetation at Bamibli and at Rusaka – for example, in the East of the Congo basin (Bonnefille et al., 1995) – as well as in the hydrology of the lakes of inter-tropical Africa (Gasse, 2000) and the ice fields of Mount Kilimanjaro (Thompson et al., 2002). This event was of lesser amplitude than Heinrich events such as the Younger Dryas (H0) and the H1, but has nevertheless been widely identified around the North Atlantic basin and beyond, from the pole to the equator (Alley and Agustsdottir, 2005). It originated from a large influx of freshwater into the ocean, which caused a slowing and even the stopping of the meridional overturning stream function. The effects of such oceanic disturbances on the tropical climate were mainly an increase in aridity attributable to the displacement of the ITCZ towards the south.

Quantitative climate reconstructions for the Holocene

Climate simulations by Marzin and Braconnot (2009) applied to tropical North Africa show that, at the start of the Holocene, the ITCZ was located at least 130 kilometres north of its current location around 9.5 ka, and that associated rainfall was 80 per cent higher than current levels. A few reconstructions have been attempted using the data themselves. Using data that Petit-Maire and Riser (1983) collected from the Inner Niger Delta, Street-Perrott et al. (1990) estimate that, during 9 ka, rainfall was 150 mm to 320 mm greater than current levels at 20°N. According to pollen data from the Sudan, Ritchie and Haynes (1987) estimate that the rainfall gradient that exists today between 12°N and 17°N (100-400 mm) was displaced from 4°N to 5°N, significantly greater than appraisals from the models cited above. During 6 ka, estimates by Kröpelin et al. (2008) came together to appraise annual rainfall at 420 mm in the Lake Yoa region (19°N) in northern Chad, consistent with previous estimates by Peyron et al. (2006) for the same latitudes, and lower than estimates by Hoelzmann et al. (2001) for the eastern Sahara (460-600 mm). In Eastern Africa the situation is more varied: Lake Challa, for example, situated near the Equator (Verschuren et al., 2009), reveals a very wet period during the early Holocene (9 ka), followed by a more arid period in the mid-Holocene (6 ka). This is in keeping with reconstructions by Peyron et al. (2006), which suggest precipitation levels equal to the present day and even lower during the latter period.

Termination of the African Humid Period

Over the course of the last millennia, there was a general degradation of environmental and climatic conditions in tropical North Africa. This represents the end of the African Humid Period (deMenocal et al., 2000). Lake levels dropped, tropical plants migrated to the Sahara, and the forests of the Sahel to the Equator gave way to savannas, steppes and degraded forest formations (Lézine, 2013; Vincens et al., 1999). This transition occurred in either an abrupt or a gradual manner, depending on local hydrogeological conditions and the resilience of the ecosystems affected in the different sectors. The ways in which this shift from humid to arid conditions took place on such a remarkable scale have been the topic of numerous field studies and climate-simulation research initiatives, to determine the 'forcing' and retroaction in play (e.g. Shanahan et al., 2015; Skinner et al., 2015 and references therein). Pollen analysis carried out in Central and West Africa shows that the deterioration of climate conditions, along with the lengthening of the dry season, began in the mid-Holocene (Lézine et al., 2013a; Vincens et al., 2010) and accelerated until the abrupt degradation of forest areas between 4.5 ka and 2.5 ka. At Lake Bambili, the first signs of this development appeared around 8.2 ka, and came to an end in 3.3 ka, with the abrupt decline of the forest. Similarly, the sub-Guinean gallery forests in the Niayes region of Senegal incorporated Sudanese species during the mid-Holocene, before declining sharply around 2.5 ka (Lézine, 1988). In the Congo basin (e.g. Ngomanda et al., 2009), the appearance of sun-loving species around 2.4 ka reflected the opening of the forest massif. The degradation of tropical forest ecosystems at the tail end of the African Humid Period resulted in the splitting of the Guineo-Congolese forest into two areas, on either side of the arid Dahomey interval (Salzmann and Hoelzmann, 2005). Alongside ecosystem degradation, we note an increase in dust flows to the sea (deMenocal et al., 2000) and a worsening of hydrological conditions. The wet front that had reached its maximum extension during the millennium around 5.5 ka dropped 5°S during the following millennium (Lézine et al., 2011). In the regions located north of the Equator in East Africa, a similar pattern can be seen (Gasse, 2000), with the general dropping of lake levels around 4.5 ka, initiated locally from 6 ka, for example in Chew Bahir Lake (Foerster et al., 2012) and Ashenge Lake (Marshall et al., 2009), and the decline of environmental conditions (Marchant and Hooghiemstra, 2004).

Human impact on the plant environment

In contrast to Europe, the impact of the development of agriculture and raising of livestock on the natural environment in tropical Africa is barely detectable and appears to be localized in the displacement of mainly pastoral and nomadic peoples. Farming palm trees at Yoa oasis in northern Chad has thus been dated to 850 BP (Lézine et al., 2011b). Moreover, markers of human impact on the landscape – such as pollen grains from perennials, including *Ricinus*, Asteraceae and *Rumex* – appear in sediments of Lake Masoko in Tanzania from 1550-1650 CE (Vincens et al., 2003) at the same time as many pieces of charcoal, indicating forest fires. The same pollen grains were observed dating from 750 CE at Kasenda Lake and from 1100-1250 CE at Wandakara Lake in Uganda (Ssemmanda et al., 2005). At Lake Hayk and Lake Hardibo in Ethiopia (Darbyshire et al., 2003), Lake Mubwindi in Uganda (Taylor and Marchant, 1995) and Lake Naivasha in Kenya (Lamb et al., 2003), an increase in the fire-resistant shrub *Dodonaea* in this disturbed ecosystem also testified to human activity from 1450 CE and between 1800 and 1920 CE, respectively. At Munsa in Uganda (Leujju et al., 2005), the presence of microcharcoal shows the degradation of the forest between 1100 and 1780 CE, and the presence of coprophilous mushrooms (*Cercophora* and *Sporomiella*) is evidence of livestock farming. Heliophilous and pioneer species established themselves from 2.4 ka in the Congo basin (Ngomanda et al., 2009) and approximately the same time in the Rukiga Mountains in Uganda (Taylor, 1990), indicating the opening of the forest canopy. Of these species, *Elaeis guineensis* was favoured as food, particularly after 650 BP (1300 CE) at Sinnda Lake (Vincens et al., 1998).

As regards agriculture, pollen data are even rarer because it is very difficult (even impossible) to differentiate between farmed grasses and spontaneous grasses from pollen grains in Africa. Nevertheless, phytoliths, seeds and other plant macro-remains preserved in archaeological sites help to overcome these problems. One of the first trees chosen for food use in Central Africa was without doubt the oilseed tree *Canarium.* In Cameroon, some of the earliest examples date from 8 ka (Lézine et al., 2013b and references therein). The exploitation of plants then diversifies with *Elaeis* being grown from 4.15 ka and *Musa* from 2.7 ka (de Marret, 1992), then *Pennisetum* from 2.5 ka (Eggert et al., 2006; Neumann et al., 2012) and finally *Sorghum* from 265 BP (Delneuf et al., 2003). As for introduced plants, these rarely date further back than the twentieth century, although maize, for example, was introduced in West Africa during the sixteenth century (Willett,

1962). Traces of this have been found in sediments dated 1690 CE in Naivasha (Lamb et al., 2003) and 1780 CE at Munsa (Lejju et al., 2005) in East Africa. In the most recent pollen diagrams, we also see pollen grains from *Pinus* and *Eucalyptus* that were introduced in 1914 and 1920, respectively, in West and Central Africa (Chevalier, 1931; Tchawa and Tsayem DeMaze, 2002).

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CHAPTER 2

THE GENEALOGICAL CONNECTIONS OF AFRICA'S REGIONS

The Y Chromosome Evidence

Shomarka Y. Keita

Introduction

Africa's peoples are diverse in physical and molecular characteristics. In addition to this diversity, the continent's size, geography, role in human evolution, as well as evidence for interactions with non-African migrants, lead some to enquire about the genealogical connections of its current peoples. This issue is addressed here primarily in a conceptual fashion, with a geographic focus on men, using Y chromosome evidence. The Y chromosome has certain genes – the molecules of biological inheritance – which are only passed from father to son.

Several questions are of interest: 1) Have common ideas about the boundaries between regions and indigenous/endogenous peoples in Africa been misleading? 2) Is there any evidence for genealogical connections between the regions of Africa that are younger than a general human connection? 3) If there is such evidence, what are its implications? A finding of primary genetic genealogical ties of any sort, from any time depth, which cut across African regions would indicate complex population histories of interconnection that are obscured by commonly held ideas about 'race' and boundaries – and certain traditions of scholarship.

Indigenous/endogenous populations, but especially their regions, are the focus here, with endogenous referring both to regional populations that have African local

origins, and to those who also may have biologically assimilated foreign unknown or known groups or individuals (migrants) – a process known as gene flow. This use of endogenous is an adaptation of Hountondji's (1999) cultural concept which refers to locally possessed ('owned') results or products of practices or traditions that have thoroughly assimilated foreign elements, whose origins may not be remembered or easily traced, and are not thought of as foreign. (Various culinary practices or food dishes are general examples.) His cultural use of endogenous is intended to replace or enlarge the idea of 'indigenous' which he suggests has had pejorative meanings, at least in writings on Africa. For example, 'indigenous' often implies or is used to imply isolated, static/unchanging and unable to innovate, absorb change or incorporate outside elements. It can be added that the idea of what Africa is, what is 'really African' or 'authentically African' is also often a part of this notion, such that a new synthesis using 'non-African' elements would be regarded, erroneously, as 'inauthentic' in keeping with this way of thinking. At the heart of the endogenous concept is the acceptance of the interaction of humans with ideas and with each other, on their own terms, in their own places. 'Indigenous' could and should be used to simply mean things produced under local impetus with elements from anywhere, but Hountondji wishes to avoid any misunderstanding. Ironically, from this perspective the endogenous becomes 'indigenous' (Hountondji, 1999). Interestingly, ideas about what is indigenous, endogenous or authentic are of interest in discussing populations in terms of the genetic aspects of their histories.

Population interactions may lead not only to genetic exchange via intermarriage, but also to the adoption of new languages and social identities. There is also evidence of migration of groups or sections of groups who were not assimilated by local people, but who may have assimilated some of them. At what point does the migrant or migrant group become either indigenous or endogenous? The answer to this depends on many things.

There are numerous examples of interactions between populations in various regions of Africa, involving culture and genes. In west Central Africa, Bantu speakers interacted with Batwa peoples even in ancient times (circa 4000-1000 BCE) resulting in intermarriage/gene flows (Klieman, 2003; Montano et al., 2011). The so-called Bantu expansion, as well as that of other language families such as Nilo-Saharan and Afroasiatic or Afrasan, was far more complex than the migration of a single group that replaced or displaced others.

In Eastern Africa, in what is now called Kenya, interactions between numerous groups of differing ethnicities and languages led to the creation of new groups and communities, such as the Swahili in the first millennium, and Taveta in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This is an authentic example of voluntary

e pluribus unum, contrary to colonial notions that characterized tropical African group origins as adynamic and isolated (Ogot, 2005). The world of 'precolonial Kenya' did not consist of non-interacting static groups. In fact, in some instances entire clans from one ethnic group joined other ethnic groups (Ogot, 2005). In north-eastern Africa, living Egyptians are the result of the amalgamation and assimilation of different peoples at various times with the ancient population (Pagani et al., 2015; Keita, 2005), who themselves emerged primarily from interactions between local ancient Nilotic and Saharan populations. Madagascar was the site of island Asian and African interactions dating from near the time of its colonization, which resulted in a population who speak an Austronesian language (with some words borrowed from African languages).

The Beja, in the Sudan and Egypt, have long assimilated persons from Arab pastoral groups (Fogel, 1995). Some pastoral Arab groups that immigrated to Africa have intermarried with various African peoples, while retaining a distinctly Bedouin Arab consciousness in African spaces. Overall, Arabic-speaking northern Africa is the result of complex interactions and not merely settler colonization, akin to European actions in Kenya, Zimbabwe/'Rhodesia', Algeria, and South Africa. The region could be said to consist largely of Arabized Africans who also have had contact with non-African regions over a long period.

Writings about early Mali and Songhay reveal multiethnic societies who incorporated a range of peoples, while some of the Moroccan soldiers who conquered Songhay remained and married local women. The Ashanti kingdom, in what is now Ghana, evolved from the coalescence of many groups. The Almoravids, who eventually left Africa to conquer Spain, consisted of diverse African peoples. Groups defined by geography, culture, religion or language can have multiple biological and cultural ancestries – sometimes from distantly related groups, as well as those who are closer, and over differing time periods.

There have been gene flows/migrations into and across various regions of the continent at different times from outside of Africa, as well between various African regions. The older the migration or intermarriage and assimilation of non-Africans, the greater the probability that the descendants and their genetics have been shaped by African physical, social and cultural environments and hence have an authentic African history (Hiernaux, 1975), a concept that can be applied to all regions of Africa. The same is true for African gene flows into non-African regions (see, for example, Moorjani et al., 2011). In those instances, the interaction has been shaped by non-African environments. For ancient migrations, the location and type of interactions define them historically, and place them in context.

Human biological and cultural variation can be found within all of the quadrants of Africa, although there are often ideas about the 'typical' person for a given group or place. There are many reasons for diversity and related attitudes. The interest here is whether or not there is a demonstrable connection between regions *after* the emergence and migration of modern humans from Africa.

Early humans

Most scientists interpret available evidence as indicating that Africa is the homeland of the population, or network of populations, which emerged with the core biology, behaviour and culture of those generally called 'modern humans' and usually designated *Homo sapiens sapiens*. The evidence for this includes fossils and genetic data. The greatest continental genetic diversity is found within Africa, and this is thought to be due largely to the origin and longer continuous residence of modern humans there.

The emergence of modern humans is believed to have occurred at least between 150,000 and 200,000 years ago, but there is molecular and fossil evidence possibly pushing back the origins to some 300,000 years. The geographical areas are not yet fully clarified and may well have included populations in several regions of Africa from the north-west, east and south. There is early evidence for broadly modern human anatomy and behaviour in Africa from Southern, Central and Northern Africa (Balter, 2011; Bouzouggar et al., 2007; Henshilwoord et al., 2011; Hublin and McPherron, 2012; Yellen et al., 1995). Modern humans may have evolved from one early population or be the result of interactions between widespread pre-modern populations within Africa, culminating in the emergence of modern humans who differed from all of these populations. The initial centre of the evolution or emergence of a completely modern human population – or its primary history – may have been somewhere in the eastern part of the tropical region, defined as being between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. Fossils from Ethiopia are likely candidates for representatives of early or near modern people, as well as remains from Morocco. Modern human origins have usually been interpreted as the emergence of a new species by most investigators – but this interpretation is not universally accepted. None of these early human groups should be thought of as being identical to any living African populations from any part of the continent. There are no living fossils.

One view takes the position that the process of movement and settlement outside of Africa saw modern humans moving as a group and encountering

peoples often designated 'archaic' *Homo sapiens,* who were behaviourally and anatomically different from them. These are usually said to be of different species. Genetic data from living humans and ancient DNA evidence have been interpreted by some to indicate the incorporation of these other 'older' populations which, if they are separate species, would indicate true hybridization and interspecies gene exchange. There are different kinds of DNA: that inherited from both parents, called autosomal, and that from only from a male or female parent, sometimes called uniparental. The uniparental DNA marks lines of descent (lineages) but represents only a small portion of DNA. However, the 'archaic' DNA found in living humans is autosomal. Another possible interpretation is that this mixture is between subspecies (or true races) of *Homo sapiens*. In this model, modern humans would simply be another subspecies of *Homo sapiens*. This view is consistent with the *biological species concept* which does not accept the idea of successful mating between different species in natural circumstances. Some scientists have even questioned the interpretation that mixture occurred, suggesting instead that the 'archaic' genes found in living peoples represent retentions from earlier ancestors who were common to both 'modern humans' and various 'archaic' *Homo sapiens*. There are other views; some scientists, while interpreting the evidence as indicating that modern humans emerged in Africa, nevertheless think that 'modernity' was not spread by a colonizing mass of migrants who primarily replaced and absorbed other members of *Homo*. Rather, they believe that constant gene flow from Africa in the form of a more diffuse pattern of migration 'modernized' populations outside of Africa in what has been called the assimilationist model.

Regardless of how it occurred, modern humans from Africa, in some sense, reconnected geographically widespread populations or individuals of *Homo*, bringing them into one population – modern humans, while simultaneously, perhaps, making it possible to colonize uninhabited regions.

During this process, modern *Homo sapiens* also went through a range of adaptations to different climates and other environmental factors. Some genetic variants would have conferred advantage to their populations if they helped protect them in new environments. New groups that split off often did not have a genetic profile representative of the parental population, and thus were founders of 'new' populations. This process, called serial founder effect, occurred repeatedly while populations were simultaneously being affected by adaptations to the physical environment – and as people moved further and further away. Serial founder effect is a special case of *genetic drift*, which in general is the term for a descendant population not being genetically representative of the

ancestral population. (Genetic drift can also be observed when descendant populations are notably smaller than parental ones: the smaller size has not captured the full range of variation of the ancestral group.) New mutations and other changes in the genes also occurred during this migration in these new populations. Overall, these processes contributed to the biological background of living humans as a group. With distance, different ecologies and time, various degrees of relationships emerged between populations as well as different patterns of genetic variation. At the species level, basic genetic variation can be summed up as clinal variation – directional variation in genes or characters over geography (e.g. skin colour), networks of relationships – genealogical connections at varying levels between and within populations, and clusters – groupings of populations which can change depending on the data that are used. These processes of mutation, gene flow, adaptation, and genetic drift are the primary forces of human evolution.

It is important to remember that genetic variation accumulated for tens of thousands of years, likely more than 100,000, *within* Africa, before modern people left Africa to settle the world in a sustained fashion – around 60,000 to 70,000 years ago. Considering that modern humans apparently lived in different parts of Africa from north to south, it can be expected that, early on, this genetic variation exhibited some geographical patterning, especially in autosomal DNA. This is implicitly verified by studies which indicate that some Africans are more similar to non-Africans than to other Africans (e.g. Ning Yu et al., 2002), even when 'African' is restricted to 'sub-Saharan' populations. This can be inferred from other genetic data as well. Modern humans most likely exited Africa via Egypt. Given this total picture, it is to be expected that people in some regions of Africa would be more genetically similar in some ways to populations outside of Africa (southwest Asia/'Near East') than they are to some populations within Africa, since Africa was the proximate source of the non-Africans. There are many levels to population history.

Regions and difference – the Sahara as place and marker

The study of living African populations has often been based on treating the Sahara as an absolute barrier and one that has always existed in its current state. The notion of race has been connected to this divide. Africa and African countries have usually been divided into 'North Africa' and 'sub-Saharan Africa', although these terms are not equivalents or even symmetrical. 'Sub-Saharan'

is used in multiple ways, including some related to cultural stereotyping. Geographically, this use is inconsistent since some countries so designated are actually largely in the Sahara (e.g. Mali, Niger) considering that its southern border is around 15-16 degrees latitude N. Others, called 'North African' are Saharan, and still others which are clearly 'sub-Saharan' have been referred to as not being sub-Saharan (e.g. Somalia). Sub-Saharan also has been used in ways to suggest that it is the only 'real Africa', and can be found in studies from various disciplines. These phrases ignore diversity within the regions and come from a form of stereotyping racialist thought, and categorical thinking that stems from a section of older discourse. The phrase 'Black Africa' is sometimes used as a synonym for 'sub-Saharan Africa', or just Africa. The phrase 'Black Africa' also has no true analog that is widely used for any other continent, and like the term 'Negro' should be abandoned without apology. 'North Africa' is used in a way to imply a disconnected region of Africa that is not really Africa. The term even gets used in studies of early humans, thus projecting a cultural practice back into the past. The idea that authentic Africans are only those that have a restricted sub-Saharan profile or locale is problematic on many grounds. Critical scholarship should look to developing different terminologies free of the biased worldview of an 'older' scholarship.

The Sahara can be usefully treated as a region of its own. This offers new possibilities for description. The terms Saharan, infra-Saharan and supra-Saharan could be used and clearly have the advantage of not carrying cultural and political baggage. The Sahara has always been traversable, with greater or lesser effort, and currently contains human communities in spite of its aridity. In the early Holocene, the Sahara was home to numerous hunting and later pastoralist communities, which influenced developments in the Nile Valley from Egypt to Sudan, and in other circum-Saharan regions. Most of Egypt is actually in the Sahara. There is evidence that can be interpreted as indicating genetic and cultural exchange between the early populations of the Sahara at different times, separated in patchy distribution in what could be called a meta-population. In an early phase of human history more than 10,000 years ago, the Sahara was also more hospitable, and there are indications of movement through it as suggested earlier.

There are other options for new descriptive terminology. Tropical Africa, a term of long-standing use but not fully appreciated or consistently used, is defined as being between the tropics of Capricorn and Cancer, and actually encompasses a large part of the Sahara. The northern tropic passes through southern Egypt and the Saharan portions of other countries that border the

Mediterranean. 'Tropical Africa' is not the geographical equivalent of infra-Saharan since it includes a portion of the desert. The term also could be modified in ways to speak of regions above and below it (e.g. supra-Tropical Africa, sub-Tropical Africa, which, interestingly, have similar climates). A similar situation sometimes has occurred with other regions of Africa, such as uses of 'East Africa' that would exclude the Horn region (Ethiopia, Somalia, part of Sudan), in regard to which similar critiques can be made.

'Race' and population

A discussion of 'race' is useful, given the persistent use of this word and a world of increasing social division. The interest here is in biological notions of race, since there has been an increasing trend to use 'race' and 'racism' in reference to all sorts of difference, conflicts and oppression. Historically, race and racial groups were based on external appearance (phenotype) and this still operates in various situations. The conceptualization of 'race', as is commonly understood by many, implies that all individuals in a group designated as a race are more biologically similar, in all ways, than they are to others of a different race. This conceptualization includes the idea that a race consists of individuals who exclusively share all lines of descent from common 'racial' ancestors. Sometimes the phenotype was defined very narrowly and included a number of very specific characteristics, called a type. This uniformity and notion of type could be applied to molecular biology, such that there is an expectation that certain genes 'belong' with certain phenotypes, or that variation. (Sometimes this situation is encountered with certain Eastern Africans.)

Recent genetic discoveries have shown that none of these ideas are true when examined closely for what used to be called 'the major three races' (Keita et al., 2004; Keita and Kittles, 1997). Geographical patterning of human variation exists, but not in a way that is consistent with the ideas behind the term 'race' as used by many people, and sometimes historically in science. The notion of race, and terms associated with racial classifications, are to be rejected on scientific and ethical grounds, but this has yet to be accomplished. Race is a legitimate biological rank in taxonomy – usually held to be the equivalent to subspecies, but it does not apply to living humans. (It should be noted that the term 'race' is also used in various countries to describe social or demographic groupings based on the possession of degrees of ancestry or appearance, or wealth irrespective of ancestry; this is not considered here.) It can be said that currently all humans belong to one race (subspecies) and one species.

Modern evolutionary taxonomy and Charles Darwin's concept of subspecies do not support the idea that modern humans divide into 'races' or subspecies. Darwin in essence suggested that for a population ('variety') of any animal species to be designated a subspecies (race), there must be evidence for incipient speciation. No living human populations meet the criteria needed to be called an 'incipient species'. Some researchers have confused the ability to often make a correct identification based on genetics of an individual into a pre-defined population. This idea has been effectively criticized and can be rejected (Maglo et al., 2016). The level of differentiation required to make such an identification is less than that needed to identify races. *There are populations, but no races.* Furthermore, nearly all individuals are distinct enough that they can be genetically distinguished and identified, even from family members and other members of groups to which they 'belong', yet obviously this does not make each individual a 'race'.

All human populations are related, but to different degrees, which can change over time. Individuals from different populations may be similar in biologically important ways, such as blood and tissue type, but not be related. In contrast, individuals may be family members (i.e. closely related), and not have the genetic profile that would allow for a blood transfusion or organ transplantation. The populations designated by cultural names, or even geography, can be thought of as being dynamic processes at the molecular and people levels. Population relationships can be influenced by intermarriage and ongoing gene exchange. The greater the gene exchange, the more related the populations become over time, although this does not mean that their geography, culture or identity will necessarily change. Foreign individuals and populations may leave descendants in a different population, but their fate and identity depend on social rules. An example would be the well-accepted Inuit male descendants of Matthew Henson and Robert Peary – who bear their surnames, and may carry 'African' and 'European' Y chromosomes that are now in the context of a largely Inuit autosomal background in their 'original' environment. An ancient example serves to illustrate this as well: recall that Alexander (of Macedonia) advised his men to marry local women after his conquest of Egypt. Social rules, socialization, history and geography determine social identity in these cases – but this 'identity' does not negate the reality of the complex ancestry. Interestingly, all human populations or regions are spaces that are part of networks with multiple ancestors.

Returning to an earlier point, it has been observed that a group originally biologically distinct may retain its notion of a singular 'ethnic' (sociocultural) identity despite significant intermarriage or assimilation of others that bring or

reinforce notable physical variation. Examples would be the Native American populations who incorporated Europeans during the early colonization of the United States, the Garifuna Native Americans who assimilated West Africans, or Muslim communities in some Near Eastern countries who intermarried with various foreigners. It is also possible for a physically distinctive group to change its culture and language with little intermarriage. Other groups that appear physically homogeneous to the eye, may in fact have had physically and molecularly different ancestors in the distant past, a point relevant to the issue of the genealogical connection of African regions. Cultural values may encourage marriages to people with particular phenotypes (physical appearance), but such rules are often broken, may not have always existed, and can change. Furthermore, similar physical appearances do not imply the same deep ancestral lineages – which are often studied in a fragmented way. Human memory is limited, and not all ancestors, or even changes in identity, are necessarily remembered, recorded or understood, over the history we acknowledge.

The Y chromosome as a genealogical marker

Genes, the stretches of DNA forming the molecular units of inheritance passed on from ancestors, can provide some information about population history and relationships, but not all complex interactions of humans. Genes are found in the chromosomes in the cell's nucleus and the mitochondria, sometimes called the power plant of the cell. The mitochondrial genes and Y chromosome are called 'uniparental'. The Y chromosome, which determines male sex, has several properties that make it useful in assessing genealogical relationships, as well as aspects of individual and population history and migration (Jobling and Tyler-Smith, 2003). In addition to being only transmitted from father to son, this chromosome has a region whose genes only change through mutations and does not get contributions from the mother, which is usually the case. The documented mutations on the Y chromosome seem to have occurred only once, and are called unique event polymorphisms (UEPs), and in this case are usually what are called single nucleotide polymorphisms (or SNPs, pronounced 'snips').

It is possible to determine the sequence of appearance of these polymorphisms in relationship to each other and generate a genealogy of ancestors and descendants. Direct ancestors and descendants are linked by shared mutations. Over time, some distant descendants retain mutations from previous ancestors and develop new mutations that make them a little different. The occurrence or

absence of some polymorphisms with others allows the description of ancestor-descendant groups or lineages, akin to family branches. The resulting description is a kind of family tree called a phylogeny. Some polymorphisms, going back to the beginning of modern humans, are shared by nearly all men. Others that occurred later, are only shared by more recent groups of descendants. The genealogical lines defined by a mutation, called haplogroups or clades, may have branches, sometimes called subclades. The major ancestor-descendant clades that have been described are called haplogroups. The terms may vary with context but can be easily understood. The names for the described haplogroups/lineages have undergone various revisions, but the basic major groups have retained their names which are designated by letters of the alphabet. The notation used here is one version. The mutation designations are commonly understood.

Y chromosome genealogical trees have been constructed from samples of men from around the world. There are trees as well from various regions and subregions of the world. The major families and sub-families (haplogroups and clades) are discussed here in terms of either their letter names, such as E or A, or their mutations designated by a letter or a number. At the global level, the Y chromosome tree can be said to have three major divisions (Figure 1). These three major haplogroups, or macro-haplogroups, are defined by mutations that occurred in Africa, illustrating the African origins of modern humans. One classification calls them A, BT and CT, and another A, BCDEF and CDEF. The mutations associated with the A haplogroup are the oldest. Haplogroup A is unique in that, unlike others, its members do not share a single defining ancestral mutation.

Figure 1 shows that all living human males are related, but that some are more closely related than others in terms of the Y chromosome genealogy. Most geographical populations (small or large) have a mixture of lineages from within a haplogroup, and some from across haplogroups. What makes genealogy different over time, is that new mutations have occurred, and not all ancestors and descendants have those new genes. In fact, a new mutation indicates the beginning of a new family within a family. Certain variations that emerge later distinguish groups, and by focusing on those differences we can define a kind of 'family' which would be the same as the haplogroups already mentioned. There is something else that is very interesting about the human Y tree: traits like a dark or light skin colour are found in populations with males who are not closely genealogically related, but also in those who share the same lineage. There are people in haplogroup C – from Melanesia and other territories in the Pacific – who have a dark skin colour and hair form similar to some of those in A, B and E, found predominantly in Africa. There are males in haplogroup

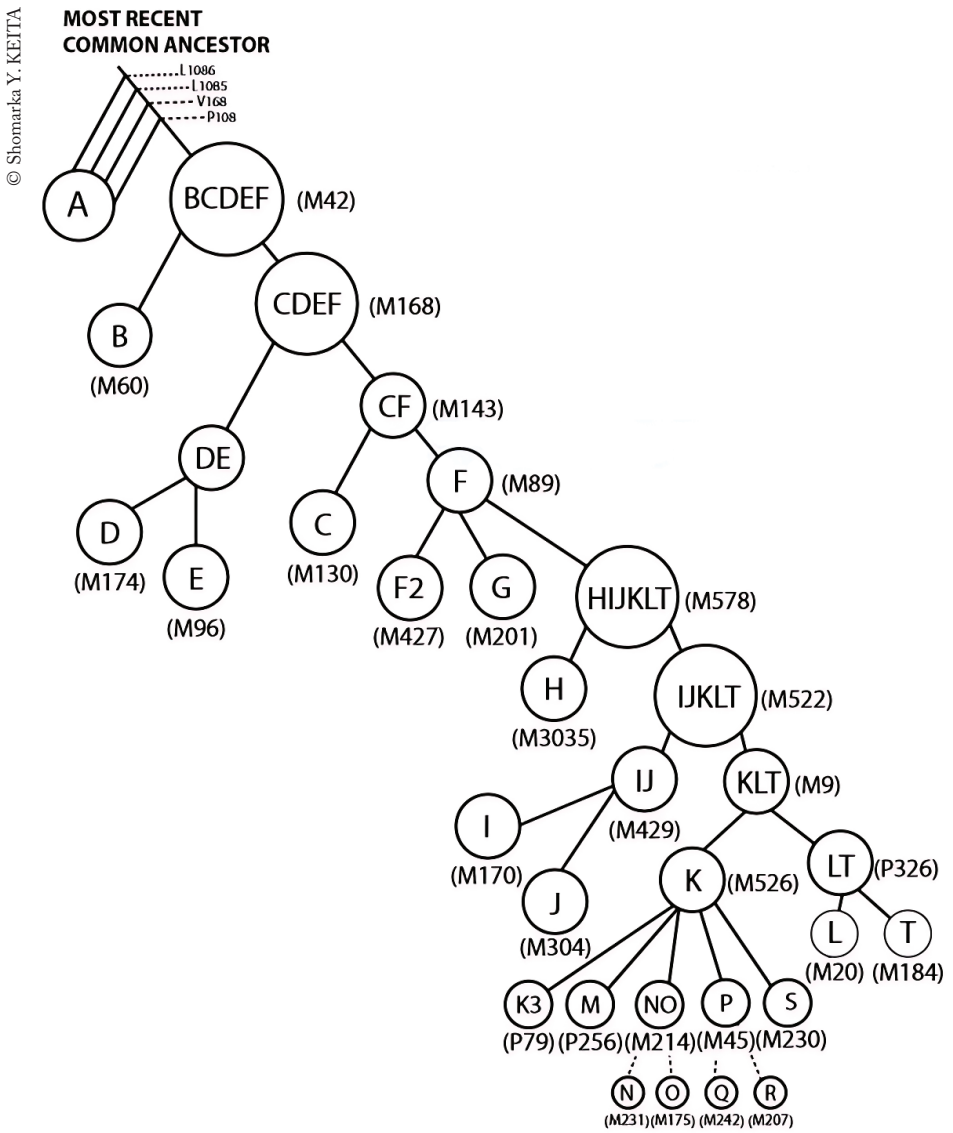


Figure 1. *Schematic of the human Y chromosome genealogy or 'family tree' showing the major haplogroups*

Note: A and B are largely restricted to Africa and are the most ancient. E is predominant in Africa where it emerged and found in all regions, but R, J and O have high frequencies in some regions.

R, E and F who have light to 'white' skin who live in Europe, Africa and Asia, but some have very dark skin as well. Hair form varies in haplogroup E and C. The CDEF haplogroup defined by mutation M168, and once mistakenly called the 'Eurasian Adam' by some, is actually an 'Afroeurasian' Adam, since most human (males), including most Africans, have the M168 polymorphism. Given that modern humans seemed to have reached Australia early via Asia, the term 'Afroaustraloeurasian Adam' would also be consistent with the evidence, since Europe was initially settled from Asia. Given the early and longstanding interactions between Africa and the Asian Arabian-Levantine region, one could also speak of an Africasia – as a unit – that would be as informative, or more so as the term 'Eurasia', depending on what is being researched. The idea that there is simply Africa and Eurasia is problematic, on reflection. The study of haplogroup distributions is called phylogeography. Taking into consideration the time of origin of the E haplogroup, and the phylogeography of its subclades, it seems that Africa's regions are interconnected, via its men.

The E and other haplogroups

Broadly speaking, the current evidence suggests that the E haplogroup has a greater overall frequency and distribution in Africa than any other haplogroup (Figures 2 and 3). This is significant in that it indicates a genealogical connection cutting across geography, language families, ethnicities and physical traits found in the people of the continent. It is, however, also important to note that the older haplogroups A and B are found scattered from supra-Saharan to far south infra-Saharan Africa, in varying frequencies (Batini et al., 2011; Scozzari et al., 2014) and are largely restricted to Africa. All of these observations have implications for deep time African interconnections (Figures 2 and 3).

Place of origin, and place of greatest length of history can be separated. Haplogroup E is defined by the M96 SNP (and others), for which a cautious reading of all of the evidence would indicate an eastern tropical African origin (Cruciani, 2007; Gomes et al., 2010; Trombetta et al., 2015). E, meaning M96, may be around 50,000 years old, but such dates are only approximations. However, it postdates the migration out of Africa. The history of the E haplogroup is also primarily African, although there were migrants to Europe and Asia at different times (Cruciani, 2007). It is also likely that the mutation antecedent to the E haplogroup, called DE or Yap (M145), originated in Africa as well, because the diversity of populations bearing the E haplogroup is greater than most populations

in the world, including the D haplogroup, which shares the Yap mutation (the 'father' mutation) with the E haplogroup. Such diversity would seem to indicate that E is older. It can be postulated that D arose later from an unchanged ancestral Yap which had been taken to Asia. Evidence from archaeology for a definitive population movement into Africa at or near the time of the Yap's origin is lacking. The totality of evidence best supports an African origin.

Associations made between genetics and languages do not necessarily mean that they arrived at the same time, brought by the same population, but in the case of the E haplogroup there are some associations in the context of other data that may indicate the spread of languages, peoples and genes together (Gebremeskel and Ibrahim, 2014), at least in some instances. Any such association is usually casual, not causal. There are other haplogroups in Africa, for example J in the Mediterranean and Red Sea coastal regions, as well as O in Madagascar, that show contact with Europe and Asia, as would be expected, but the plurality of lineages when many studies are considered, show the prominence of the E haplogroup. Some of the non-E haplogroups emerged multiple times. The R haplogroup, specifically R1, is found in very high frequencies in central Saharan Africa, in some of the groups of certain branches speaking languages of the Afrasan (Afro-Asiatic) and Nilo-Saharan families. R1 perhaps first came from south-west Asia (the 'Near East') during the Paleolithic, some 20,000 years ago. This was before the emergence of known language families, according to most scholars, and most certainly any known ethnic groups. Its bearers were assimilated into local African populations and spread by the later migration of these groups, but there are other possible scenarios for its spread. There is evidence for a later migration of R1 bearers after the differentiation of language families, but curiously, even in populations with the highest frequencies (e.g. Teda/Tubu), there are no reported loanwords datable to Near Eastern language families from the correct time depth. Some younger subclades of R1 apparently arose in Africa.

The first two 'descendants' of the E-M96 are the groups defined by the mutations P-147 and M75, identifying the E1 and E2 haplogroups, respectively. Geographically, this initial split seems to have occurred in eastern tropical Africa (i.e. between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, possibly in an infra-Saharan area). Today E2 is primarily found in East and Southern Africa but has a presence in Central and West Africa. E1 has a wider distribution because its descendants, through several mutations (its 'grandsons'), account for the majority of males in Africa. For example, the E1a-M33 reaches a high frequency in the savanna and sahel regions of West Africa, with other males in this region having an E lineage (E1b1a) defined by the V38/M2 polymorphism,

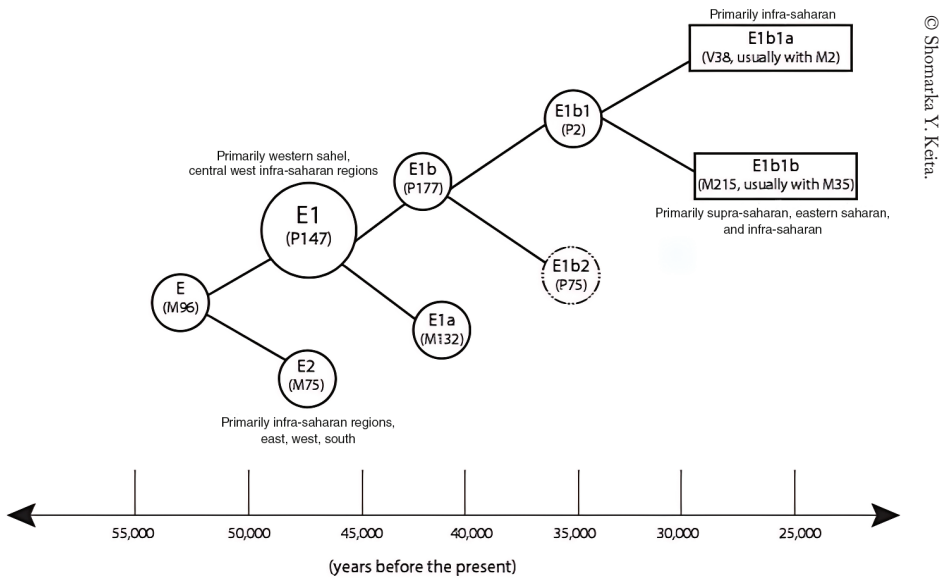


Figure 2. *The E macrophaplogroup 'family tree' defined by M96*

Note: The well accepted mutations that define haplogroups or lineages within E are shown in parentheses. Based on the literature, the estimated approximate dates of the origin of the mutations, but not spread, are given in years before the present. Current evidence indicates that most mutations likely arose in eastern tropical Africa. Current distributions for the major "terminal" haplogroups are given: E2, E 1 a, E 1b1 a, E 1b1 b. In general most populations and regions have more than one lineage and even major haplogroups.

and sometimes other E and other lineages. The 'brother' of E1a, E1b (defined by the mutation P-177), has two 'descendants' – E1b2 (defined by P-75), which is rare and poorly documented, and the lineage E1b1 (defined by PN2 or P2), which accounts for most of the male lineages in Africa and is ancestral to lineages V38/M2 and the M215/M35.1. The V38/M2 polymorphism is found in high frequency in most tropical Africa but has been found in low frequencies in supra-Saharan and northern Saharan Africa.

The P2/215/M35.1 (E1b1b), for short M35, likely also originated in eastern tropical Africa, and is predominantly distributed in an arc from the Horn of Africa up through Egypt, over to Morocco and Mauretania, with evidence of early migration by sea to Europe during the Paleolithic. An E1b1b sub-lineage (characterized by M78) was likely taken into Asia (the Near East) by speakers of an early Afrasan branch ancestral to the Semitic language family, which emerged in the Near East. Currently it is not found in very high frequencies

in Asia, but it is possible that the early presence there was another source for southern Europe, travelling there with the migration of some Neolithic farmers.

Interestingly, and for some unexpectedly, in terms of older ideas about living African populations and 'race', the P2 mutation is a distant descendant of M96, deep within the E haplogroup family tree. P2's (E1b1's) immediate ancestors and their siblings are all found in tropical Africa. This is important in that it shows a primary connection between males from all over Africa, including supra-Saharan western Africa and Egypt. Significantly, the E haplogroup does not split at its base into two different macro-populations that occupy different sides of the Sahara, as might be anticipated based on old ideas about African human variation – a 'white' and 'black' Africa – and traditional 'racial' taxonomy. The E1 and E2 split apparently occurred in tropical Africa. Both regions, including one often implied to be 'non-African', are marked by a mutation/ancestor deep within the E family tree, whose members are distributed across the continent. None of the regions or sub-regions – east, west, south or north – has only one lineage, although some are remarkable in having a strong predominance of one or two lineages or sub-lineages. Most living populations have multiple lineages, either mixtures of E sub-lineages, or mixtures of E and other different haplogroup lineages, or both. A good example of this in Africa is Egypt, where a great diversity of lineages was found in some reviews (Keita, 2005). In this regard, the genetic profile of Ramses III is also of interest. One can see in Pharaoh Ramses III (20th Dynasty) a local variant physiognomy that may represent a desert adaptation associated with the E1b1a Y lineage (Hawass et al., 2012), common in infra-Saharan regions, and an autosomal background also associated with tropical African regions (and others) based on a narrow set of markers (Martin, 2013). This is not surprising in the complex place that is Egypt.

The current distribution of older and younger Y lineages indicates that at one time populations in Africa migrated in varying directions and came to overlap in many regions. It has to be remembered, based on their age, that in some sense haplogroups A and B are earlier modern human haplogroups whose existence has been primarily preserved in Africa – and are now called 'African.' These haplogroups are found in high frequency in groups that include peoples who still employ hunting and gathering as a part of their subsistence strategies, in infra-Saharan regions as well as some others. The E haplogroup, which more likely than not originated in tropical eastern Africa, came to make up the plurality or majority of existing lineages in the four quadrants of Africa. Statistically removing the impact of known migrations into Africa would raise the frequencies even higher. These migrations would include those from eras associated with the Carthaginians, Greco-Romans

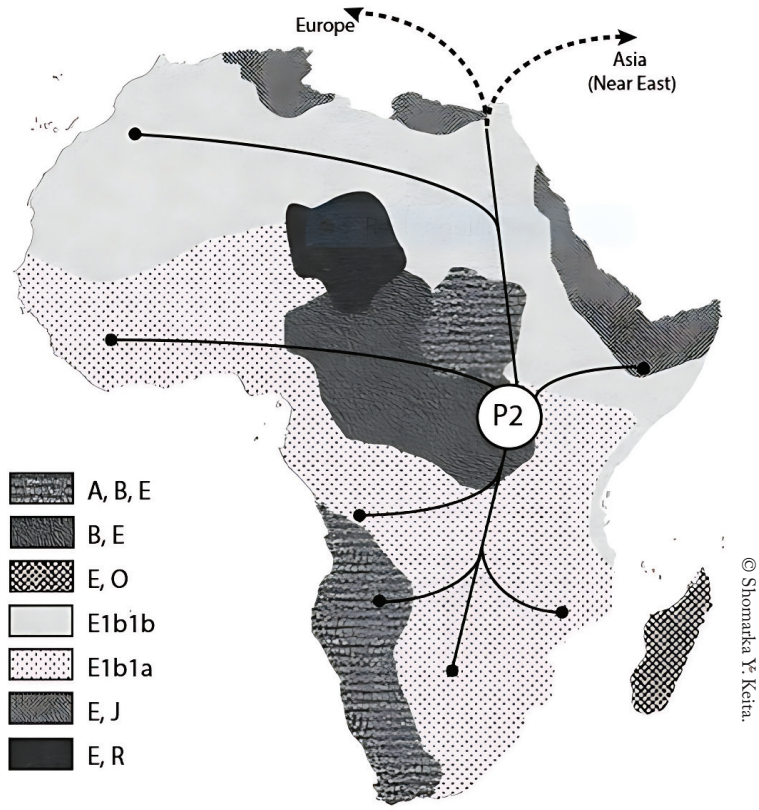


Figure 3. *Rough map of predominant distributions of most prominent haplogroups in mainland Africa and Madagascar*

Note: Regions and populations have multiple lineages. E/P2 'descendants' are the majority or plurality of the E haplogroup. E 1 a and E2 are more scattered. Migrants took the E haplogroup to Europe and Asia. Other haplogroups are common in, Saharan, supra-Saharan Africa and the Hom region: R, central Sahara and infra-Saharan; J in supra-Saharan Africa and the Hom, O in Madagascar. All quadrants of Africa have a mixture of lineages. Lines do not convey paths of migration.

and Islam. It can be said that the E haplogroup connects the regions of Africa via its males and illustrates a deep genealogical relationship. Dates of the earliest migrations of E-bearing populations to various regions are not clear, but they were likely to have been before the Holocene. Migrations after the emergence of current language families, and later formation of food-producing, and then variously organized societies, spread lineages between African communities, as well to some communities from Asia. As noted, other haplogroups were brought to Africa; some developed unique mutations, making them endogenous in the sense discussed.

Conclusion

Africa is the place of emergence of modern humans, both anatomically and behaviourally, in the view of most researchers. Due to a long history and geographical range from east, north and south, there was likely genetic geographical variation early in human history (within Africa). Male Y chromosome genealogy reveals that most, but not all, indigenous/endogenous men from all over Africa, in some sense form an ancient family group that dates to a time after modern humans left Africa. The various regions are broadly interconnected by descent from men bearing the E haplogroup, specifically one of its subgroups. These are genealogical ties that cut across populations, languages and physical characteristics, and reveal connections obscured by traditional racial thinking and its taxonomic implications. Populations having noteworthy frequencies of the older haplogroups A and B are found scattered in Saharan and infra-Saharan regions, as well as in low frequencies in supra-Saharan/Saharan Africa. These represent a more ancient story and genealogically connect to the bearers of the E haplogroup at an older date. The populations bearing 'old' lineages and mutations are not living fossils. It is merely the case that their bodies are repositories for very ancient genetic history. The distribution of all of these genealogies/haplogroups indicates several layers of population history across various geographical and cultural (including linguistic) spaces. All of the root mutations emerged before current ethnic groups and language families. The relationship of these genealogies with the different layers of biology and culture can be assessed with other genetic markers, and this mission is something for critical historians and scientists to further explore, elucidate and interpret.

The R haplogroup at different times was assimilated into ancient Africa and became a part of its biological history in populations that also have other lineages. Later, and often known or postulated migrations during more recent times, brought other haplogroups, such as J and its siblings, into the northeastern quadrant and supra-Saharan Africa, and O into Madagascar. These also have a history of being assimilated into an African physical and social environment to different degrees, thus becoming a part of Africa's endogenous populations. The Y chromosome evidence suggests migrations at various times that led to temporal layering and fusion in assimilation, as well as – sometimes – to the displacement of groups or the occupation of new territory. Most regionally defined populations have multiple Y lineages that overall could be described as a network, or reticulum, connecting peoples and places. The regions of Africa are thus connected, in a primary sense, via ancient genealogical relationships of its men, primarily via the E haplogroup.

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CHAPTER 3

LINGUISTIC MAP AND CLASSIFICATION OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES

Roger Blench

Introduction

African languages represent nearly a third of all the languages spoken in the world today. Apart from their incalculable value as intangible human heritage, they represent a rich source of information on the history of the continent. Their intricate and interlocking distribution correspond to both the archaeological and cultural map of the continent. Research on the classification of African languages was given its most important boost by the work of American anthropologist and linguist Joseph Greenberg (1963), but the explosion of data in recent decades has stimulated a constant process of reclassification and revision. This chapter presents a synthesis of current views; however, it must be emphasized that there remains much debate with a notable lack of consensus on this issue.

African languages are conventionally divided into four continental phyla (language families): Niger-Congo, Nilo-Saharan, Afroasiatic and Khoisan, as well as Austronesian on Madagascar (Blench, 2006; Greenberg, 1963). Two of these phyla have significant numbers of speakers outside Africa; Afroasiatic, because of the expansion of Arabic northwards and eastwards, and Austronesian, which is mainly centred on South-East Asia and Oceania. Using the estimates from *Ethnologue* (Lewis et al., 2016), there are around 2,139 African languages spoken today. Language numbers are distributed very unevenly across the phyla (Table 1).

Table 1. *Numbers of African languages by phylum*

Phylum	Number	Source
Niger-Congo	1537	Lewis et al. (2016)
Nilo-Saharan	206	Lewis et al. (2016)
Afro-asiatic	318* (i.e. 376-58)	Lewis et al. (2016)*
Khoisan	(70)	Güldemann and Vossen (2013)
Kx'a	4	Lewis et al. (2016)
Khoï	13	Lewis et al. (2016)
Tuu	2	Lewis et al. (2016)
Austronésien	1 (in Africa)	Lewis et al. (2016)
Isolates	4	Blench (2017)

*Tabulated by deducting non-African lects

Source: © Blench Roger.

Table 2. *Types of classifications applied to African languages*

Phyla category	Sens
Genetic	Languages that share a common ancestor
Typological	Languages that share common features (phonological, morphological, etc.) but which have no necessary genetic connection
Areal	
Referential	Systems that assign a classification purely for ease of reference.

Source: © Blench Roger.

In the case of Khoesan, many languages became extinct in historic times, and only inadequately transcribed data remain. Table 1 provides the figure from Vossen (2013), which includes languages for which records exist, but also the *Ethnologue* figures for living languages, divided into three distinct branches. New Niger-Congo languages continue to be reported every year, although none of these have radically challenged existing classifications.

The classification of African language phyla has a wayward history, in part because of the simultaneous use of very different paradigms. There are four main categories that can be distinguished (Table 2).

This division into phyla owes much to the work of Joseph Greenberg (1963), although there have been many changes and additions since his proposals were

first set out. The coherence of the first three phyla is generally accepted among scholars, although single, authoritative sources providing the type of proof usual to Indo-Europeanist or Austronesianist circles are lacking. This has led some non-Africanists to consider these phyla to be undemonstrated, and perhaps no more than a series of independent groupings exhibiting contact characteristics. Debate on the unity of Khoesan swings back and forth, partly because of the inadequate documentation of so many languages, and partly because of the wayward transcription of clicks (e.g. Westphal, 1962, 1963). In the 1980s, most Khoesanists considered that Southern African Khoesan did form a group (Traill, 1986; Voßen, 1997). However, more recent syntheses revert back to the prior model of three phyla (Honken, 2013).

This chapter reviews recent understanding of the composition of the major African phyla. It is not possible to present a consensus view, nor even in the space available, to indicate in any detail the disagreements between scholars. These can be followed up by consulting the references.

Nilo-Saharan

The Nilo-Saharan languages stretch from Tanzania to Mauritania, with isolated pockets of speakers found in Upper Egypt. Nilo-Saharan has the distinction of being the 'youngest' of the world's language phyla to be identified; prior to Greenberg (1963, 1971), there was no literature suggesting that a disparate group of languages stretching across Africa constituted a single phylum. Indeed, Tucker and Bryan (1966) treat many Nilo-Saharan languages as 'isolated units'. The first monograph on the phylum is Schadeberg (1981a), followed by Bender (1997) and Ehret (2001). The validity of the phylum has been effectively asserted by a series of Nilo-Saharan conferences, taking place since 1981. However, the internal diversity of Nilo-Saharan is such that doubts about its coherence remain, particularly among non-specialists, but to all intents and purposes it can be treated as established.

Figure 1 shows the modern-day distribution of Nilo-Saharan languages. A striking feature of this phylum is the extreme fragmentation and dispersal of even major subgroups, such as Eastern Sudanic. Part of this may be attributed to the disruptive effects of the slave trade across Central Africa in recent centuries, but it seems likely that this is more pertinently a reflection of the period when group sizes were very small, practised either foraging, pastoralism or a low-input agriculture, and moved freely when climatic or security conditions were unfavourable. Drake et al. (2010) propose that the major engine of Nilo-Saharan

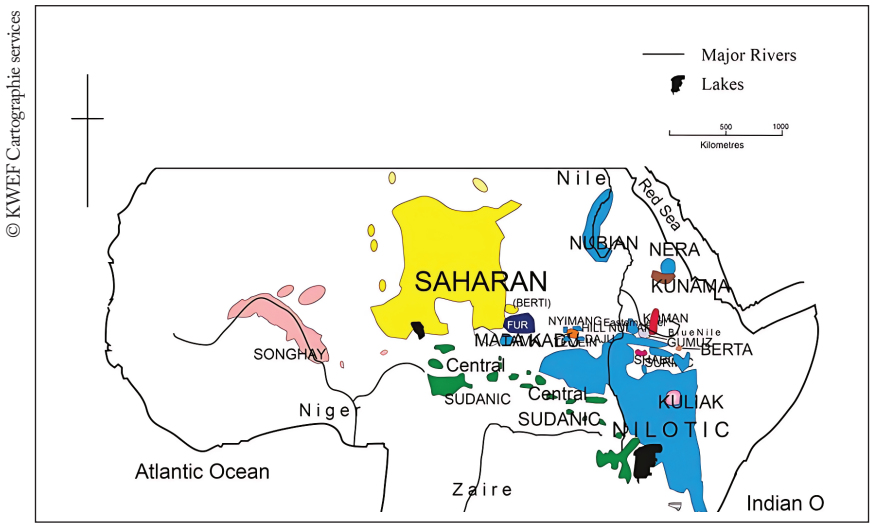


Figure 1. *Nilo-Saharan languages*

dispersal was the expansion of aquatic resources during the 'green Sahara' period, accounting for the isolation of many subgroups.

Greenberg's Nilo-Saharan has undergone considerable expansion and renaming since his first proposal. Greenberg (1963) gives the following groups as Nilo-Saharan:

- Songhay
- Saharan (Kanuri, Teda, Zaghawa, etc.)
- Maban (Maba, etc.)
- Fur
- Chari-Nile (a now unused composite of Eastern and Central Sudanic, Berta and Kunama)
- Koman (Koma, Gumuz, Mao, etc.)

Greenberg (1971) included Meroitic within Nilo-Saharan, although his evidence for this assignation was very tenuous. Despite this, it now seems that this intuition was correct (Rilly and de Voogt, 2012). In addition, the discovery or reclassification of some languages has added further to the complexity of the picture of Nilo-Saharan. Bender (1997) assumes a maximal set of members for Nilo-Saharan as follows:

Songhay	For	Berta	Kuliak
Saharan	East Sudanic	Kunama	Kadu
Maban	Central Sudanic	Gumuz	Koman

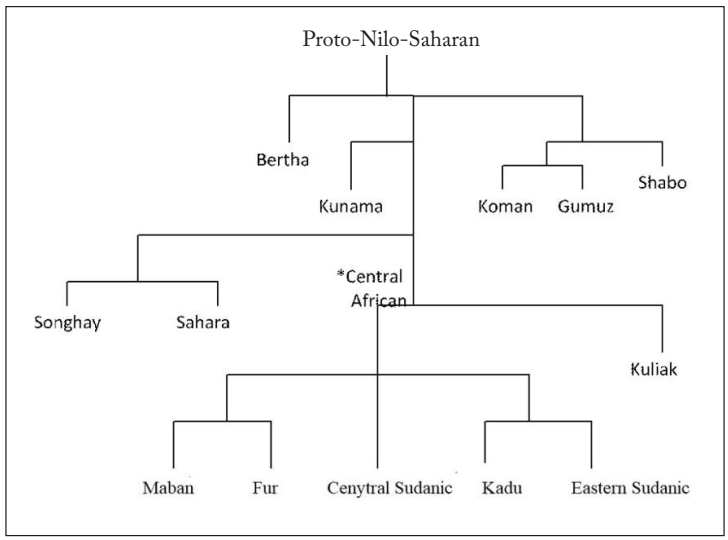


Figure 2. *A proposal for the structure of Nilo-Saharan*

Nilo-Saharan presents a number of striking features by comparison with Niger-Congo. Its branches show no 'nesting'; in other words, they seem to be scattered across Africa, representing a series of individual migrations. Each subgroup shows considerable differences, making lexical cognates and thus reconstructions relevant to early substance hard to detect. Sutton (1977) proposed a correlation between Nilo-Saharan and the 'Aqualithic', a construct relating bone harpoons, ceramics with wavy-line decoration. Drake et al. (2010) relate this to the 'Green Sahara', the expansion of aquatic resources in the Sahara some 12,000 years ago, which was responsible for images of species, such as hippos, in arid regions. This is supported by linguistic reconstructions and suggests the early Nilo-Saharans may have spread west in the pre-agricultural era, seeking rich subsistence resources along the lakes and rivers of the Sahara.

Niger-Congo

Niger-Congo has more languages than any other phylum in the world, and occupies a greater land area than any other African family. It includes the well-known Bantu languages, which are spread over nearly all of Eastern and Southern Africa, although they are only a sub-branch of Niger-Congo. Figure 3 shows the present-day distribution of Niger-Congo languages. If compared with

Nilo-Saharan (Figure 1), one difference is immediately apparent. Niger-Congo languages form large territorial blocks, with much less of the fragmentation and geographical isolation characteristic of Nilo-Saharan. Typically, this suggests both more recent expansions and the gradual spread of more sedentary populations colonizing areas, rather than moving rapidly along line features such as waterways. Nonetheless, Niger-Congo has its own perplexing problems: Why should Bantu have covered such a large area, and how is it that the Kordofanian languages are isolated from the remainder by a large stretch of Nilo-Saharan speakers?

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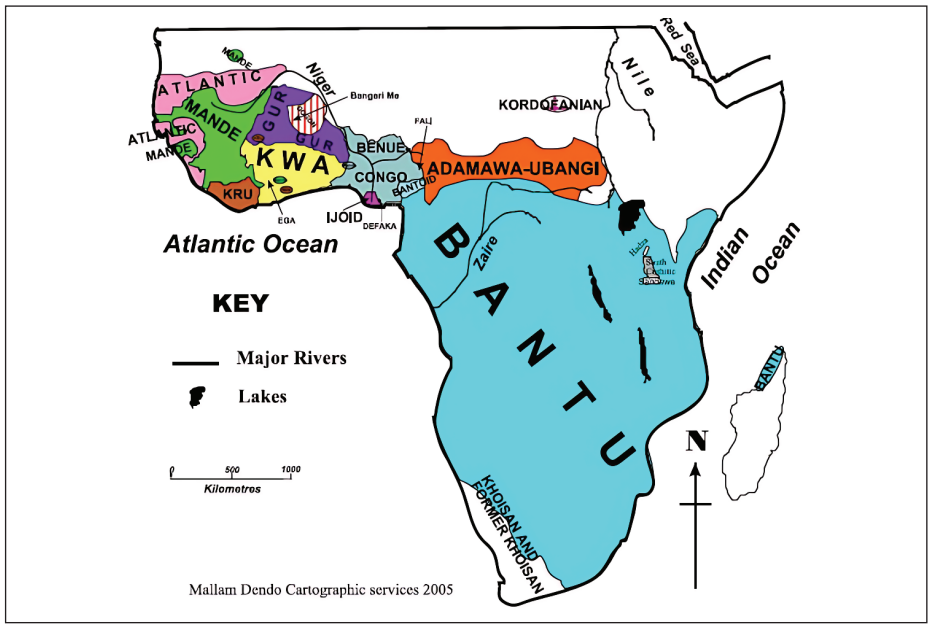


Figure 3. *Niger-Congo languages*

Making a tree of Niger-Congo is no simple task; Niger-Congo has the largest number of languages of any phylum in the world and is far more internally diverse than Austronesian, its nearest counterpart. Formerly accepted groups such as Kordofanian, Kwa and Atlantic have been split into individual branches, which may be independent. There are also clearly isolates, which have no place with established families. No branches of Niger-Congo have a set of generally accepted reconstructions, with even Bantu under attack. Under these circumstances, any tree is likely to be controversial. Nonetheless, it is essential to understanding early Niger-Congo that we model its internal structure, and with suitable caveats, this is presented in Figure 4.

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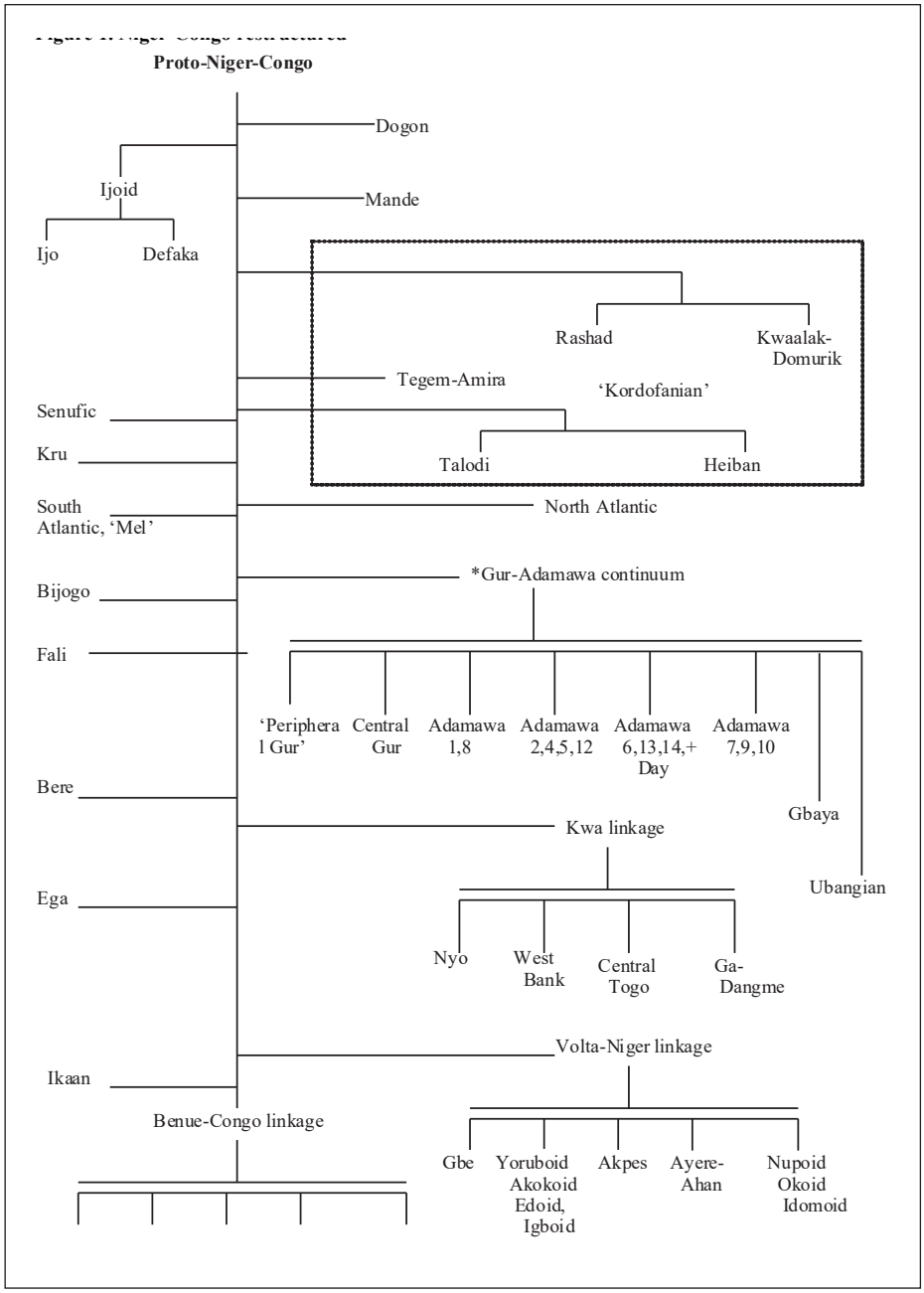


FIGURE 4. *Restructured Niger-Congo*

There are two principles upon which this tree is reconstructed:

a) The languages which retain the fewest Niger-Congo roots are likely to be the earliest to diverge from the tree.
b) Languages lacking common Niger-Congo features, such as noun-classes, verbal extensions and Advanced Tongue Root (ATR) vowels are also likely to be the oldest splits.

In other words, all the features typically assigned to Niger-Congo are in fact characteristic of a meso-language. One of the more puzzling features of Niger-Congo scholarship and African historical linguistics in recent years, are the authors willing to exclude various branches formerly ascribed to it without evidence. For example, Güldemann (2008, p. 176) says that the 'present concept of the stock-level unit Niger-Congo is conceived of narrowly in that the families Kordofanian, Mande, Atlantic, Dogon, and Ijoid are not recognized as established members'. Dimmendaal (2011, p. 321) presents a map of Niger-Congo which excludes Mande, Dogon, Ịjọ and Ubangian, while representing Kordofanian as a unity. Neither of these authors discuss their reasons for these truncated versions of Niger-Congo, and certainly do not argue against authors such as David Dwyer or Kay Williamson, who presented arguments for the inclusion of Mande and Ịjọ.

Bantoid and Bantu represent nested subsets of Benue-Congo, a large and complex group of languages, whose exact membership remains disputed. Originating with Westermann's (1927) *Benue-Cross-Fluss*, it took shape in Greenberg (1963), Williamson (1971) and De Wolf (1971). Benue-Congo was introduced by Greenberg (1963), and Ukaan, a small cluster of languages spoken southwest of the Niger-Benue Confluence, may be part of it. Figure 5 provides a revised subclassification of Benue-Congo languages.

Bendi, previously considered part of Cross River, has been shifted to Bantoid, a change of affiliation proposed by Blench (2010). Benue-Congo is of considerable importance for the understanding of Bantoid, because some languages exhibit features that resurface in Bantu, but which are only attested in fragmentary form or not all in Bantoid. However, the Kainji languages in northwest Nigeria show striking evidence for Bantu-like systems (or more accurately, Bantu retains Kainji-like systems). The conclusion must be that these have to be reconstructed back to this level, and that therefore they must have been present in early Bantoid.

Similarly with noun-classes, Kainji languages show more complete systems than elsewhere in Benue-Congo. These languages have alternating prefixes with alliterative concord and semantic correlates, although no languages show

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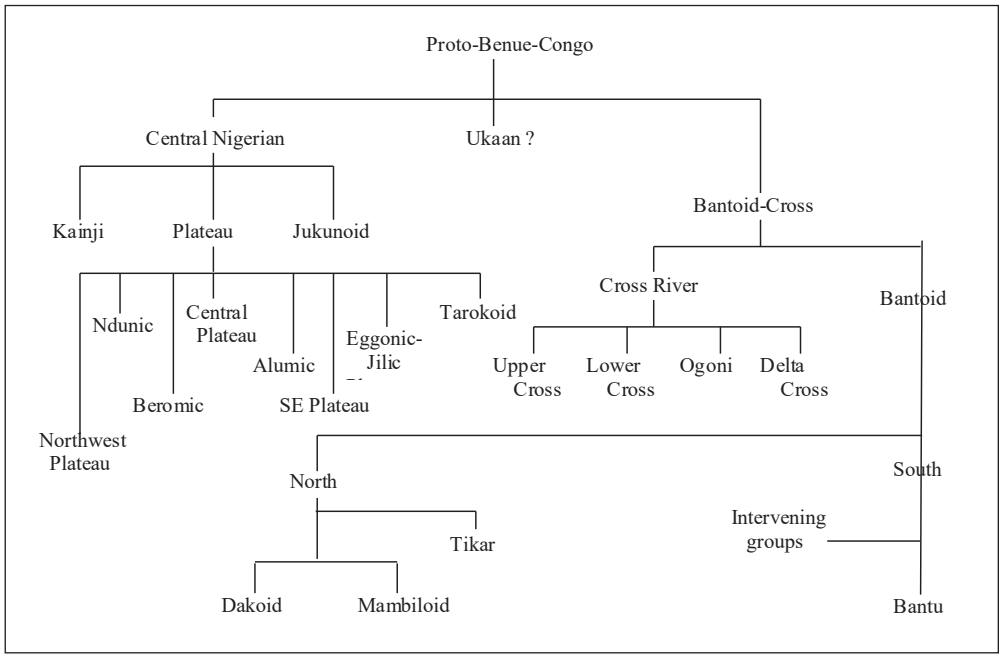


Figure 5. *Revised sub-classification of Benue-Congo languages*

quite the baroque complexity of Bantu. Evidence for many Bantoid languages suggests that noun-classes can be radically restructured, to the point where the correspondences with Bantu are difficult to discern (e.g. Tikar). The likely conclusion is that early Bantoid had a noun-class system, but that it was relatively simple, and that it has gradually evolved through re-analysis and class-splitting to the complex systems found in Bantu today. Languages with no traces of such a system *must* have lost it, despite a lack of segmental evidence for this.

Figure 5 shows the subgroups that 'stand between' Eastern Benue-Congo and Narrow Bantu. The languages represented are very numerous (>200) and also highly diverse morphologically. It seems likely that new languages are yet to be discovered, and more work in historical reconstruction will improve our understanding of how these languages relate to one another. In the absence of more extensive historical linguistics, it is assumed that individual groups split away from a common stem, and developed their own characteristics. The order in which this took place remains controversial, and will take considerable further work to resolve in a satisfying manner. A proposal is presented in Figure 6.

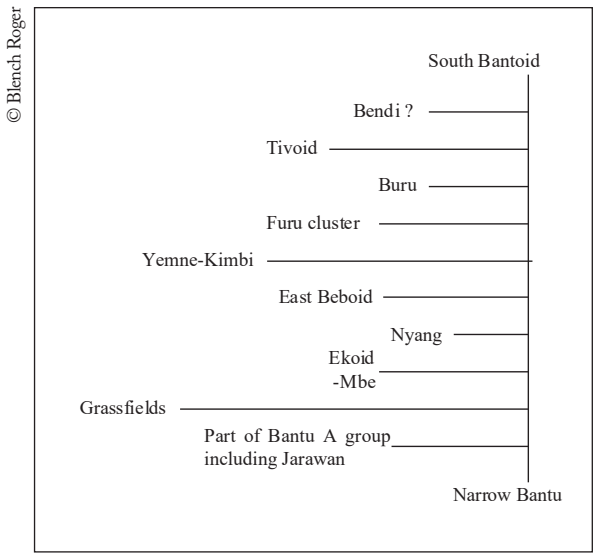


Figure 6. *Proposal for the divergence of Bantu languages*

The Bantu expansion is one of the most striking phenomena in African linguistic history. Apparently around 4,000 years ago, populations in southern Cameroon began a striking and rapid expansion, down the west coast, eastwards along the northern edge of the equatorial forest and across the forest itself, making use of the abundant river systems. Linguistic, palynological, vegetation and climatic evidence concur with archaeology in tracing this movement, but its initial stimulus is still obscure (Bostoen et al., 2015). One suggestion is that the savanna corridors which are attested by early vegetation disturbance may have initially attracted hunters and then agricultural settlement.

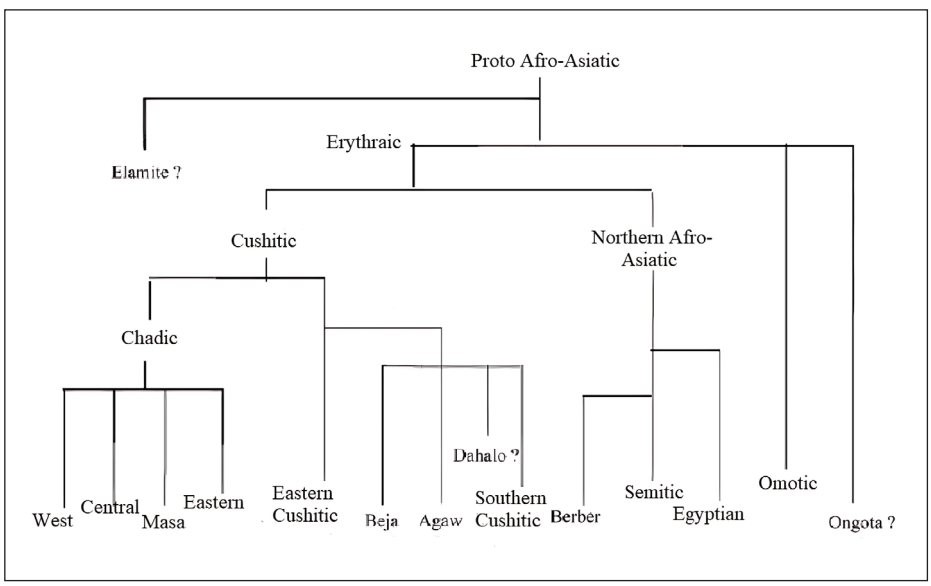
At a larger scale, the reasons for the dispersal of Niger-Congo remain controversial. It is evident that the early phases were pre-agricultural; 'bow', 'arrow' and 'spear' can be reconstructed, but there are no names for crops or domestic animals (Blench, 2006). One proposal is thus that the introduction of the bow is marked by the spread of microlithic points to the southwestern Sahara by 12,000 BP. The archaeological culture known as the Ounanian is recorded in modern-day Mali by 9000-10,000 BP (Raimbault, 1990). An enhanced capacity to bring down large mammals would certainly provide a significant competitive advantage, which might stimulate early language expansions. Somewhat later, the development of canoes may have allowed other branches of Niger-Congo to disperse along West

Africa's waterways. The presence of the Kordofanian languages in a region remote from the core area of Niger-Congo remains a puzzle, especially as most scholars now believe this is not a unitary group. At some point, the waterways that brought Chadic speakers to West Africa from the Nile Basin may have attracted foragers eastwards, ending in the Nuba mountains.

Afroasiatic

The Afroasiatic (Hamito-Semitic, Afrasian) language phylum consists of some 376 languages, spoken mainly in Africa but with extensions of Arabic (its most well-known member) and Aramaic through the Middle East into Russia. The present-day distribution of Afroasiatic languages in Africa have extinct languages such as Ancient Egyptian marked by bracketed names. Their distribution is extremely skewed, since one language, Arabic, has more than 100 million speakers (i.e. as much as all the others combined). Hausa, with up to 25 million speakers, is numerically the next most important. Two competing reconstructions of Afroasiatic have been proposed, ironically published in the same year (Ehret, 1995; Orel and Stolbova, 1995).

The internal structure of Afroasiatic is extremely controversial, with almost every configuration possible being proposed (see detailed review in Blench, 2006). In light of this, Figure 7 presents a compromise proposal.



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Figure 7. *Proposed internal structure for Afroasiatic languages*

A particularly interesting question is whether Elamitic, a language isolate in Ancient Iran, might have been an early branch of Afroasiatic (Blažek, 1999). If so, it argues for an early spread of Afroasiatic prior to Semitic.

Two quite different models of the expansion of Afroasiatic are current in the literature. The existence of ancient written sources for Semitic languages, and the archaeology of the Near East, has suggested to researchers unfamiliar with the African evidence that the Near East was the origin of its dispersal (e.g. Bellwood, 2013). However, this is highly problematic, because all the diversity in Afroasiatic is in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Ethiopia. The Omotic and Cushitic language families are largely in Ethiopia, whereas Chadic, the most diverse branch of Afroasiatic, is spread across the region from Nigeria to Chad. Blench (2014) has argued that the salience of 'fish' in Chadic argues for a migration westwards along the now-arid waterways joining the Nile Basin to Lake Chad. The other striking aspect of the Afroasiatic lexicon is the reconstruction of terms for 'cattle'. All branches except Omotic attest a form similar to **ɬa* for 'cow', and a possible interpretation is that early Afroasiatic speakers began the management of wild cattle in the Egyptian-Sudan borderland some 10,000 years ago, leaving Omotic speakers to cultivate enset (Ethiopian banana) and gather honey (Blench, 2007a).

Khoisan

The Khoisan languages are easily the most problematic phylum in Africa, primarily because the extent to which they constitute a genetic grouping is uncertain. The languages themselves are spoken by small scattered foraging populations in South-western Africa and are under threat from their dominant neighbours. Records suggest the existence of some 100 Khoisan languages, yet only 23 are spoken today. Figure 8 is a composite, showing the distribution of all Khoisan languages spoken either in the present or recent past, and their approximate extent. Many of these languages now have very few speakers, scattered among the migrant Bantu and white populations of Southern Africa.

The Khoisan or 'click' languages in Eastern and Southern Africa are similar to the languages of Australia, in that they are defined by shared phonological and morphological features rather than by an evident common lexicon. Khoisan as presently understood was probably first outlined by Bleek (1956) in her 'Bushman Dictionary', but Greenberg is given credit for the 'Click' language grouping, later renamed macro-Khoisan (Greenberg, 1963). This was the grouping in a

single phylum of all the African languages with 'click' sounds and not otherwise classified (i.e. excluding Southern African Bantu and Dahalo). This joined Hadza and Sandawe in Tanzania with the Khoisan languages of Southern Africa. The link with Sandawe and Hadza is supported by Ehret (1986), but questioned by other Khoisanists (e.g. Elderkin, 1983 for Sandawe; Sands, 1998 for Hadza). Sands' (1998) study of Khoisan relationships has shown that, especially in the case of Hadza, most of the lexical arguments advanced to support its affiliation rest on very doubtful correspondences or erroneous lexical citations.

The language of the Kwadi in Southern Angola is known only from some field notes left by Westphal, and it is doubtful whether any Kwadi speakers exist today. The Kwadi are pictured in Estermann (1976) and they are visibly not of Khoesan physical type. Güldemann (2004, 2008) argues forcefully that Kwadi was indeed related to the Khoe (Central) Khoisan. Certainly, it shares a number of lexical items, although its morphology is very distinctive. Figure 9, Figure 10 and Figure 11 show composite trees adapted from Honken (2013).

Archaeological evidence suggests that people of Khoesan type and culture may have been present in Eastern and Southern Africa for more than 100,000 years, and that those remaining are inheritors of this culture. The click languages of Eastern Africa, such as Hadza, point to the earlier foraging layer which preceded Bantu. However, as Vossen (1997) points out, the expansion of food production

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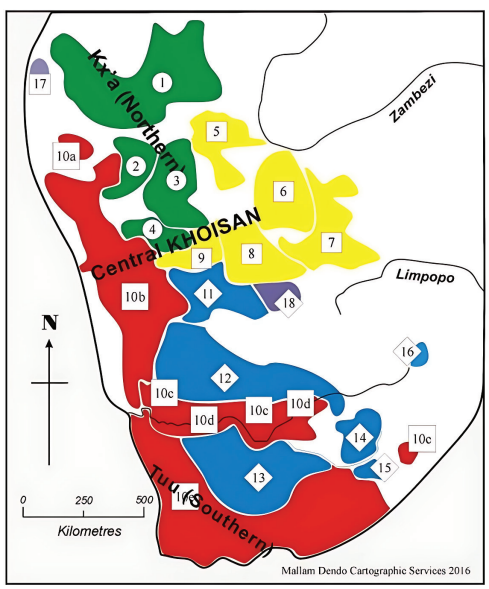
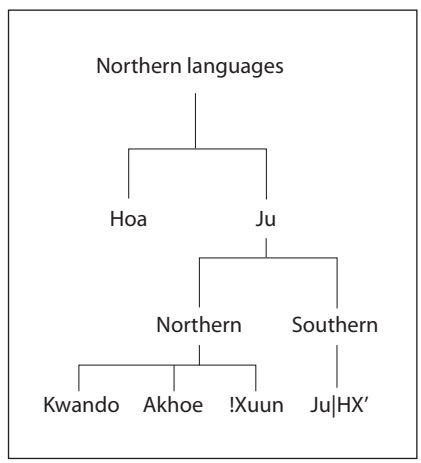


Figure 8. *The Khoisan languages*



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Figure 9. *Northern Khoisan languages (Kx'a)*

occurred perhaps only 2,000 years ago, in contact with Bantu and Cushitic livestock producers. The !Ui-Taa and Kx'a branches of Khoesan are thus older layers, while Khoe is an innovative wave reflecting access to new subsistence strategies.

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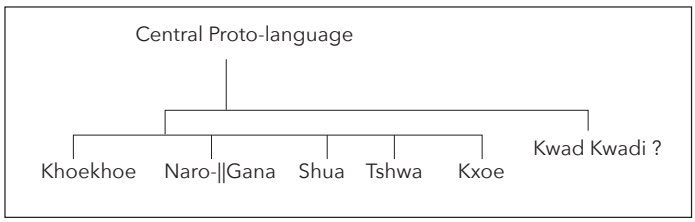


Figure 10. *Khoi languages*

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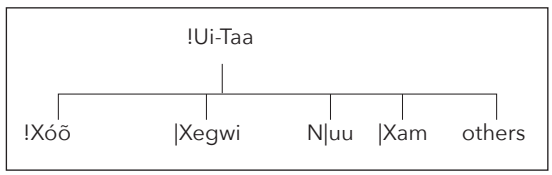


Figure 11. *!Ui-Taa languages*

Austronesian

Austronesian is not usually regarded as an African language phylum, but it is included, since it is spoken throughout Madagascar and on the Comoros. Austronesian is a very large phylum, spoken from Taiwan to New Zealand, comparable in size to Niger-Congo. The outlines of the Austronesian family were first recognized in the early eighteenth century by the Dutch scholar Adriaan van Reeland, who compared Malay, Malagasy and Polynesian (Relandus, 1708).

Malagasy is Austronesian, but its precise genesis has been much debated. It is generally considered to belong genetically to the Barito languages, today spoken in Kalimantan (Simon, 2006). However, it has clearly undergone considerable influence from Malay, whence it draws many nautical and other technical terms (Adelaar, 1994). In addition, there are numerous loans from the Bantu languages of the East African coast, some from Swahili, but others from different languages, particularly those of Mozambique which probably post-date the Swahili borrowings. It is likely the ancestors of the Malagasy came in multiple waves from islands of South-East Asia from the fifth century onwards and settled both the East African Coast and the island of Madagascar. However, the rise of Arab shipping in the Gulf overwhelmed the coastal settlements, and left Austronesian only spoken on the island.

Unclassified languages, marginal peoples and their significance

Apart from the well-known and largely established phyla, a few African languages defy easy classification. In fact, it is surprising that there are so few. There are many isolates in the New World, as in Papua, Australia and Siberia. On the assumption that the origin of modern humans lies in Africa, there should be many more. The pattern of African language phyla must reflect large-scale population movements, change and assimilation over a relatively recent period. In contrast, Papua has been largely isolated from the major impetuses of population change and many isolated languages have been able to continue unaffected for tens of millennia. Even the status and classification of language isolates in Africa remains controversial. Table 3 lists the languages that have remained unclassified and Figure 12 shows their locations.

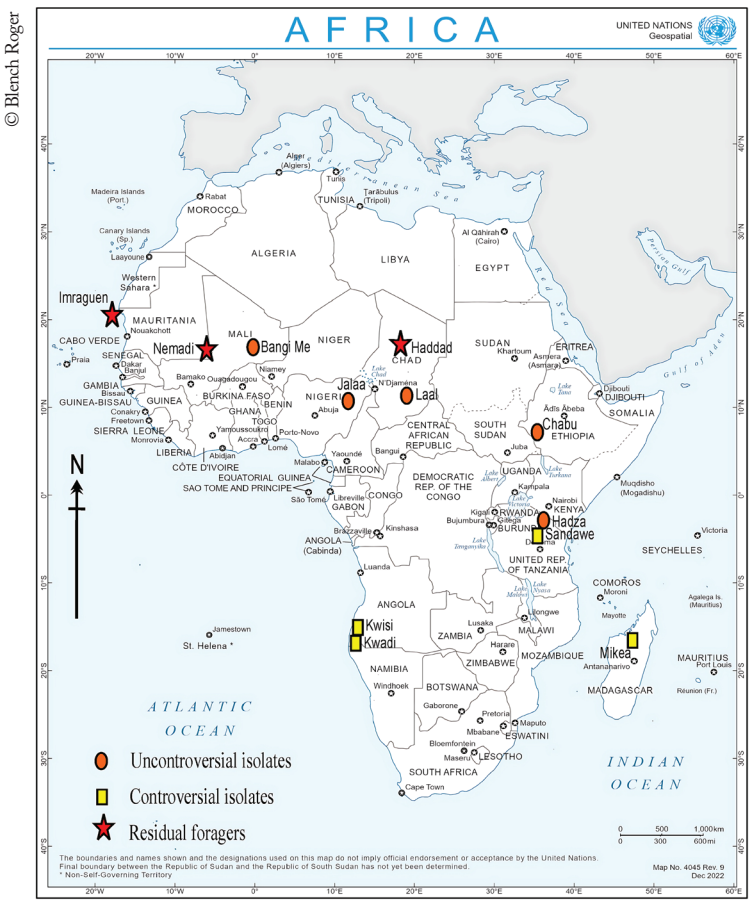


Figure 12. Language isolates in Africa

Table 3. *African language isolates*

Language	Location	Source	Comments
Jalaa (=Cuŋ Tuum)	Nigeria	Kleinwillinghöfer (2001)	Isolate
Bangi Me	Mali	Blench (2008)	Isolate
Laal	Chad	Boyeldieu (1977)	Isolate
Kujarge	Sudan	Lovestrand (2012)	East Chadic
Ongota	Ethiopia	Fleming (2006)	Perhaps Afroasiatic
Oropom	Uganda	Wilson (1970)	Probably spurious
Hadza	Tanzania	Sands (1998)	Isolate
Sandawe	Tanzania	Elderkin (1983)	Probably Khoisan
Kwadi	Angola	Güldemann (2004)	Perhaps Khoe

Source: © Blench Roger, African archaeology and linguistics, 2006, modified.

With the exception of Bangi Me, all of these are either foragers or were so until recently, which suggests that they were marginalized communities, relics of a once more widespread interlocking network of hunter-gatherers.

Synthesis

The above descriptions provide a background to archaeological interpretations of African prehistory. Blench (2006) proposed a series of correlations with technological innovation and climate, which would provide very approximate dates for the early expansion of these phyla. Table 4 is a significantly updated synthesis of this approach, based on the scenarios in individual sections above.

Table 4. *Dates, homelands and causes of phylic expansion in Africa*

Phylum	Date BP	Original homeland	Stimulus of dispersal
Khoisan	>80,000	Eastern and Southern Africa	Unknown (? microlithic technology)
Nilo-Saharan	12,000	Nile Confluence	Expansion of aquatic resources
Afroasiatic	9000	SW Ethiopia	Management of livestock/ ensete cultivation
Niger-Congo	10,000	South-Central Sahara	Bow and arrow introduced and improving climate
Malagasy	1500	Migration from ISEA	Trade and quest for natural resources

Source: © Blench Roger, African archaeology and linguistics, 2006, modified.

African languages encompass a record of human interaction with the environment, as well as a palimpsest of social and economic change. Descriptions of highly specific grammatical features all too often are given priority over the collection of cultural vocabulary. Ecological change is rapidly eroding the ethnoscientific knowledge which provides clues to millennia of movement and changing subsistence strategies. Recording this data should be a high priority for African and Africanist scholars, in many disciplines. More broadly, many African languages are threatened by globalization and the spread of trade languages, such as Hausa and Sudanese Arabic. Promoting the use of the many vernaculars should be a high priority for African educational systems, as part of the broader preservation of African culture.

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CHAPTER 4

WEST OF THE RIFT VALLEY IN CHAD, CENTRAL AFRICA

The First Two Mio-Pliocene Hominids

Michel Brunet, Mackaye Hassane Taisso, Likius Andossa and Patrick Vignaud

Introduction

The idea of human fossils is quite recent. The first Neanderthal man was described in 1856 at Neander Ravine in Germany (Fuhlrott, 1859, 1865); Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* was published shortly afterwards in 1859. In the 1980s, early hominids were known only in South and East Africa (Figure 1). From 1994, in the Djurab desert in northern Chad, the Franco-Chadian Paleoanthropological Mission (*Mission Paléoanthropologique Franco-Tchadienne* – MPFT) unearthed a newly discovered australopithecine, dated to 3.5 Ma[1] (Brunet, 1995; Lebatard et al., 2008): *Australopithecus bahrelghazali* (Brunet et al., 1996), (Figure 2), the first ever hominid found west of the Rift Valley, followed by a new hominid, *Sahelanthropus tchadensis* (Brunet et al., 2002) from the late Miocene (Figures 3 and 4), dated to 7 Ma (Lebatard et al., 2008; Vignaud et al., 2002). This earliest known hominid represents a new milestone, suggesting that an exclusively Southern or Eastern African distribution of early hominids is unlikely to be correct.

In the last two decades our roots have gone even further, from the Lower Pliocene (4.4 Ma) to Late Miocene (7 Ma), with three new species: *Ardipithecus kadabba* (Haile-Selassie, 2001) (5.2–5.8 Ma, Middle Awash, Ethiopia), *Orrorin tugenensis* (Senut et al., 2001) (ca. 6 Ma, Lukeino, Kenya) and the earliest one,

1 In geological time, Ma (mega-annum) is equivalent to one million years (10^6).

Sahelanthropus tchadensis (Brunet *et al.*, 2002) (7 Ma, Djurab desert, Chad). *S. tchadensis* (Figures 3 and 4) displays a unique combination of plesiomorphic[2] and apomorphic[3] characters that clearly illustrate its hominid affinities, which are temporally close to the last common ancestor between chimpanzees and humans, but which cannot be related to chimpanzees or gorillas (Brunet, 2006, 2009a, b; Brunet et al., 2002a, b, 2004, 2005; Guy et al., 2005; Lebatard et al., 2008; Vignaud et al., 2002; Zollikofer et al., 2005). In Chad, the sedimentological and paleobiological data of the Late Miocene (11.63 Ma to 5.333 Ma) are consistent with mosaic landscapes that are probably very similar to the present Okavango Delta (Central Kalahari, Botswana) (Brunet, 2005). As with the others, the Late Miocene hominid *Sahelanthropus tchadensis* is a new evolutionary grade (Brunet, 2009b), surely a usual arboreal climbing biped, whose precise habitat is probably linked to its opportunist behaviour in this mosaic landscape. Today, it is clear that the earliest hominids were not just living in South and East Africa, nor were they dependent on the savannah.

The new 'west side' story

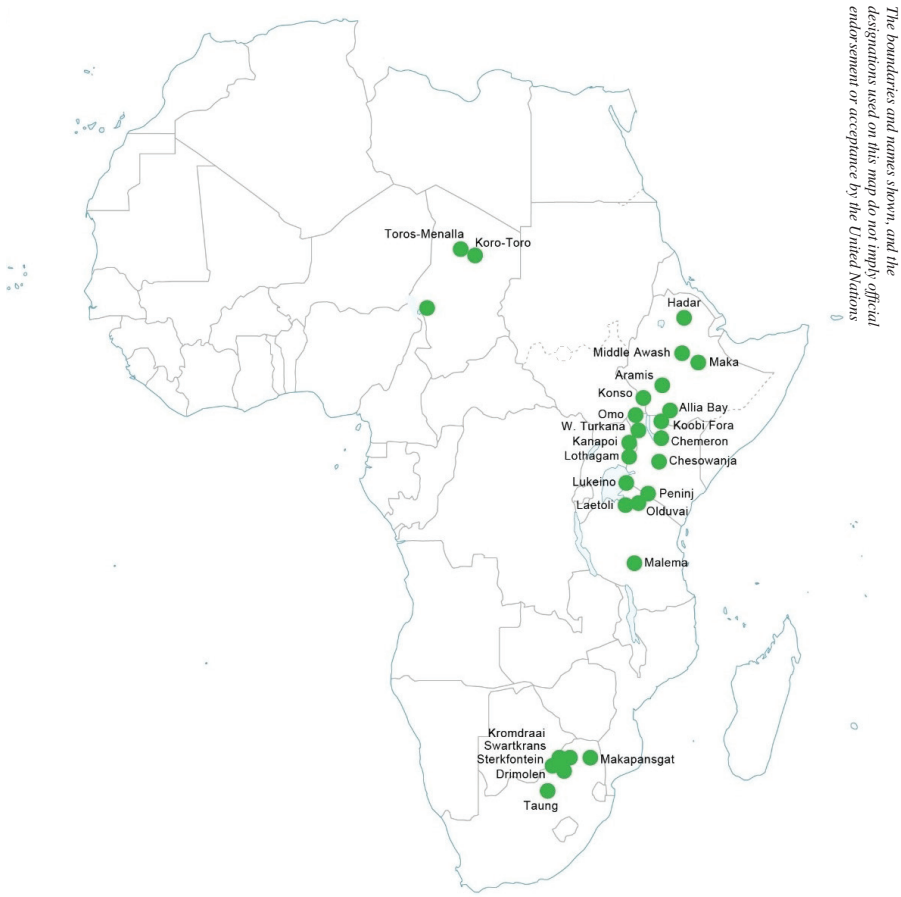
In the 1980s, the fact that the earliest prehumans were found in East Africa (Ethiopia and Tanzania) (Figure 1) led French anthropologist, Yves Coppens, to propose an 'East Side Story' paleoscenario: early hominids appeared and evolved in the Pliocene (5.33 Ma to 2.58 Ma) primary savannah east of the Rift Valley, while the tropical forest, west of the Rift Valley, is thought to represent the early African ape habitat (Coppens, 1983).

However, in January 1995, in the Djurab desert in northern Chad, east of Koro-Toro, with my team from the MPFT, we found a lower Pliocene vertebrate fauna and a partial lower jaw belonging to a new australopithecine nicknamed 'Abel', *A. bahrelghazali,* the first ever hominid found west of the Rift Valley (Brunet et al., 1995) (Figure 2).

Other australopithecine sites have been discovered in the Koro-Toro area since 1995 (Brunet et al., 1997), all presenting the same fauna, whose mammals (proboscidians, suids, rhinocerotids and equids) indicate a biochronological age of 3.5 Ma, congruent with $^{10/9}$Beryllium cosmonuclid dating (Lebatard et al., 2008).

2 An ancestral character that is shared by all members of a group (clade) and retained from a common ancestor.

3 A newly evolved trait within a specific lineage.



The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

FIGURE 1. *The main Mio-Pliocene African hominid localities*

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In addition, geological and paleontological surveys in the Djurab desert, from 1994 to 1997, yielded three new fossiliferous areas, biochronologically dated to: the early Pliocene, 4–4.5 Ma at Kollé (Brunet et al., 1998); the Mio-Pliocene boundary, 5-5.5 Ma at Kossoum Bougoudi (Brunet et al., 2000); and the Late Miocene, 7 Ma, at Toros-Menalla (TM) (Brunet et al., 2002). To date, more than 500 fossiliferous localities have been discovered in the Djurab desert, now representing more than 25,000 vertebrate specimens.

In 2001, the MPFT unearthed a new hominid, *Sahelanthropus tchadensis* (Brunet et al., 2002), from the locality TM 266. The holotype cranium (Figure 3),

nicknamed 'Toumaï', is associated with a faunal assemblage[4] of around 100 species, of which the mammalian component indicates a biochronological estimation of close to 7 Ma, congruent with $^{10/9}$Beryllium dating (Lebatard et al., 2008; Vignaud et al., 2002). This earliest known hominid, *S. tchadensis*, unearthed 2,600 km west of the Rift Valley, suggests that an exclusively Eastern or Southern African origin of the hominid clade is not a paleobiological reality.

With three new Late Miocene species, *Ardipithecus kadabba* (5.2–5.8 Ma, Ethiopia), *Orrorin tugenensis* (ca. 6 Ma, Kenya) and *Sahelanthropus tchadensis* (7 Ma, Chad), our roots have deepened, from 3.6 Ma in the 1970s to 7 Ma today.

Since 1994, all these discoveries have had a scientific impact equivalent to that of Dart's *Australopithecus africanus* (Dart, 1925). During the last two decades, the framework of the hominid evolution story has totally changed. Today, we have a completely new understanding of the environments which the early hominids inhabited. Moreover, the models established in the 1980s must be reconsidered: representative specimens of a potential cradle of humankind have widened to a continental scale. Moreover, the hominids described during the last twenty years, while extending the geographical and temporal limits of our family, show original associations of characters and morphotypes that lead us to revise our definitions of the Hominidae. In fact, we have to study evolutionary history within completely new paradigms. But, as paleontologists, we are constantly reminded that our interpretations only last as long as the next new fossil discovery.

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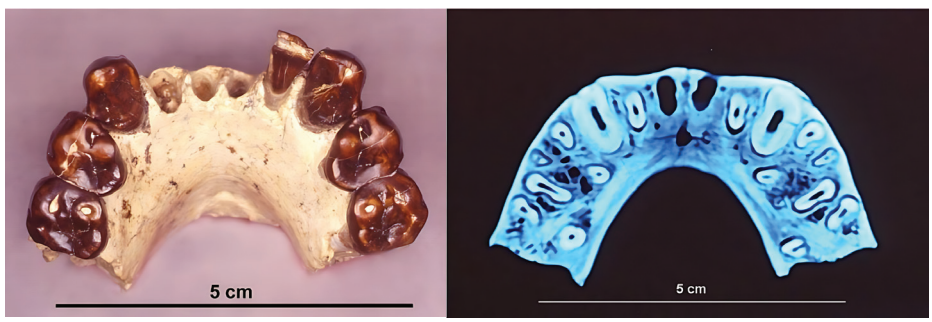


Figure 2. Australopithecus bahrelghazali*: a) holotype lower jaw (KT12/H1) occlusal view; b) horizontal CT scan Md holotype (Poitou-Charentes Scanner)*

4 A grouping of animal fossil remains found in the same stratum of an archaeological site.

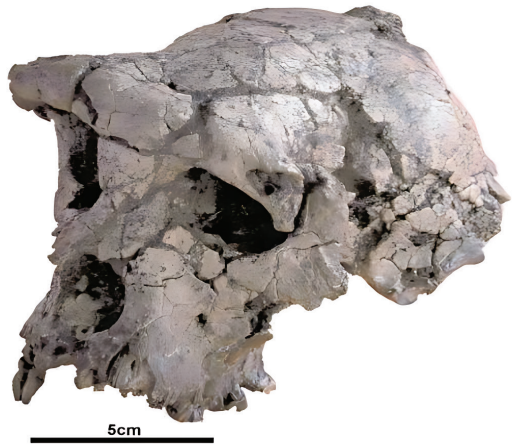


Figure 3. *Toumai, skull of the* Sahelanthropus tchadensis *holotype*

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In Central Africa, west of the Rift Valley, the first Chadian Early hominids

The Chadian australopithecine 'Abel' has an anterior lower jaw as depicted in Figure 2, with the horizontal ramus missing beyond the P_4 level and to a right P_3[5]. This pre-human has a new mosaic of derived and primitive anatomical characters, such as a flat anterior face of the lower jaw, a subvertical symphysis (bulbous in its outline with a shallow genioglossal fossa), and an incisiform and very asymmetric canine (with a bifid strong lingual crest). Each premolar exhibits a three-pulp canal rooting pattern, and the P_4s are sub-molariform with a large talonid (the posterior portion of the tooth). This original combination of anatomical features is sufficiently distinct to name a new species: *Australopithecus barhelghazali* (Brunet et al., 1996).

To date, only three late Miocene species can lay claim to the 'famous status' of being among the earliest hominids. Two of them are from Eastern Africa: *Ardipithecus kadabba,* dated 5.8–5.2 Ma, Ethiopia (Haile-Selassie, 2001; Haile-Selassie et al., 2004) and *Orrorin tugenensis,* dated ca. 6 Ma, Kenya; Galik et al., 2004; Senut et al., 2001); and the third hominid is *Sahelanthropus tchadensis*,

5 P_3 refers to the lower third premolar of the jaw, while P_4 refers to the lower fourth premolar.

dated 7 Ma, from Chad (Central Africa) (Brunet et al., 2002a, b, 2005). To date, *Sahelanthropus tchadensis* is the oldest known hominid. The geographic location of *S. tchadensis*, 2,600 km west of the Rift Valley, suggests an early (at least 6 million years ago), widespread hominid distribution (across the Sahel and Eastern Africa). The material referred to as the Chadian hominid 'Toumaï' consists of a distorted but nearly complete cranium (Figure 3), which has now been reconstructed in 3D linked to several mandibular specimens (Figure 4) and isolated teeth.



Figure 4. Sahelanthropus tchadensis*: a) lower jaw TM292-02-01, occlusal view; b) 3D reconstruction with horizontal CT scans Md TM292-02-01 (3D reconstruction with horizontal CT scan Md TM292-02-01 (Synchrotron, ESRF, Grenoble)*

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Sahelanthropus tchadensis displays a unique combination of primitive and derived characters. The identifiable derived features of *S. tchadensis* are its anteriorly positioned foramen magnum[6] linked to a rather short basioccipital bone[7] and a sub-horizontal nuchal[8] plane, a downward lipping of the nuchal crest, and a lower jaw with a vertical symphysis with weak transverse tori (bone growth). In terms of dentition, the anatomical characters include a non-honing C/P_3 complex[9], no diastema (gap) between C and P_3, small-crowned canines

6 A large, oval-shaped opening at the base of the skull.

7 The basilar part of the occipital bone, the main bone of the occiput (the back of the head).

8 Nuchal refers to the back of the neck (nape).

9 This refers to the dental arrangement in which the canines (C) and the P_3 (third premolar) are not sharpened against each other when chewing, unlike the canine honing complex in other apes.

with a long root (the upper canine without any honing distal crest and the lower canine with a large distal tubercle, both shoulders being very low), a P_3 with a strongly sloping buccal surface, post canine teeth with maximum radial enamel thickness (intermediate between chimpanzees and australopithecines), and a bulbous, slightly crenulated post canine occlusal morphology. It is interesting to note that all the hominid mandibular specimens from Toros-Menalla have the same root pattern in the post canine teeth, with two roots and three separate pulp canals for each premolar (Brunet, 2006, 2009a, b; Brunet et al., 2002a, b, 2004, 2005; Guy et al., 2005; Lebatard et al., 2008; Vignaud et al., 2002; Zollikofer et al., 2005).

Since Darwin, all these derived characters indicate that *S. tchadensis* cannot be related to an ape (chimpanzees or gorillas) but the evidence clearly suggest that it must be related to later bipedal hominids, and is likely temporally very close to the common ancestor of chimpanzees and humans (Brunet et al., 2002a, b, 2005; Guy et al., 2006; Zollikofer et al., 2005).

Late Miocene hominid environments

The East Side paleoscenario of Coppens (1983) emphasized the major role of the savannah in early hominid evolution. Do the earliest known hominid environments agree with such a model? In Chad, the sedimentological evidence from the Late Miocene Toros-Menalla fossiliferous area indicates successive wet (mega-lake Chad event) and arid periods (desertic event) since at least 7 Ma. These successive events are identified by a sedimentological series comprising aeolian sandstones (desertic episode), perilacustrine sandstones (lacustrine transgression), and green pelite and diatomite (true lacustrine environment) (Schuster et al., 2006; Vignaud et al., 2002). *Sahelanthropus tchadensis* and its associated assemblage of vertebrate remains have been uncovered from the perilacustrine sandstones (Anthracotheriid unit). Sedimentological data are consistent with this mosaic of environments, indicating a vegetated perilacustrine belt[10] between lake and desert (Vignaud et al., 2002). The Okavango Delta in central Kalahari (Botswana) appears to be a good modern analogue, presenting similar habitat diversity (mosaic of lacustrine and riparian waters, swamps, patches of forest, wooded savannah, grassland and desert areas). Even though

10 A perilacustrine belt refers to the diverse area surrounding a lake, typically characterized by swamps, woodlands and grasslands, and more desert-like areas.

the precise habitat of the TM 266 hominid among this mosaic of landscapes is still uncertain, it is likely to be wooded (Brunet et al., 2005). In addition, other significant hominid discoveries associated with wooded environments in Middle Awash (Ethiopia, *Ardipithecus ramidus* and *Ardipithecus kadabba*) and Lukeino (Kenya, *Orrorin tugenensis*) have negated the role played by an open environment or savannah, favouring the acquisition of a bipedal posture in the course of hominid evolution. Thus, sedimentological and faunal data rather suggest wooded environments for *Ar. ramidus* (White et al., 1994; Woldegabriel et al., 1994) and *Ar. kadabba* (Woldegabriel et al., 2001). The latter (2001, p. 177) noted: "It therefore seems increasingly likely that early hominids did not frequent open habitats until after 4.4 Myr. Before that, they may have been confined to woodland and forest habitats". Moreover, according to the recent description of a partial skeleton of *Ardipithecus ramidus* (Aramis, Ethiopia, 4.4 Ma) it appears that this hominid, a new evolutive grade as the three late Miocene taxa, was a climbing biped, both terrestrial and arboreal, with an opposable grasping big toe (without arched feet and with a flat-footed gait), living in a woodland landscape (Lovejoy, 2009; Lovejoy et al., 2009a-d; Suwa, 2009; Suwa et al., 2009; White et al., 2009a, b).

A wooded habitat (of open woodland with denser stands of trees in the vicinity) has also been suggested for the Kenyan *Orrorin tugenensis spp.* (Pickford et al., 2002). This is of fundamental importance as the three late Miocene taxa, *Ardipithecus kadabba* (Haile-Selassie, 2001; Haile-Selassie et al., 2004), *Orrorin tugenensis* (Galik et al., 2004; Pickford et al., 2002; Ohman et al., 2005; Senut et al., 2001; White, 2006) and *Sahelanthropus tchadensis* (Brunet et al., 2002, 2004; Guy et al., 2005; Zollikoter et al., 2004) were likely to have been terrestrial and arboreal climbing bipeds. All these Late Miocene hominids prove that the savannah hypothesis plays a part in our story.

New paradigms for a new early hominid story

During the last 150 years, most of the models for hominid evolution have been overturned by successive discoveries. This fact clearly emphasizes the importance of fieldwork, as our understanding of our evolutionary story is usually limited to current findings.

Only thirty years ago, thanks to fossil hominid remains, were we able to consider the eastern African savannah as the cradle of humankind. Today, it appears that our earliest ancestors favoured wooded environments. Furthermore,

they were not restricted to Eastern or Southern Africa but were in fact inhabiting a wider geographic region, including at least Central and Eastern Africa. In only a decade, the number of recognized hominid taxa and our geological history has doubled (from 3.6 Ma in the 1970s to 7 Ma today). These new hominids broaden the geographical and temporal limits of our human family tree. The Late Miocene hominids, with original associations of anatomical characters, represent a new evolutionary grade.

In Chad, the radiochronological dating of *Sahelanthropus tchadensis* indicates that chimpanzee and human lineages diverged before 7 Ma, which is earlier than commonly believed (Kumar and Hedges, 1998; Patterson et al., 2006; Pilbeam, 2002), although later than more recent molecular phylogenists suggest (Langergraber et al., 2012).

Paleobiogeographical evidence from published fieldwork results show that Central Africa functioned as a crossroads region between at least 3 and 7 Ma, and that it was marked by sporadic faunal exchanges with Northern and Eastern Africa (Boisserie et al., 2003, 2005; Brunet et al., 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004; Brunet and White, 2001; Geraads et al., 2001; Lihoreau et al., 2006; Likius et al., 2003; Mackaye et al., 2005; Peigné et al., 2005; Vignaud et al., 2002).

Better identification of the migratory patterns and faunal exchanges between Northern, Central, Eastern and Southern Africa during the Mio-Pliocene is key to understanding the origin and dispersal of our earliest ancestors and therefore human evolutionary history. More data is needed from these geographic areas, notably from north-eastern Africa (Egypt, Libya and Sudan).

Finally, gaining a better understanding of our early human story requires more data from paleontologists and paleoanthropologists, which means conducting even more geological and paleontological field surveys among those carried out, notably in Central Africa (Chad). Nevertheless, we are all undoubtedly African, and the first migrants to Eurasia emerged from the genus *Homo*, probably between 2 and 3 million years ago.

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CHAPTER 5

GATHERING, SCAVENGING AND HUNTING

Lifestyles of Hominids

Jason E. Lewis

Introduction

Africa's prehistory is humanity's prehistory. For nearly three-quarters of humanity's prehistoric past, our ancestors lived exclusively in Africa. The story of our ancestors' changing ways of life is therefore a predominantly African story. Before the development of civilization, the daily lives of hominids (all of our ancient relatives since the last common ancestor with chimpanzees) were mostly devoted to finding food and shelter, and making and using tools for these tasks, usually in small mobile groups. Our understanding of changes in these behaviours across time is based on the durable materials they left behind, mainly in the form of stone tools and fossilized bones. Stone tools can tell us about cognitive and technological abilities, as well as social behaviours, whereas fossilized bones can tell us about ancient environments and hominid subsistence strategies. The term 'subsistence strategy' refers to decisions made about how to obtain food in a particular environment (such as gathering plants, specialized big game hunting, agriculture, etc.). Much current research focuses on how hominid subsistence strategies have changed over time, when hominids increased their focus on acquiring meat and other animal tissues, and whether they had early or late access to carcasses in comparison with other carnivores.

Our earliest ancestors

The origins of our lineage date to around 6 million years ago (Ma) or more, based on fossils from Eastern and Central Africa that bear anatomical features associated with upright bipedal walking, a unique characteristic of the human family (see chapters 2 and 3 of this volume). The record becomes richer after 4.5 Ma, with more fossils recovered from two genera, *Ardipithecus* and *Australopithecus*. Anatomical and trace evidence suggests that these hominids spent a good amount of time in the trees, likely to find food and to seek shelter and safety from predators. The diet of these early hominids was probably much like that of chimpanzees, our closest living primate cousins, who generally inhabit forest and wet savanna environments in Equatorial Africa. Chimpanzees mainly eat fruit and other parts of plants such as leaves, flowers, nuts and bark, along with insects. On average, about 3 per cent of a chimpanzee's diet comes from meat. Based on observations of chimpanzee groups hunting in Gombe National Park in Tanzania, a hypothesis has been developed that offers a nutritional perspective on the origins of meat eating in the human lineage (Tennie et al., 2009). According to this hypothesis, the micronutrients gained from meat are so important that even small scraps are worth spending a lot of energy in cooperative hunting. Important components of meat include calcium, sodium, potassium, iron, zinc and vitamins A, K, B6 and B12, the latter present only in small quantities in plants. Macronutrients such as fat and protein, hard to come by in the environments where chimpanzees live, may be other dietary components contributing to the importance of eating meat (Pobiner, 2016).

It had long been debated whether *Australopithecus* ate significant amounts of meat and if so, whether they made or used tools to acquire it. This discussion began in 1925 with the very first description of an *Australopithecus africanus* fossil by Raymond Dart, based on a skull of a 2.8 Ma juvenile from the site of Taung in South Africa. Dart (1957) proposed a model in which *Australopithecus* were using the bones, teeth and horns of antelope to kill and butcher other animals, termed the Osteodontokeratic culture. Dart argued that *Australopithecus* was a head-hunter who brought back skulls and other specific body parts for use in a variety of symbolic and subsistence behaviours, and broad comparisons were made with later human tool use and hunting. To him, the Taung child had belonged to a predatory, cave-dwelling species he described as 'an animal-hunting, flesh-eating, shell-cracking and bone-breaking ape' and 'a practised and skillful wielder of lethal weapons of the chase.' Dart concluded that *Australopithecus* had a complex material culture and was separated from humans mainly by the development of language.

Later, Brain's (1981) pioneering work on the Transvaal caves was one of the first complete taphonomic and zooarchaeological analyses of a limestone cave system, and did a great deal to undermine Dart's theories on the Osteodontokeratic culture and the vicious, cannibalistic and predatory behaviour of *Australopithecus*. Brain laid out the various possible explanations for the state of faunal remains in a cave other than hominid behaviour, including the actions of carnivores, porcupines and other animals bringing in faunal remains and digging around in the site, or animals entering the site to die natural deaths alone, among others. Based on his analyses, Brain suggested that the animal remains in the Transvaal caves (including *Australopithecus*) were most likely the result of leopard predation and post-depositional alteration, not proto-humans hunting with bone tools.

Dart's ideas aside, the conventional wisdom for most of the twentieth century has been that making and using tools, hunting animals and eating meat was the domain of our genus only. In 1964, Louis Leakey and colleagues described fossils looking more like later *Homo* than australopithecines at Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania (Leakey et al., 1964). They were found in association with the then-earliest known stone tool culture – the Oldowan – and associated cut marked animal fossils being excavated and described by Mary Leakey (1966). In part because of this association, the fossils were assigned to a new species: *Homo habilis* or 'handy man'. The premise was that our lineage alone took the evolutionary step of hitting stones together to strike off sharp flakes, to use them to hunt and butcher animals, and that this was the foundation of our evolutionary success (Lee and Devore, 1968).

This conventional wisdom started to be challenged in the late twentieth century based on advances in several lines of research. Direct observations of chimpanzees and other primates in the wild found that they use stones as tools to access food like nuts (Sakura and Matsuzawa, 1991). Continuing discoveries in archaeology and paleoanthropology pushed back the date for the earliest Oldowan stone tools to 2.6 Ma (Roche and Tiercelin, 1977; Semaw et al., 1997), and the earliest fossils attributable to the genus *Homo* to only 2.4–2.3 Ma (Kimbel et al., 1996; Prat et al., 2005), opening up the possibility of tool manufacture by hominids other than *Homo* and/or before 2.6 Ma (Panger et al., 2003; Roche et al., 2009). Technological analyses on Oldowan artefacts from the sites of Gona (2.6–2.5 Ma), Hadar (2.36 Ma) and Omo (2.34 Ma) in Ethiopia, and especially Lokalalei 2C (2.34 Ma) from West Turkana, Kenya, demonstrate that Pliocene hominid stone tool makers already had reasonable abilities in terms of raw-material selectivity, planning depth and manual dexterity (see Chapter 7 of this volume).

This idea gained further support in 2010, when the discovery was announced of 3.4 Ma cut marked bones from Dikika, in Ethiopia (McPherron et al., 2010). This evidence pushed back the date for the earliest hominid meat-eating by 800,000 years (800 ka) and before the first appearance of the genus *Homo*. No stone tools were found with the cut marked fossils, but early hominids may have used naturally sharp stones for butchery, and therefore meat consumption and stone tool *use* may have predated stone tool *manufacture*. These cut marks are the same age as the fossils of *Australopithecus afarensis,* found in nearby deposits. The implication of this evidence was that *Homo* had not been the only meat-eater among human ancestors; *Australopithecus* had also been capable of butchering and eating animals, if only on rare occasions.

The final piece of the puzzle fit into place in 2015 when the team led by Sonia Harmand and myself announced the discovery of knapped stone tools dating to 3.3 Ma from the site of Lomekwi 3 in West Turkana, Kenya (Harmand et al., 2015). Just a few weeks before this announcement, the publication of the earliest *Homo* fossil dating to 2.8 Ma from Ledi Geraru, Ethiopia, pushed back the origins of our genus (Villmoare et al., 2015). Despite this, the only early human species found in the West Turkana region around 3 Ma is *Kenyanthropus platyops*, known from just a few fossils but broadly similar in anatomy to australopithecines (Leakey et al., 2001). Isotopic studies of the diets of hominids living between 4 and 3 Ma show that diets broadened to include more foods from grassy environments compared to earlier hominids, though it cannot be determined if they were plants, insects or animal tissues (Cerling et al., 2013; Levin et al., 2015; Sponheimer et al., 2013). Several separate independent lines of evidence have been converging over the past decade towards the conclusion that hominids likely started consuming meat earlier than previously thought, potentially 1 Ma before the appearance of our genus.

Beyond butchery, stone tools may have been used for many other purposes including woodworking, preparing leather from animal hides and processing soft plant matter. As chimpanzees regularly shape tools out of wood and soft plant matter with their teeth and fingernails, it seems reasonable to suppose that early hominids would have appreciated the benefits of carving wood with stone tools. Experiments suggest that even simple stone tools would have dramatically increased the rate at which hominids would have been able to shape wood into useful subsistence aids, such as digging sticks, spears, clubs or throwing sticks (Crabtree and Davis, 1968). Middle Pleistocene archaeological sites in waterlogged contexts, including Kalambo Falls (Zambia), Gesher Benot Ya'acov (Israel) and Schöningen (Germany), have yielded rich evidence of

hominid woodworking skills (Clark, 2001; Goren-Inbar et al., 2002; Theime, 1997). Wooden tools have not yet been discovered in earlier Plio-Pleistocene contexts, but this likely reflects the absence of waterlogged contexts of this antiquity in tropical Africa.

Earliest *Homo*

If australopithecids were knapping simple stone tools and butchering animal carcasses, what behavioural advances might have been associated with the origins of our genus, *Homo*? It appears to have been more a matter of degree, rather than presence or absence. The earliest evidence of the intensification and expansion of meat-eating comes from Kanjera, southwestern Kenya, dating to 2 Ma (Ferraro et al., 2013). The archaeological evidence includes dozens of bones bearing cut and percussion marks. An early hominid, most likely *H. habilis* or *Homo erectus*, processed dozens of animal carcasses during repeated visits to the same location over decades, centuries or millennia. Yet the stone tools found alongside butchered bones at Kanjera and dozens of other sites in Africa do not seem suitable for hunting; these tools were most likely used for cutting and pounding, and Oldowan technology did not include spear tips or arrowheads. If early humans weren't hunting the animals they were eating, how did they get access to them?

Hominids might have scavenged carcasses from the lions, hyenas, leopards, cheetahs, wild dogs and saber-toothed cats with which they were sharing the African landscape. They could have passively waited until the carnivores had left the area to safely move in and take what was left. Conversely, they could have confronted carnivores while eating and chased them off their prey by throwing stones or sticks, rushing the predators in a big group, waving arms and making noise, etc. This presumably would have yielded substantial portions of meat, especially from larger prey animals.

Timing of carcass access can be inferred by analysing the representation of different skeletal parts from an animal, and analysing the location and type of carnivore damage and hominid tool marks left on bones. These determinations from an archaeological assemblage can then be compared to experimentally and naturalistically created referential frameworks, in order to determine in what order hominids and carnivores gained access to carcasses. Blumenschine (1986) and colleagues (1993) performed controlled experiments in which butchered and non-butchered bones were fed to captive hyenas, and also left on the east African landscape for carnivores to ravage. The results showed that when bones that have

already been broken open with hammerstones are ravaged by carnivores, the long bone ends are more likely to display chewing damage, and they are less likely to display tooth marks on the long bone shafts; when carnivores have first access to unbroken long bones, relatively more tooth mark damage is likely to be present on the shafts, associated with both defleshing and breaking open for marrow.

The analysis of the 1.8 Ma FLK *Zinj* site from Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania, is a good example of how these analyses can be combined to elucidate the timing of hominid carcass access. Bunn (1981) inferred from the abundance of meat- and marrow-rich limb bones, and abundant linear striations on fossils identified as cut marks made by the stone tools that, by hunting, hominids had had first choice among the parts of the animal carcasses. Blumenschine (1995) and colleagues (2007) argued that hominids gained access to the bones from FLK *Zinj* only after carnivores, probably felids, had mostly defleshed them, and that carnivores (probably hyenas) subsequently chewed on the bones after hominids discarded them. This conclusion was based on Blumenschine's identification of many carnivore tooth marks on the shafts of long bones, a comparatively high amount of stone hammer percussion marks on the shafts, and a high frequency of carnivore gnawing on the bone ends. Dominguez-Rodrigo and Barba (2006) have contended that many of the marks that Blumenschine counted as tooth marks on bone shafts are in fact bioerosional marks created by fungi, etching the bone surface with acid. They instead suggest the hominids had primary access to carcasses, and carnivores only secondary access. These are all very different interpretations based on the same set of archaeological evidence, showing how difficult it is to reconstruct specific subsistence strategies and other behaviours in our ancestral past.

Recent *Homo*

Despite the advent of stone tools and butchered carcasses before 2.0 Ma, fossil representatives of the genus *Homo* from this time do not display the increases in brain size, changes in cranial and facial features, and reorganization of body and limb proportions that would be expected to accompany tool making and meat eating (Antón et al., 2014). Most of these developments emerge in the fossil record between 1.9 and 1.5 Ma. This period also saw the first hominid expansion outside of Africa, recorded at Dmanisi, Republic of Georgia, at ~1.8 Ma; the origin of the Acheulean stone tool culture at 1.76 Ma at Kokiselei 4 in West Turkana, Kenya; evidence of a larger, more linear body plan in fossils such as the famous Nariokotome Boy *H. erectus* skeleton from West Turkana, Kenya at 1.6 Ma; and

the possible earliest evidence for the use of fire at 1.5 Ma at FxJj 20 Main in Koobi Fora, Kenya (see Antón et al., 2014 for a detailed review). These developments are not ordered chronologically as one might expect: hominids living outside Africa were still making Oldowan – not Acheulean handaxes – and not using fire, neither of which appear in the record there until after 700 ka; Acheulean industries do not contain implements considered as suitable spear or projectile technology, raising questions about whether hominids were truly able to hunt large game. Increases in brain size and changes in body plan may have been more associated with the advent of cooking, especially meat. Cooking changes food both physically and chemically, making it easier to chew and digest, enabling the extraction of more energy from the same amount of food, the release of more of some nutrients than when raw, and the rendering of some poisonous plants palatable. Cooking would have decreased the time necessary to forage for the same number of calories (Wrangham, 2009). Modern humans are so adapted to cooked foods that we have difficulty reproducing while on an exclusive diet of raw foods; 30 per cent of women under 45 years of age on long-term raw-food diets had partial to complete loss of their menstrual cycle, likely because of their low body weight (Koebnick et al., 1999).

Large gaps exist in our knowledge of hominid lifeways in Africa between 1 Ma and 100 ka, a period Isaac (1975) called 'the muddle in the middle' due to the poorly resolved archaeological and paleontological records of this time. This period saw the transition from the Acheulean to Middle Stone Age (MSA) lithic cultures, the latter focused on preparing the stone core to strike off a flake tool of predetermined size and shape, known as the 'Levallois' method. By ~300 ka, some of these flakes might have been used as projectile points (Sahle et al., 2013), but their large size would have made them less effective compared to later projectile tips. Analyses of faunal remains from the earlier half of this period still leave it ambiguous whether hominids (attributed to either *Homo rhodesiensis* or *heidelbergensis*) were hunting large game (e.g. Klein et al., 2007). During the MSA, however, it appears that they could hunt in similar ways to later humans (Marean and Assefa, 1999).

The interval between ~60 and 30 ka is a particularly important one in the prehistory of *Homo sapiens*, as it is characterized by population expansion out of Africa and the phased extinction of archaic hominids in Eurasia, events that in many areas are marked by sharp discontinuities in the fossil and archaeological records (Fu et al., 2016; Groucott et al., 2015). The history of *H. sapiens* in Africa during this time is poorly known but was likely shaped by multiple periods of population dispersal, isolation, differentiation, and regional abandonment, structured in part by Late Pleistocene climatic oscillations and habitat reshuffling

(Jones and Stewart, 2016), and is distinguished archaeologically by the Middle to Later Stone Age transition. This transition is generally understood as qualitative and quantitative shifts in the artefact record, many of which historically have been linked with the origins of modern human behaviour (McBrearty and Brooks, 2000). These changes include how and what types of stone tools were made (e.g. the replacement of Levallois methods and retouched points with bipolar and unipolar methods of flake/bladelet and microlith production, and the appearance of groundstone tools), expanded dietary breadth, the use of bone implements and personal ornaments such as shell beads, and rare examples of figurative art and deliberate burial. The nature and timing of this transition and its relation to the changing geography of our species in and out of Africa is largely obscured by pronounced sedimentary disconformities and depositional hiatuses at most archaeological sites (Tryon and Faith, 2013). It is clear that all human hunter-gatherer populations on the rest of the world's continents after 50 ka – with their diverse languages, technologies and traditions – derived from those that had previously developed within Africa before 50 ka (Groucott et al., 2015).

Conclusion

Over the past 6 Ma, the ways in which our hominid ancestors went about their daily activities has drastically evolved. Hominid diets changed from consisting largely of fruit, leaves and other plant parts, with insects and meat when possible – similar to the diet of modern great apes – to one dominated by cooked domesticated grains and large quantities of meat today. Our social behaviour, stone-tool-making developments and landscape use evolved, not necessarily in lock step, towards the mobile, cooperative, symbolic and projectile-wielding hunter-foragers from which agriculture and complex civilization later sprang (Clark and Brandt, 1984). This transition was longer and more gradual and multifaceted than predicted by earlier 'Man the Hunter' hypotheses of human evolution. The exact natural selective causes of and specific adaptive processes leading to these behavioural changes are still under investigation. The earliest evidence of each of these developments is found in Africa, even after hominids were also living in Eurasia. Africa's vast size and often challenging landscapes have delayed exploration and research in prehistory compared to other parts of the world. Increasing interest, funding and infrastructural development within Africa is leading to a quickening pace of discovery in archaeology and paleontology, with dramatic impacts on our understanding of human prehistory.

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CHAPTER 6

THE FIRST CUTTING TOOLS AND STONE TOOL CULTURES

Helene Roche

Introduction

In Volume 1 of the *General History of Africa,* published in 1981, despite there being nothing solid at that time to support the claim, the following rather optimistic assertion was made: 'through the discoveries made in the Pleistocene basin of Lake Turkana, the age of the first manufactured tools had been pushed back to more than 2.5, perhaps even 3 million years, thus adding over a million years to the time in which such activity is known to have existed' (Coppens, 1981, p. 410). It was not until 2015, thirty-five years later, that the archaeological site of Lomekwi 3 was published (Harmand et al., 2015), the first to be accurately dated to 3.3 Ma – a discovery also made on the eastern shores of Lake Turkana in northern Kenya.

After revisiting the concept of tools, the results of thirty-five years of research are examined in this chapter to update both our knowledge of the beginnings of stone tool use at least 3.3 million years ago and their significance in terms of evolution, as well as our understanding of early Oldowan, the first technoculture to appear in East Africa.

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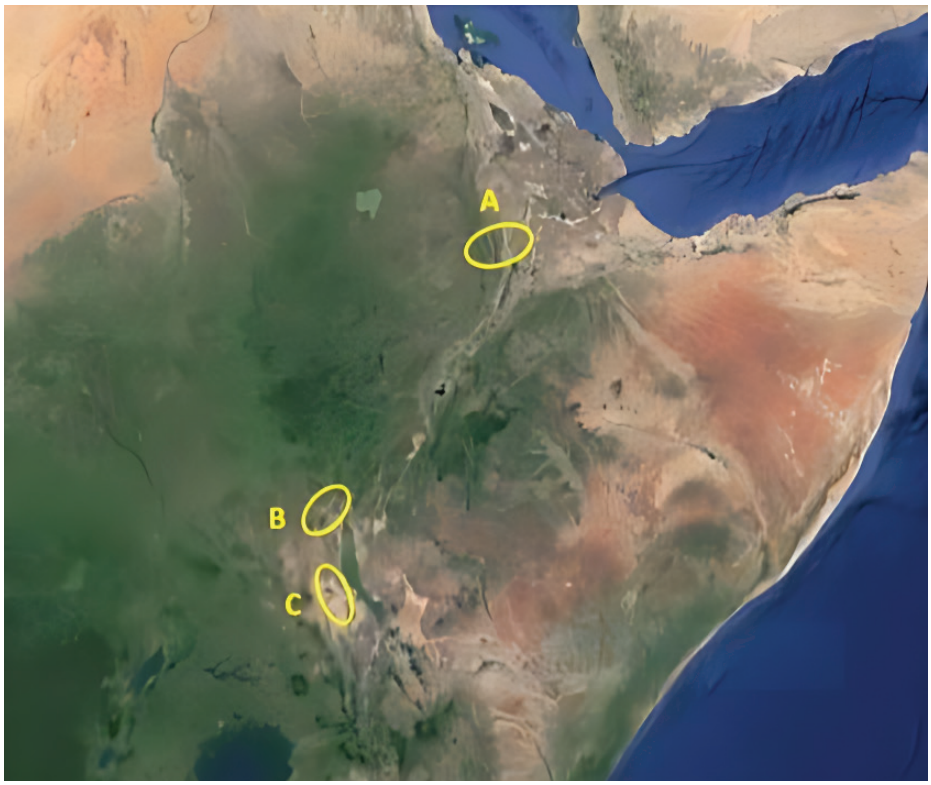


Figure 1. *Main Plio-Pleistocene sites mentioned. A: Gona, Hadar, in Afar, Ethiopia; B: Omo sites in the Shungura Formation (southern Ethiopia); C: sites in West Turkana (Lomekwi, Lokalalei, etc.) in the Nachukui Formation (northern Kenya)*

Used tools, manufactured tools

Although the most common definition of the word 'tool' in the dictionary is 'a *manufactured* implement used to carry out a particular function', we should focus on that other word as well: *used*. The impact of both these words becomes clear when placed next to the word 'tool', and hence the confusion at the crossroads of all disciplines concerned with the origins of humankind, and the relationship between human beings and animals.

Ethology has shown us that a number of animals use (and/or manipulate, in the case of non-human primates) unmodified natural objects for a variety of purposes: obtaining food, building nests, grooming, playing, defending themselves, etc. The activity we shall use here to demonstrate our point is obviously the practice of

cracking highly nutritious hard-shelled nuts, practised naturally by specific groups of chimpanzees (*Pan Paniscus*) in West Africa (e.g. in the Tai Forest, Côte d'Ivoire) but also by capuchin monkeys (*Sapajus libinosus*) in Brazil (e.g. in Serra da Capivara National Park). To do this, chimpanzees and capuchins employ two primary tools: selected objects found in nature, which have not been modified, are used as an anvil (stone, stump or branch) and a mineral or plant object is used as a hammer/striking implement. At the Bossou research base in Guinea, a small stone or stone fragment was observed being used as a passive hammerstone (Pick, Roche, 2013). This suggests that it is a meta-tool, or a tool designed to improve another tool's function. In both cases, the primary tool and meta-tool, there is no transformation, only the use of natural elements found in the environment.

Among non-human primates, a number of species – notably chimpanzees – are capable of modifying a natural element before using it. But these are pliant and flexible organic materials, such as a small branch stripped of its leaves to catch termites and ants, leaves torn from a branch to clean oneself, a piece of bark to collect water, etc. (Visalberghi et al., 2015; Whiten et al., 1999). While it can be argued that these actions are intentional, the sensory-motor skills required are on a totally different level to those required to cut a solid, brittle inorganic material such as hard rock. Of all the observations made by ethologists in the natural environment, never has the intentional modification[1] of such material been reported. On the other hand, hominids, who undoubtedly cut volcanic rocks at least 3.3 million years ago, irreversibly transformed blocks of phonolite and basalt sourced from their surroundings. To do this, using a technique which we discuss later, they used one or two primitive tools, a striking tool and/or an anvil, producing many sharp chips or flakes in the process.

When we think about tools, whether in the animal world or in the context of ancient prehistory, it is important to specify whether they were used with or without modification, or whether they were manufactured, and from what material. Thus, to conclude this paragraph, we would say that the ability to extract mineral, plant or animal material from the environment and use it without modifying it as a tool is shared by many animal species. Changing flexible natural organic material before using it is also common. However, the ability to intentionally modify a naturally hard, solid and brittle material in an irreversible manner for a functional purpose is unique to human primates and their ancestors.

1 In Serra de Capivara National Park (Brazil), capuchin monkeys were observed intentionally striking stones together for an unknown purpose, thereby unintentionally producing flakes which they did not use (Proffit et al., 2016; Roche, 2016).

Lomekwi 3 and the first cutting tools

Until 2015, the title of 'oldest site' belonged to the sites of Gona in Afar, Ethiopia, which we return to later. It is now held by Lomekwi 3, a Lomekwi member site (3.35-2.50 Ma [million years]) in the Nachukui Formation[2] dated at 3.3 Ma, discovered in 2011. Two publications (Harmand et al., 2015;[3] Lewis and Harmand, 2016) provide a fairly precise review of the characteristics of the material found there. Lithic assemblage collected *in situ* and on the surface of this exceptional site is different from anything previously known. First, the dimensions of the artefacts were much larger than those found at more recent sites: the average size of cores found at Lomekwi 3 (167 mm x 147.8 mm x 108.8 mm) is actually two to three times larger than those found at early Oldowan sites (2.6 to 2.3 Ma). This is particularly true of their thickness (Harmand et al., 2015, extended data table 2). This data definitely correlates with cutting techniques used. Technological analysis and experimentation demonstrate that direct percussion of cores on an anvil block (which implies a rather thick, fixed and stable block upon which cores to be cut were struck) and bipolar percussion on an anvil (striking a core placed on an anvil block for support) were the main techniques used to produce the reduced cores found at Lomekwi 3: 42 per cent and 37 per cent, respectively of the 83 cores at Lomekwi 3 were definitely cut using these two techniques. It should be noted, however, that direct freehand percussion cannot be ruled out for the smallest pieces, but this technique is clearly not compatible with the large size of most of the raw blocks taken from the environment for cutting. The number of flakes produced from each core must have been significant, but only 35 have been found at the site to date. This deficit can be explained by the formation process of the site, as the conditions in which the artefacts were deposited at the bottom of the channel were not conducive to the preservation of small items, although the larger pieces were not moved, as evidenced by their physical condition. The lithic pieces found varied in size, the largest measuring about 20 centimetres in length (Harmand et al., 2015, extended Data table 2).

In addition to the 83 cores and 35 flakes found *in situ* and on the surface of the Lomekwi 3 site, researchers also found fifteen percussion stones. Seven bulky stones (average weight 6.5 kg, maximum weight 15 kg) are described as anvils or at least passive hammerstones; some featured hammering marks on one or two

2 Nachukui Formation is a Plio-Pelistocene sedimentary formation (4.5/0.7 Ma) divided into seven members; it forms part of the 'Omo Group' in the Lake Turkana basin and also includes the Shungura and Koobi Fora formations.

3 All the data presented here relating to Lomekwi 3 come from this article.

of their flat surfaces and/or typical angular fractures on their edges, identical to those on experimental material and on archaeological anvils found in most recent Oldowan sites; seven smaller ones (average weight 1.6 kg) are described as being hammerstones. The site therefore contains evidence of block cutting using at least two, maybe three, different techniques, as well as percussion tools used for this cutting, but which may also have been used for other percussion activities that have not yet been identified. The supply of locally sourced raw materials did not seem to be an issue and it seems that there was an adequate choice of rock available in nearby river beds. Basalt and phonolite are almost equal in percentage terms (34.9 per cent and 34.2 per cent, respectively) as well as trachyphonolite (23.5 per cent) in the form of pebbles and rocks of all sizes, but the largest ones were chosen.

The material found at Lomekwi 3 thus provides an exceptional collection, first because of its age and secondly because of its content, which offers vital information about the skills of at least one group of hominids from this period. Who could these creators of 'Lomekwian' tools have been? There are several potential theories, based on the fossil species known from this period in the Turkana basin and beyond in East Africa. The closest species is *Kenyanthropus platyops*, found in the 1990s in the same research zone as Lomekwi 3 and in the same sedimentary bed in the Nachuki Formation (Leakey et al., 2001). *Australopithecus afarensis*, to which *K. platyops* is sometimes related, is also the same age but mainly found in Afar, Ethiopia. At Dikika, in the middle Awash valley, bones with cutmarks dated to 3.39 Ma (Mac Pherron et al., 2010) were found in the same area as a juvenile of this fossil species (Alemseged et al., 2006). Finally, we cannot rule out the possibility that another, as yet unknown, species of *Australopithecus* or another genus were the first stone toolmakers. However, based on current research, it is certain that Lomekwi 3 dates back nearly a million years before the appearance of the genus *Homo* in the Turkana basin (Prat et al., 2005), and 0.5 Ma before that in the Ethiopian Afar region (Vilmoare et al., 2015), confirming that the appearance of stone tools can no longer be associated with that of our genus.

The first techno-cultural complexes

This is no longer the case with the early Oldowan, a term used to group currently known sites dated at 2.6 Ma to 2.3 Ma. These sites are compatible with the presence of the *Homo* genus, which were not accorded this seniority when most of them were discovered in the late 1970s.

Afar, Ethiopia and sites dating to 2.6 Ma

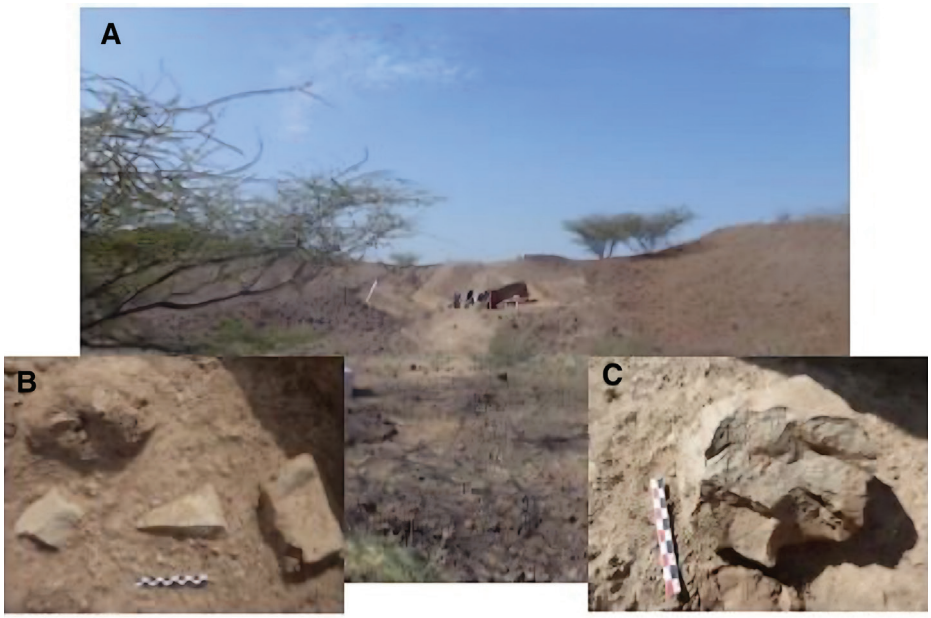
Archaeological research in the Afar region of Ethiopia began in the mid-1970s, and the first tools reliably dated to between 2.6 and 2.5 Ma were discovered there in 1976 during the fifth campaign of the International Afar Research Expedition (IARE) led by M. Taieb, D. Johanson and Y. Coppens. Among the various archaeological finds recorded in the upper part of the Hadar Formation,[4] the Kada Gona (KG) site 2.3.4, located on the main branch of the Gona river – a seasonal tributary of the Awash – yielded some fifteen artefacts in a conglomeratic layer flanked by two ash layers, which enabled them to be dated (Johanson et al., 1978, 1980; Roche and Toerceliin, 1977, 1980). Subsequent research led to the discovery of a low-density site (WG-1, West Gona) in a context of undisturbed fine sediment (Harris, 1983). However, it was mainly from the 1990s onwards that prospecting intensified and several excavations took place along different branches of the Gona River, especially at sites EG-10 and 12 (East Gona) and OGS-6 and OGS-7 (Ounda Gona South) (Semaw et al., 1997, 2003). Material from four other locations were then exploited, mainly for the study of raw materials (Stout et al., 2005): EG-13, DAN-1 and DAN-2 (for Dana Aoule North, another seasonal tributary of the Awash) and DAS-7 (for Dana Aoule South).

Of modest size (from 13 to 2 m^2) due to their cliffside location, the excavation of these sites yielded lithic material of varying density, comprising cores and flakes considered typical of Oldowan (Semaw, 2000; Semaw et al., 2010; Stout et al., 2010). It should be noted that the morphological and technological features of these cores are quite similar to those of the first pieces discovered in the mid-1970s. A number of them are in fact unifacial cores whose worked surface forms an almost abrupt angle with the striking surface, giving them a truncated appearance in their thickness (Figure 2).

Technically, all these cores seem to have been cut by direct percussion with a hard hammer and executed freehand,[5] which their size made possible, unlike what was observed at Lomekwi 3 (cf. *supra*). However, at Gona, knapping by

4 The word 'Hadar' covers several entities. First, it is a huge Plio-Pleistocene geological formation (Hadar Formation) located in the Ethiopian Rift Valley, in the far north of the country. Discovered by geologist Maurice Taieb at the late 1960s, it has since become a prime research site for several multi-disciplinary teams, each with its own name depending on the sub-region (Hadar, Gona, Dikika, etc.) where they worked (such as the pioneering International Afar Research Expedition in the 1970s), or are still working, such as the Dikika Research Project and Gona Palaeoanthropological Research Project, etc.

5 'Knapping technique is also uniform across the three sites and appears to be limited to the free-hand, hard-hammer direct percussion typical of Oldowan sites. There is no evidence to suggest the presence of bipolar, anvil or throwing techniques' (Stout et al., 2010, p. 484).



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Figure 2. *Lomewki 3, West Turkana, Kenya. A: view of the site; B and C: objects found in* situ *during excavation*

direct freehand percussion seems well established and would continue to be used throughout the Oldowan period, although the persistence of the other two cutting techniques (bipolar percussion on an anvil and percussion on a passive hammerstone) was probably underestimated.

At the Gona sites, a wide variety of raw materials has been observed both in fossil conglomerates near the site and in the archaeological material. All the sites indicated a preference for trachyte (*c.* 27.5 per cent), rhyolite (*c.* 25 per cent), aphanitic volcanic rock (*c.* 15 per cent) and latite (*c.* 10 per cent), lower percentages of other volcanic rock comprising the rest of the findings – including basalt, which nonetheless was highly present in fossil conglomerates. However, it is unclear whether larger blocks of rock than those selected were available (Stout et al., 2005).

Finally, who was the instigator of the early Oldowan artefacts found at Gona? It could potentially have been an Autralopithecus,[6] but we must mention the recent discovery of a jaw bone from the *Homo* genus dated to 2.8 Ma, discovered in the Ledi Geraru research zone, located a little north of

6 *Autralopithecus garhi* discovered in Bouri Formation (Middle Awash, Ethiopia), not far from the Gona sites, is considered a potential candidate (de Heinzelin et al., 1999).

the Awash and not far from the Gona sites (Vilmoare et al., 2015). Whoever he or she was, the Gona sites already form a small but unique group for their time period. Nevertheless, we can see some technological constants that are found throughout the Oldowan: choice of raw materials, mastery of direct hand percussion (which of course does not exclude the use of other techniques) and a diversity of core cutting techniques.

Oldowan between 2.4 and 2.3 Ma

Another 0.3 Ma gap occurred before the Oldowan reappeared in East Africa, this time in three distinct areas and with more sites: the first at Hadar in Afar, Ethiopia, the second in the Omo Valley (Ethiopia) and the third in the Nachukui formation, the latter two still in the Lake Turkana basin. Here we briefly present these groups of sites, geographically, moving from north to south. Most of these sites have been extensively researched, as they can be said to form the first true techno-cultural complexes of the early Oldowan period.

Hadar, in the Hadar Formation (Afar, Ethiopia)

In 1994, a small lithic assemblage dated to 2.34 Ma (Kimbel et al., 1996) was found at site A.L.666, in the Kada Hadar member of the Hadar Formation. This collection was in close spatial-temporal association with a hominid jaw bone attributed to the *Homo* genus and numerous faunal remains. In the early 2000s, a second site (A.L. 894), close to the first and of the same age was excavated, this time yielding abundant lithic material comprising more than 5,000 pieces, mainly whole and fragmented flakes and a few unifacial or bifacial cores. Based on what has been published about this material (Goldman and Hovers, 2009, 2012; Hovers, 2009), a techno-morphological relationship can be observed between certain cores and those from the Gona sites (Figure 3). Given that both collections may be the work of an early representative of the *Homo* genus, can we envisage local technical continuity, despite a time interval of 0.3 Ma?

Omo sites in the Shungura Formation (Lake Turkana basin, Ethiopia)

The Omo sites were the first from this time period to have been published, in the early 1970s. They were discovered during Franco-American scientific expeditions to the Omo,[7] and it was these discoveries that sparked the enthusiasm

7 The International Omo Research Expedition operated between 1967 and 1974 under the direction of Clark Howell and Yves Coppens, but archaeological research continued until 1977 under the direction of Jean Chavaillon (French team) and Harry Merrick (American team).

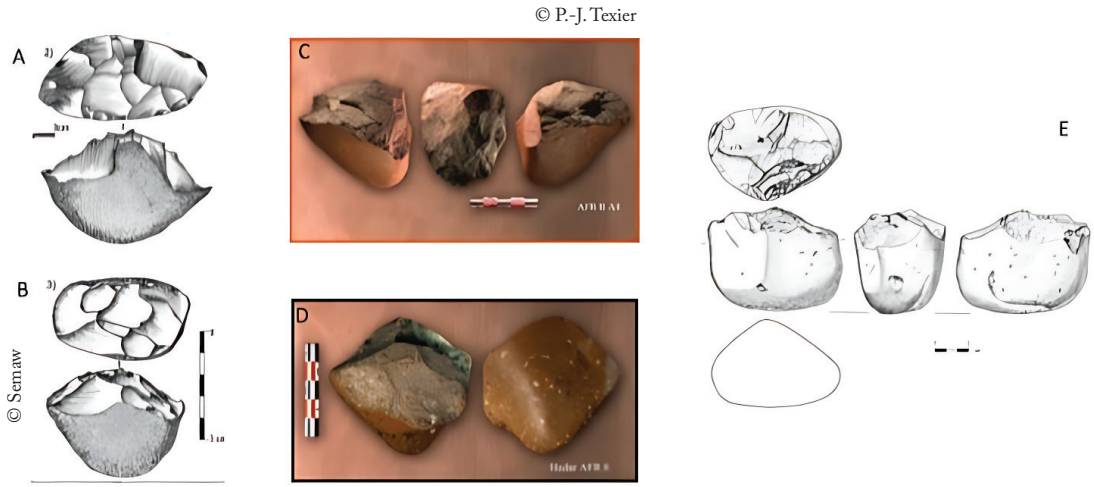


Figure 3. *Carved tools from Gona and Hadar. A: site EG 10; B: site EG 12 (Semaw et al., 2010); C and D: KG 2.3.4 site (Roche and Tiercelin, 1980); E: AL 894 site (Hovers, 2009)*

mentioned at the beginning of this article. However, not all of the sites published at the time (Chavaillon, 1970, 1976; Merrick, 1976; Merrick et al., 1973; Merrick and Merrick, 1976) have withstood subsequent re-examination of the geological context (Howell et al., 1987). It seems that seven sites discovered in the F Member of the Shungura Formation (2.34–2.32 Ma) and originating from various contexts are to be retained from this period of research.

Few technological details were provided about this material in articles from the 1970s, but two characteristics were highlighted: the almost exclusive use of small quartz nodules at certain sites, and the fact that the cutting activity seemed to be limited to breaking these small nodules by percussion. A re-examination of the material from these sites some thirty years after their discovery (de la Torre, 2004) revealed that, although the raw material severely limited the size of the lithic production and the cutting technique, the latter was essentially unifacial, minimal but well controlled, using direct freehand percussion or bipolar technique.

In 2007, archaeological research resumed in the Shungura Formation as part of a new international expedition.[8] The initial findings (Delagnes et al., 2011) are quite promising with regard to the number of sites included in Member F of the

8 Omo Group Research Expedition, led by Jean Renaud Boisserie (since 2006).

Shungura Formation, as systematic prospections and surveys in a limited area (less than 4 km^2) have almost tripled the number of known archaeological occurrences, bringing them to about thirty sites or site complexes; however, it does not appear that any sites older than 2.4 Ma have been uncovered so far. In addition, research into the origin of raw materials has shown that, although potential sources were indeed rare, they were composed of a variety of different rocks (lava, granite, cryptocrystalline siliceous rocks and quartz) in varying percentages, but in no case solely quartz. However, small nodules are indeed the norm. It therefore seems that quartz was deliberately chosen (Delagnes et al., 2011, p. 219), as we have already seen for other raw material in earlier collections.

Sites in the Nachukui Formation (Lake Turkana basin, Kenya)

Archaeological research in the Nachukui Formation, on the eastern shore of Lake Turkana, began in the late 1980s (Kibunjia et al., 1992) but intensified in the mid-1990s with the creation of the West Turkana Archaeological Project[9] (Roche, 2011; Roche et al., 2003). The research covers a broad time frame (from 3.5 Ma to 0.7 Ma) and therefore encompasses several techno-cultural complexes: the 'Lomekwian', mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the Oldowan and the Acheulean. In this section, we focus on the early Oldowan (between 2.4 and 2.3 Ma) in two site complexes, Lokalalei and Nasura. The Nasura complex is still under investigation and is comprised of three main sites – Nasura1, 2C and 3 – still unpublished. We can nevertheless say that the first two sites are located on either side of the Kalochoro tuff, which corresponds to Tuff F of the Shungura Formation, and is precisely dated to 2.34 Ma. Nasura 3 is a little more recent. The Lokalalei complex was one of the first to be investigated and, to date, half a dozen sites have been identified, including two key sites, Lokalalei 1 and Lokalalei 2C (Delagnes and Riche, 2005; Kibunjia, 1994; Roche et al., 1999). Both sites have been dated to 2.3 Ma but reveal some differences in terms of technology and context: one is a small, very well-preserved site in sand, while the other has undergone taphonomic processes (swelling and retraction of surrounding clay, insect nests, etc.) that have reshaped it.

The integrity of the Lokalalei 2C lithic assemblage has enabled numerous reconstructions to be carried out, revealing the recurrence of a simple but very effective cutting technique. Starting with a block with a plano-convex side (offering a favourable hammering platform), the flat section was reduced in an adjacent series of more or less invasive strikes – sometimes numerous – reducing

9 Run by Hélène Roche (with Mzalendo Kibunjia until 2009) from 1996 to 2011, then Sonia Harmand since 2012.

the core's height and thickness until completion. This method produced dozens of flakes from a single block of stone. Another less elaborate and more opportunistic method of cutting is also present; and it is the latter that is mainly found at Lokalalei 1 (Figure 4), with a lower production of flakes. For the first time, it was possible to demonstrate a certain intra- and inter-site variability, since organized and abundant flake production could go hand in hand with a more opportunistic and limited method, as early as the Oldowan period, dated at 2.3 Ma.



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Figure 4. *Lokalalei 2C, West Turkana, Kenya. A: view of the site; B: detail of the excavation; C: reconstruction No. 16, at least 73 flaked fragments, including 34 flakes and/or fragments reconstructed); D: reconstruction No. 33, at least 51 flaked fragments, including 38 flakes and/or fragments reconstructed*

A large amount of material bearing traces of hammering, not necessarily related to the size of the stone, accompanies these flaked assemblages from both sites. Furthermore, in Lokalalei (Harmand, 2009a) as at all the Nachukui Formation sites (Harmand, 2009b), it has been shown that raw materials were also sourced very locally from nearby river beds, with different choices being made depending on the site and time period. Finally, it is in the Lokalalei site complex that the first remains of the *Homo* genus were found in the Nachukui Formation (Prat et al., 2005).

Conclusion

The data presented above shows that not only are archaeological sites still rare for the end of the Pliocene, but that their distribution is limited, for the moment at least, to the northern and central part of the East African Rift Valley (Ethiopia, Kenya). From 2 Ma onwards, however, there is an impressive anthropic expansion, this time across several regions in Africa. The East African Rift Valley – and specifically the Lake Turkana basin – and its foothills are still prime research areas with a large number of sites or site complexes being exploited, such as Melka Kunture in the upper Awash Valley in Ethiopia, and of course the Olduvai in Tanzania. But South Africa, with its Transvaal sites, and North Africa's Aïn Hanech site, for example, are important milestones. It was probably during this period that the first 'exodus from Africa' took place.

Leaving aside the 'Lomekwian', represented at the moment by a single site, we can see that the technical characteristics that emerged during the early Oldowan (2.6 – 2.0 Ma) continued throughout the late Oldowan (2.0–1.5 Ma), with considerable variability depending on the site. It is worth noting the following: the choice of raw materials based on the petrography, volume and shape of the raw blocks; an almost unique mode of action, flaking, with simple but sometimes effective working patterns; and three main techniques – percussion on a hammerstone, bipolar percussion and direct freehand percussion. Other percussion activities should be added to this list but they are trickier to interpret.

From an anthropologial point of view, the recent Oldowan is definitely rooted in the *Homo* genus and it is the *ergaster* chronospecies (or *homo erectus,* depending on the author) who forged the other great techno-culture that also sprang from the Turkana basin around 1.75 Ma (Lepre et al., 2011) but went on to spread practically throughout the world: the Acheulean.

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CHAPTER 7

THE FIRST LITHIC ASSEMBLAGES AND CULTURAL COMPLEXES

Description and Distribution

Obarè B. Bagodo

Introduction

The terms 'anthropogenesis' and 'initial hominization' are used to refer to the tangible and explanatory evidence of the causes, mechanisms and processes involved in the biological, technical and cultural development of humankind. One such study is reviewed here, in conjunction with associated chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 and 9, in an approach that combines paleontological and/or paleoanthropological criteria with archaeological factors. Paleontological and/or paleoanthropological criteria considered include bipedalism, cerebralization and articulate speech (Coppens, 1980, 1983, 1988; Leakey, 1980; and several other sources). Archaeological criteria taken into account include the early manufacture and use of tools and their continuous improvement, the construction and constant renovation and improvement of dwelling places, the beginnings of human social life, and the controlled and continued use of fire (Balout, 1981; Leakey, 1979; and many others).

As paleontological and technological criteria have proved indispensable but insufficient for a broader grasp of early hominization, cultural and behavioural characteristics of initial human speciation are taken into account in compensation (Bradshaw, 2003; Foley et al., 1991; Ingold et al., 1994; Megarry, 1995). Such initial behavioural and psychological manifestations have led, both technically

and culturally, to constructed/improved dwelling places, foraging initiatives and wandering groups of scavengers. These were followed by a shift toward planned hunting-and-gathering sorties from more or less permanent base camps that were sometimes occupied in several phases, indicating the start of a safe and supportive human community. Hence the evolution of a stenotopic and environmentally determinist way of life followed by more adaptive, eurytopic behaviours involving reactive and/or proactive strategies when faced with climatic and ecological constraints. This is the scenario in Africa in the first instance (Balout, 1981; Butzer and Cooke, 1995 [1982]; Chavaillon, 1994; Grimaud-Hervé et al., 2005; Hours, 1987; Tobias et al., 2001) and, by extension, in the rest of the world (Hours, 1987; Megarry, 1995; Scarre et al., 2005; Tobias et al., 2001; Vrba et al., 1995). Such a scenario is retained initially in Africa (Balout, 1981; Butzer and Cooke, 1995 [1982]; Chavaillon, 1994; Grimaud-Hervé et al.; Hours, 1987; Megarry, 1995; Scarre et al., 2005; Tobias et al., 2001; Vrba et al., 1995).

The transition of hominin life from a stenotopically deterministic phase to a more adaptive eurytopic stage took technological and cultural shape during the archaic and lower phases of the Palaeolithic. Experts have identified, characterized and endorsed these phases as the first or oldest industrial and cultural complexes. Their spatio-temporal and typological distribution, now established in Africa, permits us to recognize that the continent was the birthplace of human beings (Balout, 1981; Bradshaw, 2003; Chavaillon, 1994; De Laet et al., 1994; Grimaud-Hervé et al., 2005; Harmand et al., 2015; Hours, 1987; Isaac, 1995; Leakey, 1971, 1979; Lumley, 2014; Scarre et al., 2005).

This chapter analyses the first or oldest industrial and cultural complexes. It starts with a methodological and theoretical framework, along with conceptual clarification that includes the appropriate names for selected objects (Brézillon, 1983). The analysis is rounded off with the spatio-temporal and typological description and distribution of these primary or more ancient technological and cultural complexes on the continent.

Methodological framework, conceptual and theoretical clarification

The archaeological approach to early hominization has led experts continuously to cross-examine the relevance of their choice of justification criteria. When querying whether a tool is a reliable criterion of hominization and deciding if it permits us to locate its beginnings and whether it can be

identified with any certainty at this stage, Balout suggested applying the notion of a 'technical threshold' that requires answering two questions: 'how?' and 'when?' (Balout, 1981, p. 413). To the key question of whether a tool allows us to understand the beginnings of hominization, the pre-emptory answer is that it does not. The reasons are that: (i) only fossilized bones and stones have come down to us; (ii) 'a human group can perfectly well get all its implements from the vegetable world' (the classic example being the Menkopis of the Andaman Islands); and (iii) the Oldowan (Mode 1) lithic industry's number and variety of tools and weapons, and debitage analysis, do not indicate 'a beginning' but 'rather the completion of a process' (ibid., pp. 414–15).

With regard to the associated question as to whether the early human tool was distinct – the beginning of an indefinable response – we note the presumed existence of an 'osteodontokeratic industry (tools made from bone, teeth and horn)' (prelithic?) at Makapansgat in South Africa, advocated by R. Dart from 1949 to 1960. Its importance, vigorously debated until 1970, was reinforced by the co-existence of a lithic industry at Sterkfontein in 1955 and, above all, backed-up by M. Leakey's well-illustrated publication on lithic assemblages from Olduvai Gorge (1971, 1979). It can therefore be argued that there may have been a bone industry parallel to the lithic industry, but one that is more difficult to analyse, neither industry being older anywhere than in Africa (Balout, 1981, pp. 415–17).

After its foundation in 1947 in Nairobi, the Pan-African Congress on Prehistory and Related Studies hosted a succession of conferences until the Thirteenth Congress in Nairobi in 1977, when it became an Association and focused once more on debating the methodology, terminology and nomenclature of Stone Age archaeology. This led to the following conclusions: (i) particular attention to be paid to terminology in the *Atlas of African Prehistory* (Clark, 1967); (ii) accepted (lithic) typology, in general, to be less rigid and more flexible to promote an adequate understanding of the origins of human behaviour; (iii) renewed usage of the concepts of 'Early', 'Middle' and 'Late' Stone Age, in appropriate contexts (Leakey, 1980; Ogot et al., 1980, pp. 13-43).

Since the 1980s and 1990s, debates on the methodology, terminology and nomenclature of Stone Age archaeology have been less systematically organized at continental fora. This was the case at the Ninth Congress at Jos (Nigeria) in 1983 (Andah et al., 1993), the Tenth Congress at Harare in 1995 (Pwiti, 1996; Soper et al., 1996) and the Eleventh Congress at Bamako in 2001 (Sanogo, 2004; Togola et al., 2004), and so forth. Nevertheless, precisions, clarifications, consolidations, updates and/or constructive corrections have continued to be

carried out in a methodical and theoretically honed manner with regard to naming stone tools, applied to the world in general (Brézillon, 1983; Hours, 1987; Odell, 2003; Toth and Schick, 1998; Tivier et al., 1980) and to Africa in particular (Bagodo, 1995, 2008–2009, 2012; Butzer and Cooke, 1995; Isaac, 1972, 1995). In conjunction with the preceding Chapter 7 (cf. Roche, 1989), further reflection is borne out by the testimony below.

The first industrial complexes: Oldowan and Early Acheulean

Based on the technical and morphological classification of 'Pebble Culture' by Van Riet Lowe in 1952, and previous designations for the three types of Palaeolithic tools by Movius, Balout (1981) was led to characterize 'Pebble Culture' as too complex to be an actual beginning. Moreover, Van Riet said that it contained, potentially, all of the possibilities that would lead to the classic biface and hand-axe industries of the Lower Palaeolithic in Africa. Three and a half decades later, this viewpoint was developed further by H. and M.-A. de Lumley (2014) who, having compared twenty-first century derivatives with choppers (unifacial scrapers) and associated flakes dating back 2.5 million years (Ma) from the Ethiopian site of Gona, wrote the following:

> The most important inventions by mankind were (…), flakes and choppers as they attest to the emergence of conceptual thought, in which all inventions in human history were already inscribed. If there had never been a first tool, and then a second, etc, there would not be particle accelerators, supercomputers or interplanetary spaceships today (Lumley, 2014, pp. 40-41).

The two points of view therefore converge to validate the complexity and virtual potential already inherent, as Leroi-Gourhan says (1983, pp. 249-57), in these 'early cutting tools' that he situates within the perspective of 'technique and society in the animal realm and human world' (ibid., pp. 68-84) in order to address the issue of 'technological illusion' (ibid., pp. 85-94) as follows: 'Of all human activities, technique is the only one that never returns to its starting point … techniques are not rethought, they are learnt … they progress cumulatively by means of imperceptible improvements' (ibid., pp. 86-87). Accordingly, by associating the concept of 'tool' and its 'symbol' (Coppens, 1988, pp. 191-95) with that of 'the origin and evolution of the tool' (ibid., pp. 195-98), the following observation was made: 'this extension of the body that we call the tool

… is cut for a specific purpose: it is the project initiator. Therefore, it represents both consciousness and knowledge' (ibid., p. 195).

Based on a critique of models inspired by comparative studies on human behaviour (early/prehistoric and ethnographic) and animal behaviour (large primates), G. L. Isaac (1972, 1982) suggests that the analogy with the cybernetic phenomenon of 'feedback' (feedback effect) is indispensable in discussions on the connections between the evolutionary aspects of said behaviour (Isaac, 1972, pp. 172-74). He thereby evokes a certain analytical inefficiency of current models, including those based on connections between the transition to life in open spaces, bipedalism, utilization of tools, manufacturing of tools, brain development, language and the development of culture, division of labour and the union of family groups, small-scale hunting and cooperation during large-scale hunting (ibid., pp. 172-73). From this perspective, focused mainly on an integrated and adaptive approach to change in all implicated aspects, language and cooperation may well be integrated into functional complexity following long historical evolutions throughout the system as a whole (ibid., p. 174).

The aforementioned authors talk about the oldest/earliest 'industrial complexes' as being markers of the emergence of humanity (Chavaillon, 1994; Grimaud-Hervé et al., 2005, pp. 46–64; Harmand et al., 2015, pp. 310–26; Hours, 1987; Leakey, 1979; Megarry, 1995; Scarre et al., 2005, pp. 61–82; Wynn, 1988, pp. 133–61). The beginning of humanity, based on the first tool with its attributed symbolism, complexity and virtual potential, gradually released/retained the notion of industrial complexes during the early phase of the Palaeolithic. H. and M.-A. de Lumley (2014) suggested the beginnings of the Lower Palaeolithic at Gona (Ethiopia) as being around 2.5 Ma. However, older assemblages found at Lomekwi 3 (West Turkana, Kenya) pushed the date range of this 'event' back to 3.3 Ma (Harmand et al., 2015; Roche, 1989, Chapter 7). *De facto*, the early Stone Age is now situated between 3.3 Ma and 1.9 Ma, and the beginnings of the Lower Palaeolithic around 1.8 Ma to 1.5 Ma.

Such a repositioning of the outer limits of the early Stone Age can only add more colour to the debate about the 'slowness', or not, of technological and cultural development until the Lower Palaeolithic. The long chronological perspective brings increased appellations and nomenclature to already quite diverse Palaeolithic sequences, as well as more confusion (Bagodo, 1995, 2008-2009; 2012, pp. 12-14, 161-75). In Africa, where these sequences are the longest and most varied, the overview compiled by Isaac (1995) in 1982 remains an undisputed reference work. Complex, illustrated and comprehensive, the study focuses on the characteristics and chronology of the 'earliest archaeological

traces' then known on the continent and dating to 2.6 Ma (ibid., pp. 173-75, tab. 3.4; pp. 176-77, fig. 3.4). The review is not, however, impervious to criticism, one failing being the omission of West African sites (cf. ibid., figs. 3.5, 3.6, 3.7) that had already been methodically excavated but were missing dating records (Bagodo, 2012, pp. 161-68).

As well as participating at the Pan-African Congresses on Prehistory, Isaac contributed greatly to debates on the identification and denomination of archaic technocultural sequences in Palaeolithic Africa (Isaac, 1972, 1995; Leakey, 1971, 1979). He was therefore well placed to assert his preference for the use of the terms 'industry' and 'industrial complex' over 'culture', and to give central importance to the degree of factual evidence provided by artefacts, both in the identification and study of sites and in understanding the functional use of these artefacts in relation to the skill of their makers and users. He also highlighted the importance of the unchanged primary context of said sites – as temporary camps, workshop areas or permanent, constructed dwelling places – and of the spatial distribution of artefacts. Well-known sites like Olduvai, Gona, Omo, Koobi Fora, Melka Kunture, Olorgesailie and others were called upon to support the argument (Isaac, 1995, pp. 157-66). A reserved position towards other views or frameworks that rendered the naming of artefacts and their associated nomenclatures universal and/or irreversible led him to point out the weakness of archaeologists' knowledge regarding the specific functions of the earliest tools and the speculative character of their interpretations. Among the 'Five Modes' of industrial complexes proposed by J. G. D. Clark (1969) and not invalidated by subsequent restructuring into 'Six Modes' (Odell, 2003; Toth and Schick, 1996), the two earliest retained and identified by Isaac (1995, pp. 167-72) are: (i) Mode 1: Oldowan and Developed Oldowan, and (ii) Mode 2: Acheulean. He even pointed out that the term 'techno-complex', borrowed from D. L. Clarke (1968, pp. 206, 328-30), seemed more meaningful, even though the reality remains more of a polysemic definition of this term and its extensive application to Modes 1 and 2 considered below.

The adoption for decades of the paradigmatic concepts of (i) Mode 1: Oldowan and Developed Oldowan and (ii) Mode 2: Acheulean, and their application in the analysis of the characteristics and distribution of the oldest or first lithic techno-complexes in Africa, require justification. First, the word 'mode', derived from the Latin '*modus*' and of masculine gender, refers to the general manner in which a situation presents itself or an action manifests itself. From this term we get the expressions 'methods of production' for goods and 'ways of life', used to define different organizational stages in human society.

Prehistoric archaeology generally has access only to vestiges of material life in order to explain the first or most ancient technological stages of humanity. The usual theoretical and methodological approach allowed the adoption of the two concepts of Oldowan and Acheulean to define and chronologically categorize the two technological phases for stones that had been deliberately cut and used within a programmatic and controlled mindset (Isaac, 1972).

However, the very recent arrival on the scene of Lomekwian lithics older than Oldowan by some 0.7 Ma (Harmand et al., 2015) meant that the Lower Palaeolithic had to be subdivided into Lomekwian as the new Mode 1, Oldowan (Classic and Developed) as the new Mode 2, Acheulean as the new Mode 3, and so on for the later stages. This chapter takes into account mainly the Lomekwian stage (cf. Roche, 1989, Chapter 7) and the initial Oldowan and Acheulean stages (1.8 Ma to 1.5 Ma).

Lower Palaeolithic: Lomekwian and Oldowan industries (Classic and Developed)

The general term of Lower Palaeolithic is used to define the technological stage of cut tools/debitage in a lithic assemblage and derived artefacts that have evolved over time at industrial lithic complexes, now determined as dating to between 3.3 Ma and 1.9 Ma. Starting with the Lomekwian lithic industry dating to 3.3 Ma (Harmand et al., 2015; Roche, 1989, Chapter 7), the Lower Palaeolithic now spans three technological ages: the Lomekwian, Classic Oldowan and Developed Oldowan. The suggestion, therefore, is that the Five Mode scheme that J. G. D. Clark proposed (1969), modified to Six Modes (Toth and Schick, 1996; Odell, 2003), has now progressed to Seven Modes, the first associated with the Lomekwian, the second Oldowan and Developed Oldowan, the third Acheulean, etc. The distribution of the most representative sites covers most of the continent, as shown below (Figures 1 and 2).

Oldowan lithic industry: new Mode 2 (between 2.6 and 1.5 Ma)

Acceptance of the validity of the Lomekwian industry means: (i) retaining the Oldowan industry as the new Mode 2, and (ii) dismissing the sub-denomination of pre-Oldowan referred to earlier in favour of differentiation from the Classic Oldowan (Lumley, 2014, p. 40). As regards Gona, formerly credited as being the oldest dated site, some experts have already rejected the concept of pre-Oldowan (Toth and Schick, 2005, p. 71, referring to Roche,

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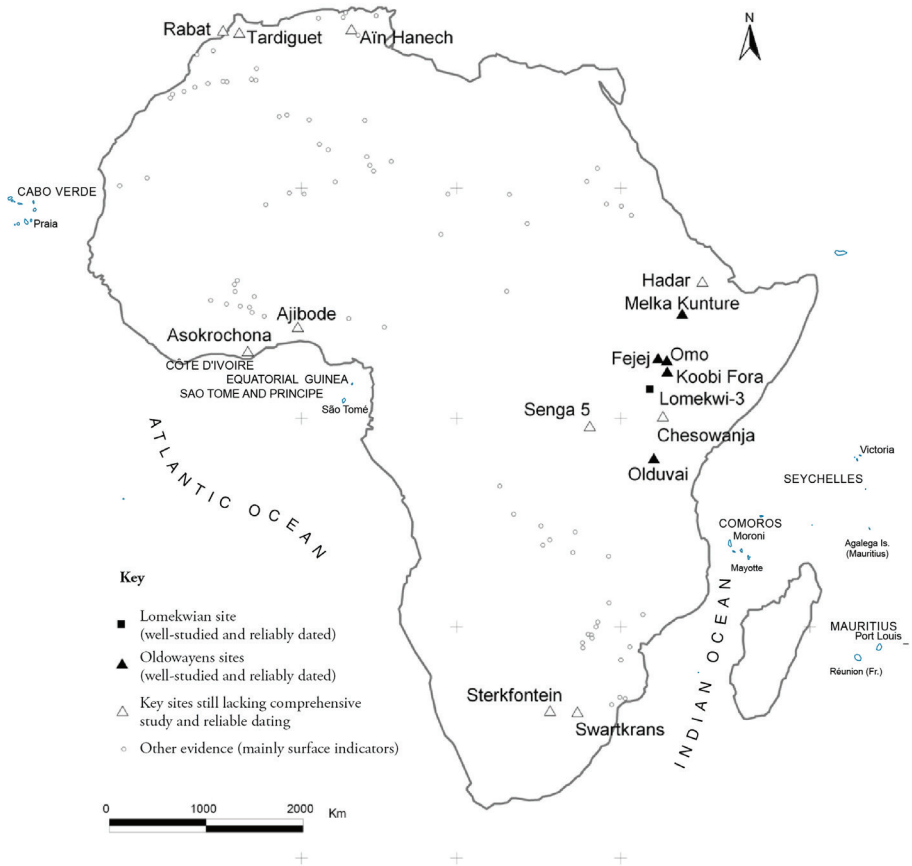


FIGURE 1. *Map of distribution of Lomekwian and Oldowan sites in Africa, dating between 3.3 and 1.8 million years ago*

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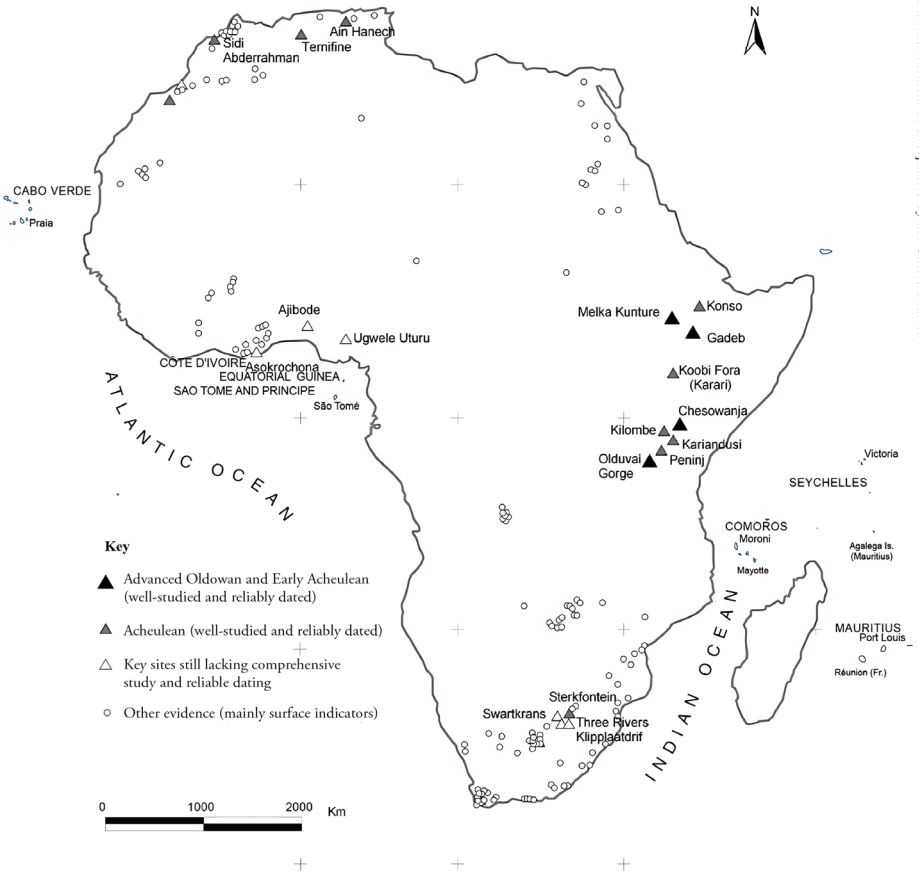


Figure 2. *Map of distribution of Developed Oldowan and Early Acheulean sites in Africa, dating between 1.5 and 0.7 million years ago*

1989). Others recalled that the Oldowan stage was followed by the Developed Oldowan artefact tradition, identified as having three successive stages labelled as DOA, DOB and DOC (Leakey, 1971; Reynolds, 1996a, p. 538).

For decades, in the early history of the periods of Stone Age tools (Balout, 1980; Chavaillon, 1994; Isaac, 1972, 1995; Leakey, 1971, 1979), whether in 'Terminology and technology' (Tixier et al., 1980), 'Denomination of objects' (Brézillon, 1983) or even 'Terminology, typology and nomenclature' (Bagodo, 1995), the Oldowan technological stage was generally presented and accepted as corresponding to the Lower Palaeolithic (Hours, 1987, pp. 29-46). The Lower Palaeolithic is referred to as an 'industry' and/or an 'industrial complex' in encyclopaedic dictionaries (Fagan et al., 1996; Leroi-Gourhan et al., 1988), as well as in specialized studies (Chavaillon, 1994, p. 37; Isaac, 1995, p. 168) and features characteristic items: uniface pebble tools (choppers) or bifaces (chopping tools), polyhedrons, discoids, multiform scrapers with sharp edges and small useable cutting flakes, etc. Occasionally, partial assembly has established the existence of industrial operating chains with angles of debitage in the assemblage varying between 80° and 100° for Oldowan choppers and 70° to 80° for Acheulean choppers (Chavaillon, 1994, p. 37).

Techno-industrial features such as these are similar to the oldest known cores, anvils and hammer tools and sharp-edged flakes mentioned above, dating to 3.3 Ma and grouped under the recently defined Lomekwian industrial stage (Harmand et al., 2015; Roche, 1989, Chapter 7). Obviously, there are differences with the Oldowan stage, including a marked rise in frequency. This includes uniface stone tools (choppers), bifaces (chopping-tools), polyhedrons and discoids, among others.

As the manufacture and use of Oldowan tools are studied in more detail above (cf. Roche, 1989, Chapter 7), an updated spatial distribution of sites producing said tools is taken into account here, as follows (cf. Chavaillon, 1994, pp. 35-43, figs. 8.1, 8.3; Grimaud-Hervé, 2005, pp. 50-52; Reynolds, 1996a, pp. 537-38; Roche, 1989, Chapter 7; Toth and Schick, 2005, pp. 71-73).

East Africa

In the Kada Hadar Member of the Hadar formation, sites dated at 2.6-2.5 Ma near the Kada Gona river (Afar, Ethiopia) produced 81 artefacts in 1976 (choppers, chopping tools, cores and flakes) and more than 3,000 similar artefacts in 1993-94, revealing a fairly organized and intensive debitage. Close by, near the Ounda Gona river, two sites of a similar age delivered several hundred bone-cut artefacts

in 2000. Finally, only the Al-666 site, which dates back more than 2 Ma, produced 34 artefacts, with a fossil maxilla specimen attributed to the genus *Homo*.

In the Shungura (Omo, Ethiopia) and Nachkui (West Turkana, Kenya) formations, the Omo (2.3 Ma) and Lokalelei 1 and 2c (2.34 Ma) sites confirmed both the age of the first industries and the already organized knapping stone cutting techniques, as indicated by the numerous reassemblages of fragments from the Lokalelei 2c industrial complex.

On the border between Ethiopia and Kenya, in the Fejej region, fluvial deposits from the tributaries of the lake and/or the paleo Omo River preserved the 'Fj-1' site excavated from 1992 to 2002, which delivered more than 2,000 cut (quartz) tools with an age of 1.96 Ma. Numerous refitting initiatives seemed to indicate a stone-cutting workshop occupied for short periods. In the Koobi Fora tuffs region (East Turkana, Kenya), small cores and quartz flakes comparable to those from the Omo valley were found on several sites on the volcanic ridge dating to 1.8 Ma. In Tanzania, the famous eponymous site of Olduvai delivered cut stone tools and unmodified or retouched flakes older than 1.8 Ma, from the base of Bed I. Artefacts found in Bed II, dated between 1.7 Ma and 1.45 Ma, showed that the Developed Oldowan was a more diverse pebble culture with quartz, quartzite and silex cut tools including scrapers and points. In Ethiopia, the banks of River Awash preserved the sites of the Melka Kunture complex, with Oldowan industries at Karre I, Gombore I and Garba IV dated at between 1.7 and 1.5 Ma.

In Uganda, the Nyabusosi site, dated to 1.5 Ma, delivered an Oldowan assemblage of approximately 600 artefacts, 80 per cent of which were fashioned from quartz.

South Africa

In South Africa, famous paleontological sites at Sterkfontein and Swartkrans contained lithic industries in layers dating from between 2 Ma and 1.5 Ma, comparable to those at Olduvai, and comprising cut stone tools and unmodified and retouched flakes. The Kromdraai B site produced an assemblage of mainly Developed Oldowan artefacts. In northern Malawi, the Mwinbia site produced typical Oldowan quartz and quartzite artefacts consisting of cores, retouched tools and fragments with faunal dating to at least 1.6 Ma.

Table 1. *Sites and specifications of the first industrial and cultural complexes*

Chronosequence	3.3-2.6 Ma
Mode/technological stage	Mode 1 (new)
Industry	Lomekwian
Sites and industrial/cultural complexes (Lomekwian and Classic Oldowan)	
One site only: Lomekwi-3 (West Turkana) **Tools:** Anvils including two weighing 12 kilograms (kg) and 4.9 kg, anvils, cores including three unifaces weighing 1.85 kg, 3.45 kg and 4.74 kg; bipolar cutting technique; dispersed preparatory battering marks on cores to break off flakes; negative bulbs of previous percussion on dorsal surfaces of flakes; cortical flakes including one weighing 650 grams (g). Cutting techniques and derived products both testify to first lithic industry, now Mode 1 or first-stage of Lower Palaeolithic. **Habitat and way of life:** Beginning of specification of a nomadic, stenotopic, eco-deterministic human way of life, perhaps not yet family at Lomekwi-3, pre-/proto-family later (?) at Kada Gona, Lokalelei I and 2C, or even at the AL-666 /Hadar site (?).	
Chronosequence	2.6-1.6 Ma
Mode/technological stage	Mode 2 (new)
Industry	Oldowan (Early/Classic)
Sites and industrial/cultural complexes (Lomekwian and Classic Oldowan)	
Sites: Kada Gona and AL-666 (Hadar), Lokalelei I and 2C (West Turkana), Omo 71, Fejej-FJ-1 (South Ethiopia), Olduvai (Beds I, II), Melka Kunture (Gombore I), Swartskrans (Members 1), Aïn Hanech (Algeria), Mwimbi (Malawi), Senga 5-A (?) (Democratic Republic of Congo). **Tools**: Uniface cut-stone tools called choppers or biface tools (chopping tools), polyhedrons, discoids, sharp-edged multiform scrapers, small cutting/useable flakes; debitage mass analysis reveals choppers and chopping tools with angles of 80° to 100°; partial refitting establishing operational sequences; industry now Mode 2 or second-stage Lower Palaeolithic. **Habitat and way of life**: Sizeable workshop areas, simple/temporary base camps and cultural centres for hominin families improving stenotopic way of life (DK 1 at Olduvai, KBS at Koobi Fora and Fejej Fj-1 (Ethiopian Omo).	

Source: Obarè B. Bagodo.

Table 1. (cont.)

Chronosequence	1.6-1.3 Ma
Mode/technological stage	Mode 3 (new)
Industry	Developed Oldowan
Sites and industrial and cultural complexes (Developed Oldowan and Early Acheulean)	
Sites: Olduvai (Bed II), MelkaKunture (Garba IV), Koobi Fora (Karari), Swartkrans (Members 2-3), Sterkfontein (Member 5), Kromdraai B, Chesowanja (Kenya), Peninj ST Site Complex (Tanzania), Senga 5-A(?) (Democratic Republic of Congo). **Tools**: Typical Oldowan tools with more evolved/diverse tools including scrapers and points made from quartz, quartzite and silex (Olduvai, Bed II); pebble culture including unmodified and retouched flakes (Garba IV, Melka Kunture); Karari industry at Koobi Fora; Developed Oldowan industry (Kromdraaia B) and subdivided in stages A, B and C at Olduvai (Bed II); now third stage of Lower Palaeolithic. **Habitats and way of life**: Sizeable workshops, more structured base camps (less temporary) for the beginning of a multi-family social structure, with a stenotopic lifestyle at DK 1, KBS and Fejej Fj-1, etc. **Possible use of fire**: Traces at Swartkrans.	
Chronosequence	1.4-0.7 Ma
Mode/technological stage	Mode 4 (new)
Industry	Early Acheulean
Sites and industrial and cultural complexes (Developed Oldowan and Early Acheulean)	
Sites: Olduvai (Beds II and III), Koobi Fora, Chesowanja, Melka Kunture (Garba IV-D and XII-J), Swatkrans, Sterkfontein, Thomas Quarry I and Sidi Abderrahman (Morocco), Ternifine (Algeria), Senga 5-A(?) (R.D. Congo), Asokrochona (?), Ajibode (?) and Ugwele Uturu (West Africa); a number of other sites. **Tools**: Lower Palaeolithic or Acheulean, now Mode 4 or fourth stage of lithic technology; greater tool diversity (40 per cent bifaces?) with unmodified and retouched flakes and scrapers; biface tools or axes/cleavers; hand axes (African Acheulean). Technology and economical use of raw materials: cutting at angles of 70° to 80°, with symmetry/initial morphological balance. **Habitats and way of life**: Sizeable workshops, permanent and more complex camps to consolidate a multi-family social structure appropriate for an early eurytopic and migratory way of life out of Africa, at Olduvai (Bed II), Fxjj20 (KBS/Koobi Fora), Gadeb, Chesowanja, Swartkrans etc. **Probable use of fire**: Physical and geochemical traces, but no tangible evidence of structured hearths, at Olduvai (Bed II), Fxjj20 (KBS), Gadeb, Chesowanja, Swartkrans.	

Source: Obarè B. Bagodo.

Central and Northern Africa

In Central Africa, the open-air site at Senga 5, located in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the stratigraphic context of which was contaminated by infiltration, delivered numerous consumed animal bones along with hundreds of quartz and quartzite tools including cores, flakes and fragments in artefact-bearing layers. Dating has proved problematic but is estimated at between 2.3 Ma and 1.9 Ma.

In Northern Africa, the neighbouring sites of Aïn Hanech and El-Kherba in Algeria, dated at approximately 1.8 Ma, have borne tools associated with Oldowan industries including choppers, polyhedrons, battered spheroids, small cores, and unmodified or retouched flakes (Toth and Schick 2005, p, 73, quoting Sahnouni et al. 1996, 2002). Conversely, the geological sequence at Casablanca (Morocco), the status of Pebble Culture and of lithic items from Siddi Abderrahman older than the Acheulean, have recently been contested to the extent of observing the geofacts and crediting the earlier level of occupation at the Thomas Quarry as being Early Acheulean and dated at approximately 1 Ma (Toth and Schick 2005, p. 73, quoting Raynal et al. 2002).

Early Lower Palaeolithic: Early Acheulean industry (new Mode 3; beginning between 1.8 Ma and 1.5 -1.4 Ma)

The preceding analysis reveals a chronological overlap between the end of the Oldowan and the Early Lower Palaeolithic over a considerable period spanning 1.8 Ma and 1.5-1.4 Ma (cf. Chavaillon 1994, pp. 35-43, figs. 8.2, 8.4; Grimaud-Hervé., 2005, pp. 53-54; Reynolds 1996a, pp. 537-38; Thot and Schick, 2005, pp. 71-73). The Lower Palaeolithic, referred to earlier as the equivalent to Mode 2 (ancient) or to Mode 3 (new), is defined as a lithic industrial complex routinely referred to as Acheulean with 40 per cent of bifaces remaining under debate (Isaac, 1995, pp. 168-69). Bifaces used as axes or cleavers are now huge, with transversal cutting edges, and are called hand axes, known to characterize the Acheulean in Africa (Brézillon, 1980, pp. 117; 1983, pp. 249-52; Roche, 1989, Chapter 7). When it came to the cutting technique, the economical use of raw materials, morphology and typology of these biface tools (cf. Roche, 1989, Chapter 7), experts recognized a qualitative development (Grimaud-Hervé et al., 2005, pp. 53-54, 57). Thus, according to some of the latter, bifacial industries testify to the beginning of humanity because of the 'notion of symmetry and sense of harmony' of these tools (Lumley, 2014, p. 68).

On the continent, the spatial and chronological distribution of industrial complexes (Acheulean) during the early lower Palaeolithic is shown in decreasing age order (Figure 2).

East Africa

The review begins with the Konso-Gardula site, east of the Omo Valley in Ethiopia, the discovery of which in 1991 was followed in 1993 and 1994 by extensive explorations of the key lacustrine and fluvial sediments (180 metres deep) dated to between 1.7 Ma and 0.7 Ma (Beyene et al., 1996; Lumley, 2014). A recent article entitled: 'Konso: the first bifaces' (de Lumley, 2014, pp. 67-68) refers to 'early bifaces' in levels dated to 1.6 Ma, presented as being '*the oldest bifacial industries in the history of humanity*', preceded by 'the first picks', pebbles cut to a point by means of unifacial reduction with a trihedral section associated with large flakes with long cutting edges (de Lumley, 2014, p. 67). It is, however, appropriate to quickly note another, slightly different viewpoint, according to which,

> [T]he earliest, currently acknowledged, bifaces have come from the Kokiselei 4 site in western Turkana and are dated between 1.7 and 1.6 million years old and from the upper levels of Swartskrans (South Africa) also dated at between 1.7 and 1.5 million years old. The stratigraphy of sites that have delivered the oldest tools allow us to study the transitional phase between the early and lower Palaeolithic, and then the evolution of the Lower Palaeolithic (Grimaud-Hervé et al., 2005, p. 54).

Furthermore, at Olduvai, a more diverse industry with scrapers and points from the Developed Oldowan found in Bed II (1.7 Ma and 1.45 Ma) preceded, then overlapped with, the Acheulean industrial complex with its more sophisticated pebble culture, numerous bifaces and retouched flakes in Beds III and IV. In Ethiopia at the Melka Kunture sites, Oldowan industries at Karre and Gombore I (1.7 Ma to 1.6 Ma) and Garba IV (1.5 Ma to 1.3 Ma) featured several levels containing bifaces, hand axes and flakes indicating significant long-term occupation and, respectively, Early Acheulean levels at Garba IV-D and XII-J (1 Ma) (Chavaillon, 1988, pp. 413, 433, 682-83; 1994, pp. 35-43). At Koobi Fora (Kenya), the Karari industry evolved from the Developed Oldowan to the Acheulean between 1.65 Ma and 1.25 Ma.

South and North Africa

In South Africa, as mentioned above, Early Acheulean industries operated alongside Developed Oldowan industries at the South African sites of Sterkfontein and Swartkrans very early on, between 1.7 Ma and 1.5 Ma.

In North Africa, the aforementioned debates relating to industries prior to or comparable to the Acheulean are worth noting in order to emphasize the need to continue with research and discussions already underway on the lithic artefacts found at Siddi Abderrahman, in particular those from the oldest level of occupation at the Thomas Quarry (Thot and Schick, 2005, p. 73, quoting Raynal et al., 2002).

Central and West Africa

In Central Africa, cross-dating methodologies, including optically stimulated luminescence at the open-air site of Senga 5 (Democratic Republic of Congo), represent a challenge that must be addressed to clarify the existence of the Early Acheulean.

In West Africa, issues regarding the characterization and reliable dating of the stages of the Oldowan and early lower Palaeolithic continue to be a major concern that has yet to be resolved (Andah, 1979a-b; 1995; Bagodo, 2008-2009, 2012; Shaw, 1980).

Description and distribution of the first cultural complexes (Oldowan and Early Acheulean)

Until now, this study has focused on pebbles or blocks of stone used as hammerstones or battering tools to shape other pebbles or blocks in a chain of technical actions to fashion Lomekwian, Oldowan and/or Early Acheulean tools (cf. Roche, 1989, Chapter 7). These have been accepted and named as artefacts to signify that they are the material representation of what Leroi-Gourhan (1971) described in 1943 as the 'technological structure of human societies', breaking it down to a trilogy of 'Tendance et fait' (technical tendency and fact), 'Degrés du fait' (degrees of specificity) and 'Hiérarchie des techniques' (hierarchy of techniques) (Leroi-Gourhan, 1971, pp. 23-42). The dialectical relationship underpinning this trilogy led to the conclusion that 'the technical level is potentially equivalent in all men, so there is no "hierarchy" other than a socio-economic one' (ibid., p. 41). This conclusion firmly places cultural determinants, including social and economic factors, at the initial stage of anthropogenesis. Social and economic hierarchies and differentiation, even at this initial stage, induce a neuropsychological apptitude that can be analysed in its cognitive, psychomotive and socio-affective dimensions (Bradshaw, 2003;

Megarry, 1995). The interactive analysis is complex, at both the individual and phylogenetic levels, and is marked in general by the 'date palm method', which makes a distinction between phylum 'inflorescence' and 'bushes' or 'bouquets' (Coppens, 1983, pp. 26; 42). Phylogenists and cladists continue to debate this point (Coppens, 1983, Chapter 2; Coppens and Geraads, 1994, pp. 28-34).

Thus it seems that by adopting a cross-disciplinary perspective that is not or is only slightly inclined towards some degree of sociobiological reductionism (Wilson, 2000) or anthropo-ecologist reductionism (Butzer, 1994), we can understand and explain evolution through two modes of life: stenotopic and eurythopic (Megarry, 1995). The earlier stenotopic lifestyle was, presumably, essentially ecologically determined during the industrial Lomekwian and Oldowan stages between 3.3 Ma and 1.8 Ma. The eurytopic lifestyle undoubtedly followed and must have been relatively adaptive owing to the application of psychomotive skills, a proactive and reactive manner in response to constraints that climate, fauna and flora exerted. It might have begun with varying degrees of success from the Early Acheulean industrial stage, which saw the introduction of bifaces between 1.8 Ma and 1.5 Ma.

The relative variability of artefacts, and the gradual increase in this variability from Classic Oldowan industries to developed ones (new Mode 2), have been discussed above. Greater typological variability of artefacts and their spacial distribution in an increasing number of sites is observed during the Early Acheulean or new Mode 3 (cf. Roche, 1989, Chapter 7). Hence, poorer visibility (temporarily?) materialized across the African continent from the east to the south, then to the north, and then to the centre and to the west, mirroring the 1955 vision of anthropogenesis powerfully expressed by Teilhard de Chardin in the phrase: '[t]he next step of terrestrial evolution: the Noosphere (mind sphere)' (Teilhard de Chardin, 1970 [1955] , p. 177). This would see the emergence of a terrestrial space covered with *noumena* (or thinking layer, in Greek) and, at the fringes, *gnôsis* (knowledge, science, in Greek). The new terrestrial 'Noosphere', or technologically and culturally manufactured mental sheath, is referenced here, with scientific reserve regarding the Christian teleological aspects assumed by its proponent in his attempt to explain early hominization in particular.

Characterization and distribution of the first cultural complexes: Modes 1, 2 and 3

Before the 'Deployment of the Noosphere' (ibid., p. 189) across the planet, and gradually throughout time, its early characteristics were therefore recognized to have been shaped in Africa, the cradle of the human race. Associated with the

lithic industries already identified and localized above (Figures 1 and 2) (cf. Roche, 1989, Chapter 7, figs. 8.1, 8.2), the initial characteristics of the Noosphere were also behavioural in nature, hence socio-affective and economic (Bradshaw, 2003; Foley et al., 1991; Ingold et al., 1998; Megarry, 1995). They gradually evolved during the Lomekwian stage (Mode 1), Oldowan (Mode 2) and Early Acheulean (Mode 3) in a variety of ways that were hotly debated in the 1970s through the 1990s, before finally being endorsed with sufficient archaeological, paleontological and paleoanthropological data for a clear specification to be established between nature and culture, humanity and animality (Foley, 1996; Foley et al., 1991; Ingold, 1998; Premack and Premack, 1998; Megarry, 1995; Thot and Schick, 2005, pp. 74-82; Tobias et al., 2001; cf. Coppens, 1983, Chapter 2).

Some of the early cultural characteristics are as follows: (i) constructed/improved habitat, an indication of early and safe socialization and human solidarity, borne out by vestiges of base camps that are more or less permanent, occasionally occupied in several phases; (ii) food sources based primarily on foraging and wandering scavenging initiatives, followed by a shift to foraging and planned hunting sorties from base camps; and (iii) early attempts at controlled use of fire, the reliability of the earliest traces being strongly debated.

The spatial distribution of these three categories of indices that reflect the genesis of culture and humanity is presented, with reference to representative sites, as follows, in decreasing chronological and sequential order from the two successive stages of the Oldowan to the Early Acheulean (cf. Harmand et al., 2015, Chapter 9; cf. Thot and Schick, 2005, pp. 71-73).

Early habitats: cultural impulse of the human family

The Douglas Ko-rongo (DK) 1 habitat at Olduvai (Tanzania) and the Koobi Fora Ridge (KBS) habitat (Kenya) are recognized as containing the earliest constructed/managed dwelling structures. The Oldowan DK 1 habitat, which Louis and Mary Leakey excavated and defined as a 'hut floor', is assumed to have been constructed as protection against the wind and other hazards. In a circle of blocks of stone dated to approximately 1.8 Ma, the habitat was discovered at the base of Bed I along with pebble tools, unmodified and retouched flakes, and the bones of consumed animals (Grimaud-Hervé et al., 2005, p. 58; Harmand et al., 2015, Chapter 9; Leakey, 1971, 1979; Thot and Schick, 2005, pp. 74-82; cf. Roche, 1989, Chapter 7).

Stenotopic to eurytopic ways of life: the introduction of a multi-family social structure

As mentioned above, a diet based on eco-deterministic foraging and wandering scavenging initiatives is one of the characteristics of a stenotopic lifestyle. The later stage of sourcing food by planned hunting and gathering sorties from a base camp where pebble tools are stored is associated with a eurytopic life style and multi-family hominin social structure. Details of three such sites: KBS – Kay Behrensmeyer Site; HAS – Hippopotamus Artefacts Site in the Koobi Fora region (Kenya) and Fejej Fj-1 site (Ethiopia), follow.

The Oldowan site of KBS in Koobi Fora, excavated in 1979, covers 100 square metres and is dated at over 1.9 Ma. The notion of its probably being a permanent camp is based on the discovery of more than 200 tools (cores and unmodified flakes) and animal bones (hippopotamuses, gazelles and porcupines) hunted in the vicinity and brought back and consumed in situ. One of the other contemporary sites in the same region, the HAS site, delivered numerous hippopotamus bones and a lithic industry comparable to the one at KBS, with a specialized area for pebble sharpening covering an area 7 metres in diameter (Grimaud-Hervé et al., 2005, p. 58; Reynolds, 1996b, pp. 375-76; Thot and Schick, 2005, pp. 74-82; cf. Harmand et al., 2015, Chapter 9).

The Fejej Fj-1 site, also Oldowan and dated to 1.96 Ma, is located in the paleo-basin of the Omo in Ethiopia. It yielded more than 2,000 quartz tools and the broken bones of various sub-desert animal species, mainly bovids (impala and koudou), rhinoceroses, hippopotamuses, zebras, carnivores, primates, rodents, fish and turtles. The habitat was established there owing to the proximity of water, abundant fauna, and quartz and basalt pebbles, and functioned as a home base with pebble-sharpening activities attested by refitting evidence, animal butchery to remove flesh and the breaking of bones to extract bone marrow (Grimaud-Hervé et al., 2005, p. 52; Harmand et al. 2015, Chapter 9; Thot and Schick, 2005, pp. 74-82).

Earlier traces of controlled use of fire: consolidation of early anthropogenesis

Regarding the distant origins and/or the precise beginning of the use, and then 'mastery', of fire (Lumley et al., 1982a, b; Pelegrin, 1988; Perlès, 1977, 1988), it would seem appropriate to speak rather of controlled use. It is in Eastern and Southern Africa that credible earlier traces of controlled use of

fire have been found in the early lower Palaeolithic sites contemporaneous with the first *Homo erectus* (Clark and Harris, 1985, 1993; Lumley, 2014, pp. 95-96).

These rare African sites are situated in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and South Africa. In Ethiopia, at the Gadeb site, dated to 1.5 Ma, traces of fire use have been found on some isolated bone fragments. In Kenya, in the KBS formation, dated to 1.4 Ma at the Fxjj20 site at Koobi Fora, east of Lake Turkana, burnt lithic artefacts and rubified sediments were observed but no traces of a managed hearth. At the Kenyan site of Chesowanja, east of Lake Baringo, in deposits dated to 1.4 Ma, some sediments burnt at temperatures ranging from 400°C to 600°C were found, again with no traces of any hearths. In levels also dated to 1.4 Ma, in the Swartskrans cave of South Africa, some bones burnt at temperatures of 600°C were found that were associated with an Oldowan/Early Archeulean lithic industry; again, without any localized hearths. Finally, the same was observed in Tanzania in Bed II at Olduvai dated, between 1.8 and 1.2 Ma, also without any traces of hearths (Campbell, 1992, pp. 310, 462-63; Clark and Harris, 1985, 1993; Lumley, 2014, pp. 95-96; Toth and Kathy, 2005, pp. 79, 116).

Without overlooking or denying ongoing expert speculation regarding food, biology, social activity, safety and thus cultural and technological factors, the controlled use of fire is presumed and/or presented by some as being a heroic achievement, and one that has become beneficial, protective and liberating for hominins during this (or these) prehistoric technocultural stage/s that are difficult to identify with certainty. It could have begun during the prehistoric period of the Early Acheulean or later stages, and transmitted to descendants, who were betrayed by proven traces of controlled use of fire around 0.4 Ma (Lumley, 2014, pp. 95-96; Lumley et al., 1982a, b; Pelegrin, 1988; Perlès, 1977, 1988).

Conclusion or questioning?

The preceding analysis demonstrates that *Australopithecus,* who appeared around 4.4 Ma, learned, like their successors or later contemporaries of the genus *Homo* from 2.5 Ma, to control their destinies and determine their own technological and cultural paths.

In the early Lomekwian technological stage (Mode 1, new) dated at 3.3 Ma, research has shown a stenotopic, nomadic and ecologically deterministic way of life, which in the current absence of any indicative and proven evidence of a change in lifestyle, is considered to have continued to the second Oldowan

technological stage (Mode 2, new) dated at 2.6 Ma as a baseline. The Early Acheulean (Mode 3, new), or the start of the third lithic technological age, arrived around 1.8-1.5 Ma, at the same time as the earliest humans constructed habitats that revealed the beginnings of a cultural, family-oriented, eurytopic, ecologically adaptive way of life inseparable from a reactive and proactive neuropsychological capacity, able to motivate and adopt a relatively sedentary lifestyle whether circumstantial or more or less permanent in nature (Bradshaw, 2003; Meggary, 1995).

This is the scenario in which *Australopithecus*, *Homo Habilis* and *Homo Ergaster,* the ancestor of *Erectus,* demonstrated knowledge, consciousness and accumulated skills that were gradually transmitted down the generations from 3.3 Ma to 1.5 Ma. De Laet hesitated to apply the term '*wandering but well established*' to '*prehistory*' to describe this scenario but did not find a satisfactory alternative other than the consolation of human history that was 'pre', early or 'more ancient' (De Laet et al., 1994, pp. 2-3). That, along with the intrinsic 'culture' and 'technology', are factors that were and are still lacking in the animal world, including the great primates (Premack and Premack, 1998).

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CHAPTER 8

ADAPTATION OF SOCIETIES IN AFRICA FROM THE LATE PLEISTOCENE TO THE EARLY HOLOCENE

Latifa Sari

Introduction

For a long time, the terminology used for cultures in North Africa from the end of the Pleistocene to the Holocene (Upper Palaeolithic, Epipalaeolithic and Neolithic) was mainly Eurasian, in comparison to sub-Saharan Africa where the term Later Stone Age (LSA) was used to describe cultures that existed there from 57,000 BP to historical times. This accentuated the isolation and independence of cultures in the ancient Palaeolithic world on the African continent. However, in recent years, the term Later Stone Age has been increasingly used in North Africa (Barich et al., 2006; Barton et al., 2013) and has started to replace the Eurasian terminology previously employed there.

Numerous archaeological finds attest that Africa has provided humanity with far more than just modern humans; it was the hub for various innovations that are continually being brought to light. On the African continent, the end of the Pleistocene coincided with the emergence and expansion of microlithic industries (Figure 1) and the introduction of structured and organized logistics in line with the availability of natural resources. These adaptations, which first appeared in sub-Saharan Africa and then in North Africa, occurred in response to palaeoclimatic changes that would have intensified during the Last Glacial Maximum. At the beginning of the Holocene, human activity increased with

post-glacial climatic improvement. The latter was conducive to the emergence of new adaptations and innovations introduced by the last hunter-gatherers, to whom we owe the emergence of Neolithic populations.

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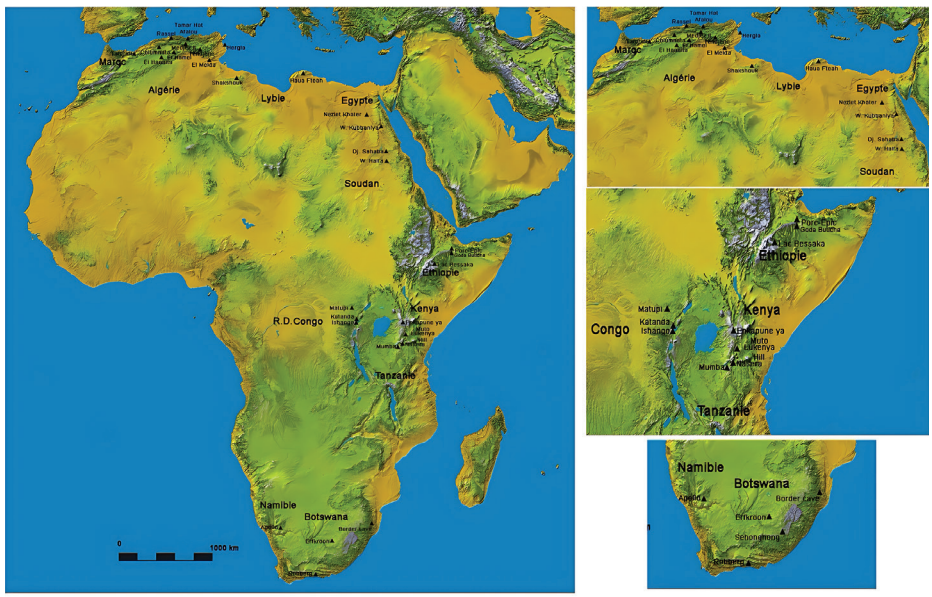


Figure 1. *Map of sites mentioned in the text*

Sub-Saharan Africa

In sub-Saharan Africa, the end of the Pleistocene is marked by the appearance of the microlithic industries of the Later Stone Age that succeeded those of the Middle Stone Age (MSA). In Southern Africa, the origin of these industries coincided with the local development of microlithic blade tools dating back to 44,000 BP, such as assemblages found in Border Cave in South Africa, and the appearance of modern artefacts such as ostrich eggshell beads, bone arrowheads and bored stones. These artefacts resemble those used by both historical and modern-day Kalahari San hunter-gatherers (d'Errico et al., 2012). However, industries properly defined as from the LSA period would become widespread from 20,000 BP onwards, mainly in the form of Robberg microlithic technology (22,000-12,000 BP) discovered in south Limpopo (Deacon, 1990). This is microlithic technology with unretouched blades, produced using bipolar

manufacturing techniques (Figure 2A). Tools were carved from fine-grained stone that did not originate from the region (Pargeter and Redondo, 2016). The Robberg bladelet industry appeared during a period of great aridity that appears to have occurred between 20,000 and 18,000 BP (Deacon, 1990). Palaeoclimatic conditions reduced ecological productivity in much of the region during this period, forcing the population to seek refuge along coastlines that are currently submerged. The latter provided an abundance of seasonal coastline resources that were exploited for both symbolic and culinary needs (Jerardino, 2016). Indications of recurring seasonal occupations have been recognized at many sites such as Erfkroon, whose inhabitants exploited local plant and animal resources (Mitchell, 2016). Fauna hunted by the Robberg communities included relatively large migratory species living in the middle of the plain (Klein, 1989). These hunting activities are linked to wide territorial mobility, and the use of poisoned arrows from 24,000 BP (d'Errico et al., 2012) must have optimized these cynegetic activities. Bone arrowheads and bone beads have been found, as well as ostrich eggshell and turtle shell containers. In addition, rock art would have appeared at this time, as evidenced by cave art in the Apollo 11 Cave in Namibia (Wendt, 1976).

The Oakhurst macrolithic complex (12,000–8000 BP) replaced the microlithic Robberg industry during the postglacial climatic improvement. During this period, there was an increase in both rainfall and temperature, leading to the overall expansion of animal and vegetable biomass. This climatic improvement favoured the spreading out of hunter-gatherers who moved into zones that had previously been too arid (Mitchell, 2016). According to Wadley (1993), the Oakhurst complex (Figures 2B and C) is characterized by the predominance of flakes, a low frequency of bladelets and the presence of poorly diversified tools. The scarcity of bladelets is compensated by an increase in the use of polished bone heads employed for reinforcement purposes, as they still are today by modern-day San populations. Moreover, in this culture, seashells and engraved ostrich eggshell beads have been found considerable distances inland. Other forms of social and symbolic objects appear after 12,000 BP in planned burial sites featuring funerary objects and ochre, implying complex religious beliefs. The Oakhurst complex is succeeded by the Wilton microlithic assemblages (10,000–3000 BP) from the beginning of the Holocene, which revealed the production of very small geometric microlithic tools with the standardized serrated edges used with bows, as well as miniature fine-grained stone scrapers (Wendt, 1976). This culture would have experienced a significant increase in the number of sites and a trend towards a decline in the variety of food.

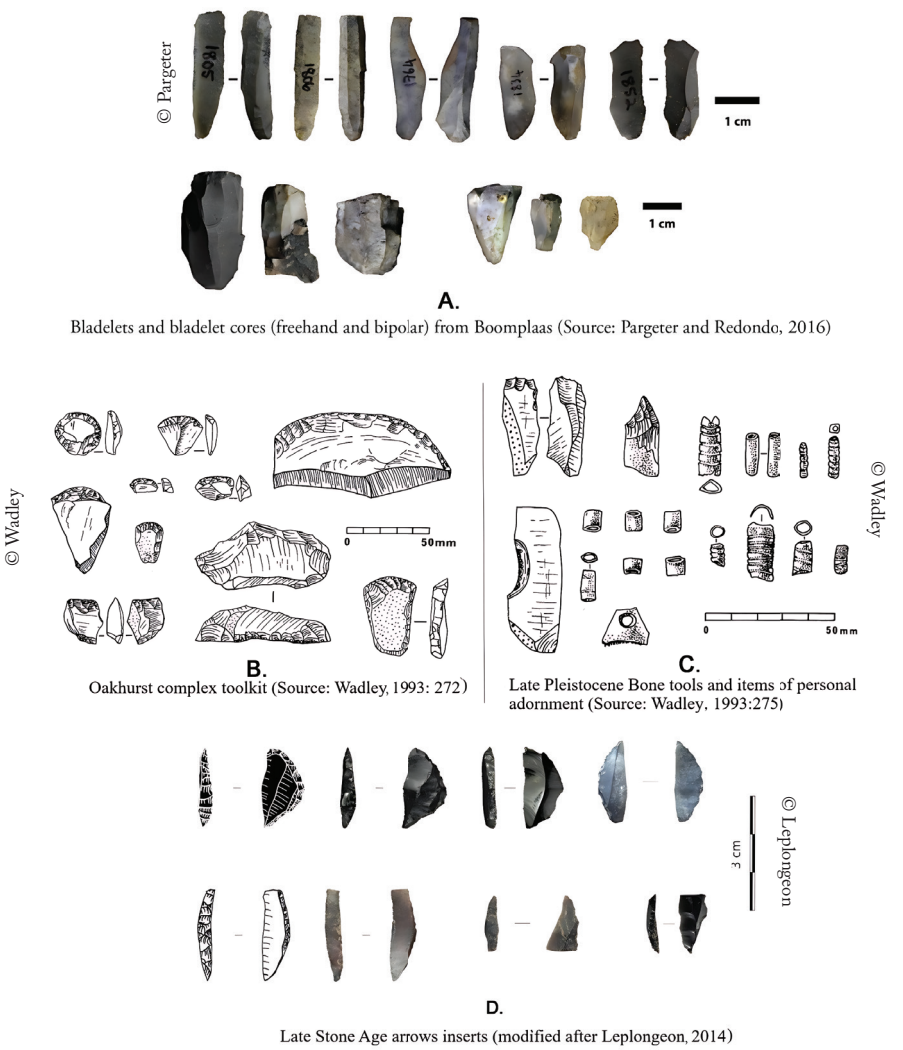


Figure 2. *Industries and adornment during the early LSA in sub-Saharan Africa*

Just as in Southern Africa, LSA assemblages from the end of the Pleistocene in East Africa succeeded those of the MSA, and only a few sites with reliable chronology document this transition, such as the Mumba rockshelter in Tanzania, Enkapune Ya Moto and Lukenya Hill in Kenya, as well as the Caves of Porc-Epic and Goda Burticha in Ethiopia (Figure 2D). The oldest LSA industries dated

back to 57,000 BP in Mumba (Gliganic et al., 2012) and 50,000 BP in Enkapune Ya Muto (Ambrose, 1998). In general, industries in East Africa are often defined as being orientated towards blades on a large scale (Ménard et al., 2014) and sometimes bipolar production using an anvil (Eren et al., 2013), as well the presence of microliths with backed blades. The latter became predominant in numerous sites in East Africa from 25,000 BP. Hunter-gatherers from Lake Besaka in the Afar Rift retained a rather long tradition of blade tools, the so-called 'Ethiopian blade tool tradition', often in obsidian with a few small backed microliths. The artisans of the ancient LSA, such as those of the Sakutiek tradition (Ambrose, 1998), would have lived in relatively dry conditions, as evidenced by palaeo-environmental data from sites at Lake Victoria in Kenya that reveal the presence of open grasslands and fauna adapted to an arid environment (Tryon and Faith, 2016). Hunter-gatherers trekked considerable distances in search of fine-grained lithic raw materials and obsidian – up to 250 km in the case of the Nasera site (Ambrose, 1998) – as well as systematically planning seasonal activities related to the exploitation of natural resources (Klein, 1989).

With post-glacial warming came a rise in lake water levels that promoted habitat densification with reduced residential mobility (Tryon and Faith, 2016). From then on, new cultural traditions appeared on a grand scale, such as the Eburian in Kenya, whose industries are present from 12,000 BP. The latter would have used large backed blades with scrapers added to the ends, and detachable prismatic nuclei in obsidian (Ambrose, 1998). Hunter-gatherers exploited the landscape more intensively via seasonal occupations, and some of them focused on specialized activities, such as fishing. The spread of poisoned arrowheads, in use in East Africa around 13,000 calBP, optimized hunting and fishing activities, as observed amongst historical and modern-day Hadza hunter-gatherers of East Africa (Langley et al., 2016).

In Central and Western Africa, climate-induced changes at the beginning of the final Pleistocene resulted in the shrinking back of tropical forests at different periods between 36,000 BP and 12,000 BP, forming new ecological niches for hunter-gatherers (Cornelissen, 2016). The Lupembian complex, attested in a large section of Central Africa, characterized by nuclei form axes and long, lanceolate-shaped bifacial axeheads, is supposed to mark the beginning of the LSA at 40,000 BP. However, the chronology of the assemblage at the Lupembian complex remains uncertain (Cornelissen, 2016, p. 314). Alongside this complex, microlithic quartz industries featuring backed stone tools appeared in Central Africa from 40,000 BP, as evidenced by the oldest settlement at Matupi in the North-East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Van Noten, 1977).

Debitage was relatively simple, and the production of microliths using bipolar techniques was only practised in a few sites. The pervasiveness of quartz as a raw material in this culture was a conscious choice, as other raw materials were available (Cornelissen, 2016). Microlithic quartz industries would have boomed from 22,000 BP in the savanna grasslands, with game hunting suited to this open environment. However, fishing was practised in odd areas untouched by the drought crisis, such as Ishango in the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 25,000 BP (Crévecoeur et al., 2016). Hunter-gatherer-fishermen in Ishango would have experienced reduced residential mobility due to the abundance of aquatic resources. From 12,000 BP, the landscape became more open to wooded and forested areas (Van Noten, 1977), which favoured the emergence of the Tshitolian complex that replaced the Lupembian, by introducing a new industry producing small bifacial points, pedunculate microliths and tranchet arrowheads. The Tshitolian complex would last until the middle of the third millennium, whereas microlithic quartz industries would survive until the Holocene.

North Africa

The Middle Palaeolithic (MSA) in North Africa gave way to a proper blade industry of the Upper Palaeolithic type (Early LSA) identified at Nezlet Khater in Upper Egypt (Vermeersh, 2010) and at Haua Fteah in Cyrenaica, where it was dubbed the Dabban (blade and burin) industry (McBurney, 1967). The latter, the age of which has currently been put back to 46,000 years (Douka et al., 2014), is mainly characterized by chamfered burins, small backed blades and end-scrapers. In the Maghreb, the situation is completely different, since the Upper Palaeolithic appears to be represented by a relatively poor number of assemblages that contrast with the Dabban assemblage and correspond more to an MSA industry and to the non-Levallois debitage flakes found at Taforalt Cave in Morocco. This industry disappeared around 24,500 calBP, leaving an estimated hiatus of 1,900 years between it and the oldest Iberomaurusian layer, which would not have been local in origin (Barton et al., 2013).

In North-east Africa, a number of Kubbanian and Fakhurian microlithic blades appeared in the Nile Valley and Nubia just before the Last Glacial Maximum in 21,000 BP. These industries produced genuine backed blades, including the Ouchtata bladelet that appeared in the Valley, as well as employing the micro-burin technique for breaking down some of the blades. When the climate became more clement between 16,000 BP and 10,000 BP,

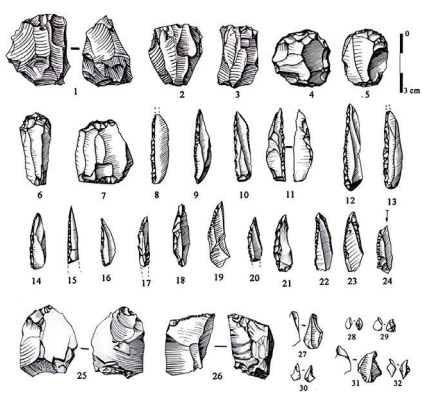
there was a profusion of microlithic industries, such as Sebekian, Silsilian and Afian, demonstrating the emergence of heightened exploitation of natural animal and plant resources, and in particular wild grains (Close and Wendorf, 1986). Human settlements were characterized by seasonal camps and fishing and hunting activities aimed at mammals such as aurochs, bubal antelopes, dorcas gazelles, hares and hippopotami (Vermeerch and Van Neer, 2015). The sites were probably occupied several times throughout the year by groups that already possessed territorial and social organization, as evidenced by the presence of two great Nubian cemeteries at Jebel Sahaba dating between 12,000 BP and 10,000 BP.

In North-west Africa, microlithic industries of the Late Pleistocene are represented by the 'Eastern Oranian' in Libya and its western Iberomaurusian variant in the Maghreb called the 'Western Oranian' (McBurney, 1967). The first was found in the coastal zone (Cyrenaica) and pre-Saharan zones (Jebel Gharbi and North of Acacus) in Libya, whereas the second extended much further, from Morocco to the Tunisian coastline where there were low levels of sites due to subsidence. In the south, this industry would not extend beyond the Saharan Atlas, whereas in the west, it is well documented on the Moroccan shores of the Strait of Gibraltar and all along the Moroccan Atlantic coastline, especially in the Rabat-Casablanca region. The Eastern Oranian, the date of which has now been pushed back to 17,200 BP, succeeded the Dabban blade industry at Haua Fteah (Douka et al., 2014) and the possibility of the former stemming from the latter is no longer discarded (Lucarini and Mutri, 2014). Other sites in Libya have revealed the presence of Eastern Oranian around 16,750 ± 60 BP, such as at Shakshuk and Jebel Gharbi (Barich et al., 2006), but they are devoid of Dabban blades. As for the Maghreb, the earliest Iberomaurusian occupation, now confirmed by new dating (Hogue and Barton, 2016), is shown to be at the Tamar Hat rockshelter in north-eastern Algeria, from 21,240 ± 130 BP, which confirms the primacy of the Iberomaurusian over the Eastern Oranian. The origin of the Iberomaurusian in the Maghreb is still unresolved, although the most recent scenario is associated with the introduction of carriers of Haplogroup U6 from 35,000 BP in North-west Africa from South-west Asia (Soares et al., 2016).

The appearance of microlithic industries in North-west Africa corresponds to a fresh arid period with an expanding steppe and declining forest cover; annual rainfall did not exceed 500 mm, and temperatures dipped as low as 3–4 °C (Lubell et al., 1984). Increasing temperatures and rainfall around 15,000-14,000 BP until 12,000 BP would lead to increased forest cover at higher elevations. It is in relation to this period of climatic improvement that we see a proliferation

of Iberomaurusian occupations, particularly in rockshelters on the coastline, whereas open-air sites are practically limited to inland regions in the south, where occupations are late, such as at Columnata, El Hamel and El Haouita. Between 12,500 and 11,700 BP, the period corresponding to the Younger Dryas in Europe, the western Mediterranean experienced a cold and arid phase, during which human occupations became scarce and demonstrated industries from the final phase of the Iberomaurusian, such as those at Columnata.

The lithic assemblages of the Eastern Oranian and of the Iberomaurusian share key technological characteristics, the most striking of which include a high level of blunt-ended flakes and the use of the microburin technique (Close and Wendorf, 1986). Other tools are present, such as end-scrapers made on thick or nuclei-form blades, burins and chiselled tools, whereas geometric microliths (still rare) are chiefly represented by segments (Figure 3A). The choice of human settlement depends in most cases on the proximity of running water as a source of the primary material in the form of pebbles. The introduction of other materials is complementary, and sometimes happens as a result of displacement activity. Contrary to the prevailing notion regarding the ease of debitage using pebbles, a recent technological study indicates that, from the earliest occupation of Tamar Hat, stone cutters adopted scaled-down debitage techniques using a complex and integrated production chain, and slight percussive actions geared at the creation of



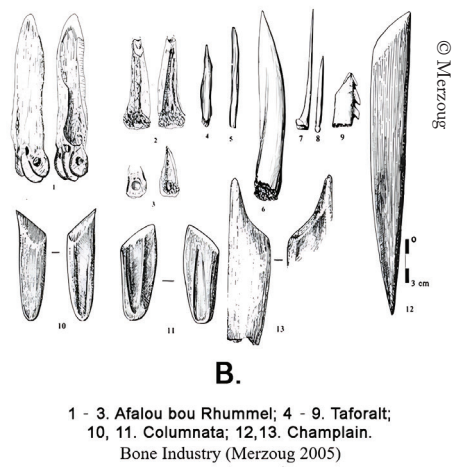


Figure 3. *Lithic and bone industries of the Iberomaurusian culture*

small standardized tools with composite projectile tips to be fixed onto a handle (Sari, 2014). The need to produce standardized lamellar blanks was an ingenious adaptation by the first Iberomaurusian populations facing the difficulties posed by the Last Glacial Maximum.

The recurrent and seasonal occupation of the same locations is well documented both in the Maghreb and in Cyrenaica (Douka et al., Merzoug, 2005). In addition, the stone cutting techniques carried out *in situ* reinforce the image of seasonal and relatively sustainable occupations. The practice of hunting by the Eastern Oranian and Iberomaurusian populations is confirmed by the results of archaeozoological research (Klein and Scott, 1986; Merzoug and Sari, 2008). The animal most hunted by groups of the Eastern Oranian on the coastal plain was the Barbary sheep (mouflon), whereas the gazelle was favoured on the desert fringes. Other hunted animals included equines, zebras, bovids and rabbits (Klein and Scott, 1986). For their part, Iberomaurusians hunted the most common species in their immediate surroundings, Barbary sheep in mountainous terrain and bubal antelopes or gazelles on the high plains and moderate hills, and seemed to have used the same hunting tactics and the same culinary practices overall (Merzoug, 2005). However, this is tempered by the inconsistencies born out between the assemblages recouped on the coast, in comparison to those from inland regions. Indeed, the ecological conditions experienced in the open steppe environment where the groups from the high inland plateaus found themselves required adapted tools that were different to those used in a mountainous and forested environment where the coastal groups were located (Sari, 2014). With post-glacial climatic improvement came a rise in lake water levels and the accessibility of the seashore, so populations also orientated themselves towards fishing resources, as evidenced by fish bones in coastal sites in the Maghreb and Cyrenaica. At the same time, human groups gathered and consumed plants, in particular wild grains, the remains of which have been found in sites where there were also crushing and grinding implements that may have originated from relatively remote sources (Saxon et al., 1974).

The bone industry was poorly developed during the Iberomaurusian (Figure 3B) and is mainly represented by awls, arrowheads and especially tranchets (Camps-Fabrer, 1966). The use of animal bones was limited with decoration used only rarely, and the techniques used to make these tools are scant in literature. The use of dyestuffs, evidenced on lithic and bone tools, and on skeletons, demonstrates that this material was part and parcel of the domestic and symbolic activities of these populations. Decorative elements are mainly represented by seashells with natural or pierced holes. Scallop shells, tusk shells and the shells of bivalves

are well represented at Rassel (Brahimi, 1970), while at Haua Fteah, land snails were pierced using straight 'drills' and thorns from the forests (Hill et al., 2015). Some pebbles with bored holes and engraved schist/soft stones were found in the western part of the Maghreb (Collina-Girard et al., 1997), whereas in the region of the Babors in north-eastern Algeria, a fragment of terracotta dating back to 20,200 BP evoking a mouflon horn was found at Tamar Hat (Saxon et al., 1974). Twenty years later, several terracotta figurines dating between 15,000 BP and 11,000 BP were found in the neighbouring rockshelter at Afalou. These figurines were made from local clay and fired at temperatures ranging from 500 °C to 800 °C (Hachi et al., 2002).

The human remains of Iberomaurusian groups known as the 'Mechta Afalou' population have been found in three necropoles at Taforalt, Columnata and Afalou. The latter revealed the oldest burial dating back to 14,910 ± 180 BP. These populations practised dental avulsion to the upper central incisors in both men and women of all ages, a practice that altered cranial and mandibular morphology (Hadjouis, 2002). According to Aoudia (2013), the mortuary tradition of these groups testifies to the presence of authentic collective burial sites at the backs of caves or at the foot of cliffs, with several dozen individuals buried in contracted positions. Moreover, the elaboration of a mortuary structure made from stones, and the placing of mouflon bones are all practices that characterize the Iberomaurusians. Finally, the latter would have also practised complex mortuary rituals on a minority, involving a particular mortuary treatment of the dead. This treatment, which required a long apprenticeship, is closely associated with violent deaths, and involved post mortem modification such as ochre staining and cut marks (Aoudia, 2013). The presence of necropoles implies the existence of residential camps that were frequently reoccupied during the season most conducive to the exploitation of local resources.

The Iberomaurusian culture was succeeded at the beginning of the Holocene by a new culture called the Capsian, during a period marked by a favourable climate with a rise in temperature, humidity and vegetation cover at high altitude (Lubell et al., 1984). While reassessing the validity of the morphological approach of Iberomaurusian and Capsian human remains in anthropological research on Maghrebian populations, Lubell (Lubell et al., 1984) defends the notion of the continuity of the population. This author proposes that, as a result of post-glacial climatic improvement, the last Iberomaurusians would have gone to new settlement areas and adopted a new culture that came to be known as the Capsian culture. As for the Eastern Oranian, it is now known that this was succeeded in 12,500 BP by the Libyco-Capsian at Haua Fteah,

from which the culture was derived (Douka et al., 2014). This local culture (12,500-7900 BP) appeared during the drought crisis of the Younger Dryas and its industry is characterized by blades and backed bladelets, with very few geometric microliths and no real affinity with Capsian industry in the Maghreb (Lucarini and Mutri, 2014).

Alongside the Iberomaurusian and Capsian, there were variants limited to a specific area and located inland, such as the Southern Tunisian bladelet industries (Keremian and Mellalian) and the el-Oued facies, which sometimes features very small microliths (Columnatian). In contrast to the Southern Tunisian bladelet industries, which were earlier than the Capsian, the others that popped up in various places appear to have been displaced by the Upper Capsian (Rahmani and Lubell, 2012). However, the connection between these microlith industries and the Capsian remains vague and unexplored in terms of a palaeoenvironmental and technological appraisal.

The Capsian sites in the Maghreb (10,000–7500 calBP) are mainly located on the high plateaux of eastern Algeria and southern Tunisia. The Capsian was traditionally split into two phases that were thought to be contemporary cultures (Typical and Superior) with five regional variants, until their superimposed stratigraphy was revealed in some sites in the Telidjene basin (Lubell et al., 1984). For a long time, people thought that many of these sites were vast piles of open-air fragments containing a mixture of stone tools, charcoal and ash, bones and snail shell debris that gave the mounds their name of *escargotieres*. This widespread notion stemmed from the difficulty in providing a stratigraphic reading of these sites, and it was corrected by the multidisciplinary research carried out by Lubell in the Telidjene basin. Interpretation has been further facilitated by recent field work carried out at the coastal site of SHM1 at Hergla in Tunisia (Mulazzani et al., 2016), during which the presence of a long period of occupancy was detected within a structured and stratified habitat on several levels.

The Typical Capsian appeared around 10,000–8000 calBP in an area limited to 100 kilometres between the regions of Gafsa and Tebessa. Lithic assemblages are dominated by the production of large blades, implying debitage systems that created simple or elaborate shapes using hard hammer or soft hammer percussion techniques simultaneously. Tools are large, dominated by burins and scrapers made from large, locally available, good quality Eocene flint blade cores. Some retouched Iberomaurusian blades, such as La Mouillah points and scalene bladelets created using microburin techniques, reappeared in Capsian industries. This technique is also used to produce geometric microliths, such as scalene triangles, lunates, rectangles and trapezoids.

It is currently accepted that the Upper Capsian appeared around 9000 calBP, and lasted until 7500 calBP (Belhouchet et al., 2014). This culture extended over a vast geographical area in the highlands of central Algeria and eastern Tunisia, and its lithic industry was characterized by microlithic tools that were pressure flaked/punch struck for the first time, requiring sophisticated prepping of the core (Rahmani, 2003). The blades are likely to have been transformed into geometric microliths (mainly trapezoids and triangles). In addition, the notched blades and bladelets increased in number compared to the Typical Capsian (Figure 4A). According to Rahmani and Lubell (2012), pressure flaking was a cutting technique that enabled a large quantity of standardized blades to be produced with fewer raw materials; it would therefore have favoured the mobility of Capsian groups in the territories in which they roamed. The appearance of pressure knapping, a technological change observed in many sites including Kef Zoura D, Ain Mesteheiya and Medjez II, was previously related to a short and abrupt period of climatic instability corresponding to the aridification episode in 8200 calBP (Rahmani, 2003; Rahmani and Lubell, 2012). However, other authors (Belhouchet et al., 2014) have recently reported that the earliest appearance of pressure knapping in a Capsian context has been pushed back to the first half of the ninth millennium calBP. As a result, far from being a local invention, this technique is likely to have been acquired through cultural transmission with Mesolithic groups from Sicily or Southern Italy, or by groups from the former Neolithic site at Franchthi cave in Greece. This hypothesis is based on solid dating evidence, coupled with reliable technological convergences based on experimental references. However, it does not take into account the possibility that the people of the Upper Capsian culture may have employed technical practices similar to contemporary groups in the north of the Mediterranean, irrespective of the constraints placed upon them by climatic variations and cultural transfers.

The people of the Capsian culture relied on hunting large mammals, such as wild cattle, antelopes, gazelles, mouflons and zebras, to subsist (Aouadi et al., 2014). The tools they used to hunt included geometric blades or lateral barbs hafted onto a shaft or handle, whereas backed blades were used for butchering animals (Gassin and Gibaja, 2016). At inland Capsian sites, the consumption of snails increased significantly around 8200 calBP, an era marked by climatic change, and small game such as gazelles and lagomorphs became more present (Lubell et al., 1984). At Hergla, on the eastern coast of Tunisia, the Capsians practised fishing, probably using nets in the absence of harpoons, as well as the seasonal gathering of marine and terrestrial gastropods (Mulazzani et al., 2016).

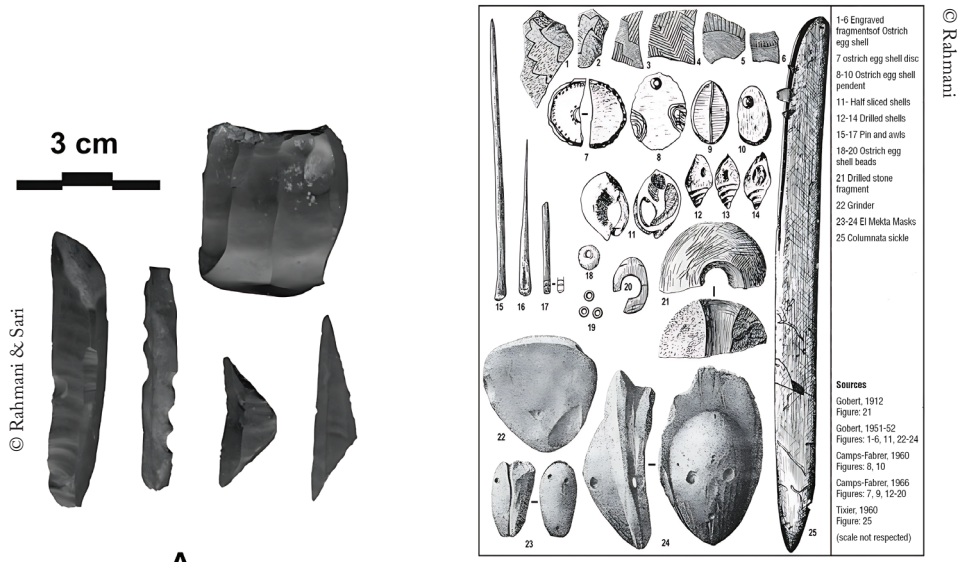


Figure 4. *Key material artefacts of the Capsian culture*

Capsian assemblages include a wider range of bone industry and adornment than their Iberomaurusian predecessors (Figure 4B). The awls and points are best represented in the bone industry, and we now know that the points at Kef Zoura D were used to work mainly on plant materials and less so on animal skins, fresh meat and leather (Petrullo, 2016). Sometimes the Capsians worked on human bones, a practice that was non-existent among the Iberomaurusians (Camps-Fabrer, 1966). Ornamentation included seashell beads, engraved ostrich shell beads, necklaces, threading discs, bone tubes and tubular beads. In addition, the Capsians also used ostrich eggshells as containers, which they decorated with geometric and occasionally figurative engravings. They engraved and sculpted soft stone with drawings of human or animal heads (Camps-Fabrer, 1966).

Capsian sites have frequently revealed grinding stones with signs of wear consistent with the milling of wild grasses. Some of the objects used testify to the gathering and preparation of wild grains, and reveal the importance of these food resources, such as notched bone sickles found within an Upper Caspian

context (Camps-Fabrer, 1966). Until recently, it was believed that there was no direct evidence of plant components in their diet other than charred *Allium* bulbs (Lubell et al., 1984). However, abundant macro-crops of plants have been found in recently dug sites such as El Mekta in central Tunisia, indicating that the Capsian populations foraged for pine nuts and acorns, which they processed and stored for their nutritional benefits. In addition, the occupants of the site also exploited esparto grass for basketry (Morales et al., 2015) and marked an economic change in the Maghreb with the appearance of pottery associated with hunter-gatherers at the beginning of the eighth millennium calBP (Mulazzani et al., 2016).

The Capsians, dubbed Proto-Mediterranean, whose vestiges have been found in numerous sites including Medjez II in eastern Algeria, practised dental avulsion of upper and lower incisors, and buried their dead in a different way to the Iberomaurusians. Their sepultures were exclusively individual in their habitats, and the deceased were buried in a pit along with seashells and tubular beads (Aoudia, 2013). However, the Capsians would have had certain mortuary treatments reserved for a minority in common with the Iberomaurusians, the technical execution of which was complex. These treatments involved cutting corpses and skulls which, according to Aoudia (2013, p. 425), represents strong Iberomaurusian heritage in Capsian culture, adding to the arguments of those defending continuity between the two cultures.

The Capsians were the last hunter-gatherers in the Maghreb. They would be succeeded by the first pastoral or agricultural societies that appeared in the region around 7400 calBP (Mulazzani et al., 2016).

Conclusion

The climatic and environmental changes that occurred during the late Pleistocene on the African continent shaped the mosaic of habitats and the topography of the regions and are closely linked to the history of human evolution. On an overall level, Eastern, Northern and Southern Africa (Central and Western Africa being largely unexplored at this point) demonstrate the same evolutionary and behavioural findings. However, a more thorough examination of data acquired over the past three decades reveals a more complex model. More research in unexplored regions is necessary to shed more light on the processes implied in the evolution and adaptations of human populations on the African continent.

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CHAPTER 9

THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF FOOD-PRODUCING ECONOMIES

Augustin F. C. Holl

Introduction

Roland Portères and Jacques Barrau present the state of knowledge on the archaeology of African agriculture in Chapter 27 of Volume I of the *General History of Africa* entitled, 'Origins, development and expansion of agricultural techniques'. Based on the continent's biogeography, they propose a systematic arrangement of large areas, potentially agricultural centres. 'In addition to the Abyssinian centre and the African portion of the Mediterranean centre, there existed also a West African centre and an East African one, this latter being possibly an extension into the equatorial highlands of the Abyssinian centre' (Portères and Barrau, 1981, pp. 693–94). The state of the research on the domestication of animals and farming systems is barely touched upon in the chapter that J. Ki-Zerbo dedicates to African prehistoric art: 'these pictures also show the gradual transition from trapping animals or taking them into captivity, to feeding them and then to domesticating them' (Ki-Zerbo, 1981, pp. 672). Archaeological research had barely begun on such topics that are today well established and highly developed in the disciplinary fields of archeobotany and zooarchaeology. The assessment of four decades of research, somewhat irregular from one region to another, is relatively remarkable.

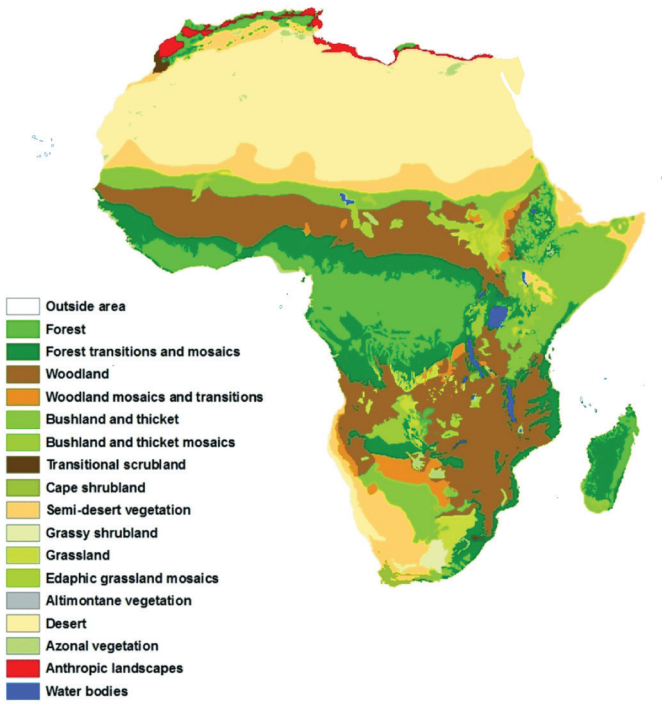
A continent straddling the equator

Africa is a massive continent literally straddling the equator. This situation has significant climate and biogeographic implications. Most of the continent experiences monsoons with summer rains. The Mediterranean fringes north of the Tropic of Cancer and south of the Tropic of Capricorn are sustained by winter rainfall.

The hunter-gatherer populations inhabiting the continent during the last Pleistocene faced serious climatic difficulties. In the northern hemisphere, vast swathes of the continent were emptied of their populations during the Last Glacial Maximum, *circa* 20/18,000 to 12/10,000 BP. These were concentrated in refuge areas along the Nile Valley (Jebel Sahaba, Waddi Kubbaniya), the Mediterranean coast (Iberomaurusian), the Atlantic coast (Bingerville Highway site, Cote d'Ivoire) and on the High Plateau of south-western Cameroon (Fiye-Nkwi, Mbi Crater, Shum Laka). During this period, interment of the dead had become common practice, as evidenced by the cemetery of Jebel Sahaba (Nubia), the burials in rock shelters/caves at Fiye Nkwi, Mbi Crater and Shum Laka, and the many Iberomaurusian cemeteries in the Maghreb (Balout, 1955). A recolonization movement began with the return of humidity and the wet phase of the early Holocene; this new dynamic would lead to some interesting innovations.

Hunter-gatherers of the late Pleistocene and early Holocene

Hunter-gatherer communities in both Northern and Southern Africa adopted more intensive forms of predation. They invented the bow and arrow and practised selective hunting of a limited number of animal species: the Barbary sheep (*Ammotragus lervia*) in North Africa and the Sahara, and the giant or Lord Derby eland (*Taurotragus derbianus*) in Southern Africa. As for the Capsians, they adopted the intensive use of aquatic resources in the chotts of the Saharan hinterland of the Maghreb. It was in this general atmosphere of transformation that innovations occurred in different parts of the continent. These included the invention of pottery, the cultivation of wild sorghum, the 'captive breeding' of Barbary sheep, and the domestication and/or adoption of cattle.



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Figure 1. *Phytogeographic map of the African continent: Climatic zones influencing the distribution of agricultural complexes.*

The use of pottery

The use of pottery became widespread between 8000 and 6000 BCE in the northern hemisphere of the continent. Such pottery was found in the eastern Sahara (Nabta Playa), on the Bandiagara Escarpment in south-eastern Mali (Ounjougou), in Tibesti in northern Chad, in the Tadrart Acacus in south-western Libya, in the Tassili-n-Ajjer and Hoggar mountains in the Algerian south-east and in the Air region in Niger. The vessels at sites in the eastern Sahara, at Nabta Playa and Bir Kiseiba, were small bowls that would have been used for the consumption of food and drink. Those of central Sahara, from Tagalagal, Amekni, Site Launay, etc., were more diverse in shape and size. They included large hemispherical pots with rounded bases, globe-shaped pots with inverted rims, and smaller semi-hemispherical bowls. The large vessels were probably used for storing liquids and foodstuffs, such as the wild grasses that were gathered regularly. Medium-sized pots would have been used for cooking food, while bowls were for consuming food and other substances.

Wild sorghum cultivation

The exploitation of wild grasses and other plant resources intensified signifcantly during the first millennia of the early Holocene as indicated by data from Nabta Playa in the eastern Sahara (Biehl et al., 1999; Wasylikowa and Dahlberg, 1999) and Uan Afuda and Ti-n-Torha in the central Sahara (Barich 1992, 1998). Panicoid grasses (*Panicum* sp., *Pennisetum* sp., *Setaria* sp.) were most common at sites in the central Sahara. Macro-remains samples taken from site E-75-6 (Nabta Playa) indicate the presence of 127 taxa, including a significant proportion of 'useful' plants (Wasylikowa and Dahlberg, 1999, pp. 29-31). Among these plants is a large group of wild grasses including *Brachiaria* sp., *Digitaria* sp., *Echinochloa colona*, *Panicum turgidum*, Paniceae type A, Paniceae type B, Paniceae indet., *Sorghum bicolor* ssp. *arundinaceum* and *Urochloa* sp. Sorghum remains from 187 samples were found in all the dwellings and silo pits excavated.

> Sorghum grains occur in all the huts, indicating that it was always available in the area. [Sorghum] was collected in similar quantities to other food plants, except in three huts, where much larger quantities were found. These huts also had a lower diversity of food plant species (Wasylokowa and Dahlberg, 1999, pp. 22-23).

These remains were morphologically wild and frequently harvested in the Nabta Playa basin. Some of this sorghum may also have been grown using the technique of flood-recession farming. The moist sediments exposed by the receding waters were sown with seeds and the young shoots were transplanted later. Overall, the data from Site E-75-6 of Nabta Playa indicate a focus on sorghum, remains of which were found in all dwellings. The duration of this 'experiment' is uncertain, but the sorghum grown in Nabta Playa remained morphologically wild.

Captive or tamed Barbary sheep?

Layers of dung from Barbary sheep were uncovered in the Uan Afuda cave, on the eastern flank of the Tadrart Acacus in south-western Libya. These data, collected in layers 1 and 2 of excavation I, at the entrance and in the upper part of the stratigraphy of the excavation inside the cave, date from *c.* 8300– 8500 and 8000 BP (Di Lernia, 2001). The heavy accumulation and hardening of the deposits show that this was not an accidental phenomenon. Additional data, including micromorphological and palynological analyses, and analyses of macro-remains, were used to reconstruct some of the events that took place at Uan Afuda between 8500 and 8000 BP.

The hunter-gatherers who lived in the Uan Afuda cave at the end of the Pleistocene/start of the early Holocene mainly hunted Barbary sheep and gathered wild grasses and fruits. The Uan Afudiens were able to catch young sheep who could not escape and take them back to their dwellings. The data collected indicate that the animals were provided with fodder and protection. It is highly unlikely that the captured animals were kept in the cave at all times. It is conceivable that ropes were used to allow them to graze during the day, while at night the cave was used as shelter for humans and animals. Barbary sheep have been bred in captivity, but it is difficult to know whether they were able to reproduce in captivity or be domesticated. The possible number of captive animals present at a given time in the cave is unknown. A few individuals would not be enough to counteract a lack of meat. However, if the captive individuals were selected because they were females, they could eventually have provided milk and ensured the survival of the group of hunter-gatherers during periods of scarcity.

Overall, the end of the Pleistocene and beginning of the early Holocene was characterized by three converging trends. First, a trend towards territorialization marked by the repeated occupation of the same sites. This was accompanied by a trend towards the intensified exploitation of certain animal and plant resources, as indicated by the hunting of Barbary sheep in the Acacus and the gathering and/or cultivation of wild sorghum in Nabta Playa. The final trend was the expansion of material culture with the invention/adoption of pottery. These trends, punctuated by climate change, intensified during the Holocene but with significant variations between regions. Interesting contrasts emerged regarding the cultivation of wild grasses: the intensive farming of wild sorghum seems to have been confined to the Nile Valley and the eastern Sahara, particularly in Waddi Kubbaniya and Nabta Playa, while wild millets and other panicoids were predominant in sites of the Central Sahara, at Ti-n-Torha, Uan Tabu and Uan Afuda in the Tadrart Acacus in southeastern Libya.

Producing one's own food

The emergence of food-producing economies is a milestone in the economic and social development of humankind. The consequences of these transformations have certainly been revolutionary, but only in the very long term. It is unlikely that in their initial phases these historic changes took the form of a 'Great Leap Forward'. In fact, some data show that the first communities living partly on agricultural products in the Fertile Crescent suffered serious food shortages

(Cohen and Armelagos, 1984). The average stature fell considerably compared with that of the Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic populations. According to Angel, 'Owing to poor diet throughout childhood, the dimensions of the skull, pelvic inlet, and long bone shafts, as well as general dental health, were depressed below any reasonable health norm' (1984, p. 62). Situations varied considerably, but overall, the early Neolithic populations had poor initial 'health scores' that only improved much later (Angel, 1984; Goodman et al., 1984).

Viewed in this light, the adoption of agriculture and livestock farming caused more problems that it resolved in its initial phase. What factors compelled humans to follow this route? Answers vary but are generally based around three variables: climate change, population pressure and trade dynamics. Depending on the location and time period, these main variables combined to produce specific situations that are examined later in this chapter. The end of the Pleistocene and the early Holocene were marked by significant climate change on a global scale. The impact varied depending on local circumstances but, overall, the continent experienced a sharp increase in rainfall, recharging groundwater levels and reactivating river systems. The early Holocene became the golden age of the small and large Saharan lakes. Excess water from the Mega Lake Chad flowed into the Bahr el Ghazzal and the Wadi Howar and emptied into the Nile. During this period the hunter-gatherers from the Late Palaeolithic and Mesolithic spread to all the biogeographical areas of the continent. Based on this knowledge, the old model of African production economies deriving all innovations from the Near East (Clark and Brandt, 1984) now has limited validity.

The emergence of forager-herders

The end of the Last Glacial Maximum was characterized by a general warming of the climate, resulting in an important wet phase in most regions in the continent's northern hemisphere. Populations that were concentrated in the refuge areas of the Nile Valley, the Mediterranean coast, the highlands of south-western Cameroon, the Atlantic Coast in Cote d'Ivoire and the central Saharan uplands once again spread out to more hospitable lands. The early Holocene nevertheless experienced significant climate fluctuations with brief but severe arid phases, as was the case in 9800-9600 BP and 9200-9100 BP (Wendorf and Schild, 1998). The pioneering phase of the adoption/domestication of cattle took place in an area stretching from the Tadrart Acacus plateau in south-western Libya to the eastern Sahara and Nile Valley in the east (Holl, 1998a, 2004; Marshall and

Hildebrand, 2002; Wendorf and Schild, 1998). This phase dated from 10,000 to 8000 BP. Bones of large bovids identified as *Bos taurus* have been collected in Nabta Playa, Bir Kiseiba and Ti-n-Torha. During the El Adam phase of the early Neolithic (10,800-9800 calBP), the sites contained a few bones and teeth of *Bos*, many gazelle and hare bones, plus those of turtles, jackals, birds and small rodents, indicating a rather poor environment comparable to the northern fringe of the Sahel. These hunter-farmers probably came from the Nile Valley and ventured into the desert to take advantage of the pastures fed by summer rains. 'They used their cattle as a renewable resource' (Wendorf and Schild, 1998, p. 101), using milk and its by-products instead of meat. Site E-75-6 of the El Nabta phase, dating from 9100 to 8900 BP, marked an important change in the early Holocene occupation of the Playa. It contained the remains of at least 15 circular dwellings, each flanked by a bell-shaped silo, and all arranged in two or three parallel lines with three wells 2.5 m deep. E-75-6 was occupied during the dry season, when intensive sorghum harvesting was added to the farming of cattle and hunting of gazelles and hares. This scenario, debated since the publication of these results by the team of F. Wendorf and R. Schild (1998) (Stock and Gifford-Gonzales 2013), is challenged in a recent work:

> The results from modern DNA analyses, coupled with (a) this re-examination of the ecological underpinnings of the early African cattle domestication model and (b) the dates of the appearances of caprine and cattle domesticates in a minimum of two diffusionist waves via different land and sea routes from a current bracketed date of c. 6300 BC onwards, show that the time has come to abandon the long-standing hypothesis of an early Holocene independent centre of cattle domestication in Northeast Africa (Brass, 2017).

However, this new study does not explain the presence of cattle before 6500 BCE in the archaeological sites of the Central Sahara in the Acacus (Holl, 2004) and in Nubia (Sudan) in the Wadi al Arab site dating from 8500–6500 BCE (Stock and Gifford-Gonzales, 2013).

Adoption and development of livestock husbandry

The discussion focuses exclusively on animal species that have had a fundamental cultural impact. This is the case for cattle, sheep, goats and camels, either exclusively and/or in varying combinations. It draws on the long-term research programme conducted by Fred Wendorf and Romuald Schild in the eastern Sahara since the 1960s, which considerably altered scenarios regarding

animal domestication in Africa (Blench and MacDonald, 2000; Holl, 1998, 2004; Wendorf, Schild and Associates, 2001).

Nomadic hunter-gatherers societies between the Nile Valley and the Nabta Playa Lake area were responsible for the domestication of cattle (*Bos taurus*) from local wild strains (*Bos primigenius*) at the very beginning of the Holocene, between 10,500 and 7500 BP. They also cultivated wild sorghum and developed sophisticated rituals involving the sacrifice and burial of whole cattle. This complex spread gradually throughout the eastern Sahara and reached the central Saharan uplands – the Tadrart Acacus – around 8500 BP. A transhumance system developed based on the plains being occupied during the wet season, and mountain sites, with many caves and rock shelters occupied in the dry season. The waterways were therefore used as transhumance routes. The livestock represented in the archaeological sequences of the Ti-n-Torha complex, Uan Afuda, Uan Muhhuggiag, Uan Tabu, Fozzigiaren, Ti-n-Hanakaten, etc. was initially dominated by cattle, then gradually incorporated varying proportions of sheep and goats (Holl, 2004). The territories of these Saharan nomadic pastoralists consisted of two large entities: a zone of sandy plains where stone monument cemeteries were found, and a mountainous area where rock painting and carving sites were identified.

Domesticated sheep and goats spread across the continent from Western Asia via the Sinai and the Isthmus of Suez. The early Neolithic in Lower Egypt, documented at Merinde and dating from 7000 BP, was a mixed economy combining agriculture and farming of cattle and sheep and goats. This West Asian complex spread in two directions: from the Delta to Upper Egypt and Nubia on the one hand, and along the northern and southern Mediterranean coasts on the other. Along the first axis, small village communities, Nagada I and II, Early Khartoum, Shaheinab, Kadero, etc. established themselves along the Nile as far as Nubia. Fishing, hunting and the cultivation of wild resources remained constant.

Along the second, southern Mediterranean axis, sheep and goat farming spread westward along the Tripolitania coast, as indicated by the Haua Fteah site in its E phase, known as Libyco-Capsian and dated 9000–6000 BP. Further west, in the Aurès Mountains at an altitude of 1,540 m, the Cappeleti site showed a sequence of occupation of 2,000 years, from *c.* 6500 to 4500 BP, subdivided into four periods of variable duration. The cave, an integral part of a transhumance system, was clearly a seasonal habitat, occupied in spring, summer and part of the autumn. The livestock represented comprised mainly sheep and goats, with a very small number of cattle. The site of El Khril, near Tangier in the Gibraltar area, contained cardial pottery and several bones from cattle and sheep and goats. The southern Mediterranean axis confirms the expansion of

nomadic pastoralism based on sheep and goats, characteristic of proto-Berber and proto-Libyan populations before the advent of the camel.

Complexes with cattle, sheep and goats spread throughout the continent along two axes. The west-southwest axis started in the central Saharan uplands and moved towards West Africa. This expansion process extended over 2,000 years, from 6000 to 4000 BP. The Aïr Mountains and the surrounding Ténéré desert acted as sort of marshalling stations for transfers of the pastoral economies. The sites at Adrar-Bous and Arlit marked out these movements, which continued from 4500 to 3500 BP along the Atlantic coast (Tintan and Chami), in the Taoudeni Basin (Erg-in-Sakane, Adrar-n-Ifogha and the Tilemsi Valley), the Dhar Tichitt, Dhar Walata, Dhar Nema, Azawagh Valley and the Eghazzer basin and, further south, the Kintampo Culture site and the Chad Basin (Gajiganna in Nigeria, Deguesse in Cameroon). Evidence of ritual practices involving the sacrifice of cattle, sheep and goats dating from around 6000–5000 BP has been found in a vast area stretching from the central Sahara in Libya to the Eghazzer Basin in Niger. Pastoral ideology, apparent in rock paintings and carvings, contributed to the emergence of societies of nomadic pastoralists, represented in West Africa by the Peul or Fulani communities. Living in contact with farmers, these communities were found in Senegal in the west to Sudan and the Central African Republic in the east. The dwarf goat (*Capra hircus*) spread further south into wet areas and was integrated into forms of domestic livestock.

The north-south axis, which started in the eastern Sahara and headed south along the Nile Valley eventually led to the formation of paradigmatic pastoral societies, creating what anthropologists have called the 'Cattle Complex'. Here, the livestock was generally mixed, but with a strong dominance of cattle. Sites dating from the 'Pastoral Neolithic' period in the third millennium BCE were documented in the basin of Lake Turkana. Populations of hunter-gatherer-fishers adopted the farming of domestic animals, practices that remained confined to northern Kenya and only spread southward after more than a millennium. Community ecology and epizootiology models provide a coherent explanation for this lag: animals new to a biogeographic area had to adapt and develop an immune response to local pathogens carried by large mammals. Around 4000 BP, sheep, goats and cattle reached southern Kenya and northern Tanzania and continued their expansion south.

Part of the settlement of East and Southern Africa took the form of a demographic expansion of Bantu-speaking farmers, who understood metalworking and lived in small family hamlets. These groups incorporated sheep, goats and cattle into their way of life giving rise to new cultures known as the

'Bantu Cattle Culture System'. Remains of cattle dating from 380 BCE have been uncovered in Salumano in Zambia. Cattle farming extended along this eastern side, while sheep and goat complexes developed in the west, from Angola to Cape Province. Sheep remains dating from 2100 to 1900 BCE have been found at sites in Cape Province. Hunter-gatherer peoples (Khoi) adopted the pastoral economy and introduced these species into the more southern countries.

The domestication of the camel took place on the Arabian Peninsula in around 5000-4000 BP. It was thereafter gradually introduced into North Africa during Roman colonization. This robust and simple animal species became the 'ship of the desert', bred for its meat, milk, transport capacities and many by-products, including skin and coat, etc. Pastoral economies based on camels, dominant in the Sahara Desert, were found in the northern half of the African continent, in an arc from northern Kenya to Mauritania. Somalia had the highest concentration of camel herds, followed by Sudan and Mauritania.

The expansion of the West Asian agricultural complex

The West Asian complex, based on wheat, barley, oats, goat, sheep, cattle, pigs and flax, initially spread into the Nile Delta, the Fayum Depression and southwards into the Nile Valley. It reached the Ethiopian Highlands at an unknown date, probably from the Arabian Peninsula and was added to an agriculture based on local plants such as ensete, teff and noog.

The early Neolithic sites of the Fayum date from approximately 5200 BCE. Fourteen settlement sites have been identified over 60 km along the northern and north-eastern shores of the lake. Harvests of wheat, barley and oats were stored in underground granaries situated a good distance from the lake; 160 specimens of these structures have been excavated. Merinde, dating from circa 5000-4900 BCE and occupied for almost 600 years, is the best-known early Neolithic site in the Delta. The Neolithic tradition of a mixed economy continued in increasingly elaborate village settlements such as El-Omari (*c.* 4500 BCE) and Ma'adi (*c.* 3500 BCE). Cardial Neolithic sites have been uncovered in the Tangier region of northern Morocco, at El-Khril, Achakar, Gar Cahal and Cal That el Gar. These were mainly rock shelters and caves that were occupied intermittently, probably seasonally.

The oasis agricultural complex

This agricultural complex was a relatively late variant of the West Asian complex. It consisted of an intensive form of gardening that required special hydraulic installations to ensure permanent access to water for irrigation and watering. Little is known about the archaeology of the oasis agricultural complex. However, research by Van der Veen (1992, 1999) in the Fezzan in southern Libya provides interesting clues. According to the findings, the locality of Zinchecra was part of the Garamantes Kingdom that developed in southern Libya during the first millennium BCE. Wheat, barley, dates, grapes and figs were cultivated there in the first millennium BCE, around 700-600 BCE. The production of dates later became a specialization of certain oases in Africa north of the Tropic of Cancer, a specialization which supplied and supported trans-Saharan trade.

The sub-Saharan cereal complex

The cereal crops of sub-Saharan Africa essentially comprised four species of grasses grown as a single crop and/or in rotation. They all have wild varieties, the distribution maps of which were published by Jack Harlan (1979). These maps show more or less extensive distribution areas for sorghum, millet, rice and fonio, thus presenting a non-centric character according to Harlan (1976).

Sorghum was farmed intensively from the late Pleistocene, but domesticated varieties were difficult to locate. Seed imprints in pottery shards from the KG23 site of the Butana Group near Kassala in Eastern Sudan, dated to 3500-3000 BCE, provide convincing archeobotanical evidence of domestic sorghum cultivation in Eastern Sudan during the fourth millennium (Winchell et al., 2017). Sorghum cultivation later spread to the northeastern part of the continent around 1000 BCE. DNA sequences extracted from prehistoric sorghum show no differences from those of modern sorghum, which Rowley-Conwy and others (1999) interpret as evidence of relatively recent domestication. In West Africa, the most reliable sorghum remains were discovered in Daima on the Chadian Plain and dated from 800 CE. Sorghum grows under rain and/or using the technique of flood-recession farming. Sorghum as a crop seems to have spread from North-east Africa to the rest of the continent. Before the arrival of maize in the sixteenth century, it was the most common cereal in Eastern and Southern Africa.

Remains of domestic millet have been unearthed at several West African sites. They usually form part of a collection of macro-remains comprising other

panicoids such as *Brachiaria deflexa*, *Panicum glaucum*, *P. turgidum*, etc. wild rice, fruits and legumes. P. Munson (1976) presented a scenario for the domestication of pearl millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*) in the Dhar Tichitt region in the southwestern Sahara (Figure 2). The presence of wild millet remains in the samples analysed is an argument in favour of local domestication, which the authors date to between 2000 and 1500 BCE (Amblard and Pernes, 1989; Holl, 1985, 1986; Klee and Zach, 1999; Neumann, 1999). Millet was also grown in the Kintampo Culture site in modern-day Ghana during the same period. From 1500 to 1000 BCE, millet was present in almost the entire Sudan-Sahel region, at Gajiganna, Kursakata, Megge on the Chadian Plain, in the Nok culture area and in Oursi and Ti-n-Akasof in Burkina Faso. From the end of the first millennium BCE and in the first millennium CE, the cultivation of millet (*Pennisetum glaucum* and *Eleusine coracana*) was adopted throughout sub-Saharan Africa, from the Sahelian zone to Southern Africa, including Central Africa, in the area today covered by the equatorial rainforest in southern Cameroon and in the centre of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

African rice (*Oryza glaberrima*) was domesticated in the western part of West Africa. The cultivation of wild rice has been documented at a handful of sites, in Gajiganna and Kursakata in the Chadian plain and Jenne-Jeno in the inner Niger Delta (Murray, 2004). Domestic rice remains were found in

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Figure 2. *View of the central portion of the agro-pastoral village of Akhreijit, Dhar Tichitt, Mauritania, dating from 4000 to 2400 BP, context of the earliest domestication of pearl millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*)*

layers dating from 300-200 BCE at Jenne-Jeno and 800-700 BCE in Dia on the flood plain of the inner Niger Delta. To date, the Gambia Valley, another potential area of African rice domestication, has not been the subject of any systematic archaeological research.

Fonio (*Digitaria iburua*) was found in limited areas. The Boucle du Mouhoun in Burkina Faso is at the centre of one of these regions. Here, the site of Kerebe-Sira-Tomo 4 revealed a significant concentration of fonio and cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata*) burned following a fire. This occupation layer dated from 1100 to 1200 CE.

In summary, sub-Saharan cereal farming comprised multiple variants based on millet, sorghum, rice and fonio. Farming methods were certainly diverse and probably included slash-and-burn practices with long fallow periods on the one hand, and the use of flood-recession techniques on the other, with many intermediate solutions.

However, in all cases, the production of cereals was only part of the food complex, which also included proteins and fats from plant and animal sources. Hunting, fishing and farming provided animal resources. Oil palm (*Elaeis guineensis*), shea tree (*Butyrospermum parkii*), African olives (*Canarium schweinfurthii*) and black-eyed peas (*Vigna unguiculata*) provided vegetable proteins and fats. The remains of palm nuts are frequently found at archaeological sites, especially those of the Kintampo Culture in Ghana (D'Andrea et al., 2006; Marshall and Hildebrand, 2002), the Obobogo Culture area in southern Cameroon and the megalithic area of the Central African Republic (Zangato, 1999). The shea tree, a protected species, was found in savanna areas where it formed veritable savanna parks. The production and consumption of shea oil was an integral part of the cultural heritage of the Mande peoples in the south-east. The baobab, (*Adansonia digitata*), which provided its young leaves, fruit and bark for rope making, is also a protected species.

The black-eyed pea was found across a vast area stretching from Senegal to Cameroon (D'Andrea, 2007). This legume is now considered an essential element of the food complex, as was the case for the maize/bean pairing in Mesoamerica and wheat/barley/lentils in the Near East. The oldest remains of beans originated from central Ghana (Site B6B, Horizon 4) and date from 1830 to 1595 BCE (D'Andrea et al., 2007, p. 686). Others have been found in the Oujoungou area in Mali, in the Boucle du Mouhoun in Burkina Faso (Figure 3) and in the Nok culture area in Nigeria (Breunig, 2007; Huysecom, 2007). The area where the black-eyed pea – *Niebe* in Senegal – was domesticated is most likely West African. Overall, the sub-Saharan cereal crop systems spread to the equatorial wet zones, combining or overlapping with forms of equatorial horticulture.

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Figure 3. *Kerebe Sira Tomo 4, in the Boucle du Mouhoun in Burkina Faso: food supplies burned following a fire, including jars of fonio (*Digitaria iburua*) and black-eyed peas (*Vigna unguiculata*) dating from 1100–1300 CE*

Equatorial agroforestry

Equatorial horticulture was primarily based on tubers and oilseed plants such as oil palm and *Canarium schweinfurthii*. The Kintampo Culture site in Ghana is an interesting case of a cereal/tuber combination. The 'stone rasps' or 'terracotta Cigars' at the Birimu site revealed the presence of yam phytoliths. The processes that resulted in the domestication of African yams, *Dioscorea cayenensis, D. rotundata,* remain unclear. The yam belt extending from Togo/Benin in the west to the Central African Republic in the east was probably one of these domestication areas. The diversity of wild yams is at its highest in the forest/savanna ecotone, along with forest galleries (Hamon et al., 1995). Despite the lack of direct evidence, the establishment of megalithic communities in this region suggests the intensive cultivation of wild yams. Furthermore, the urban civilizations of southern Nigeria, Oyo, Ife and Benin, along with the rural forest communities at Obobogo, along the Congo River, at Igbo-Ukwu, in the Gabonese forest and in Equatorial Guinea, very probably exploited the wide range of wild yams and tubers that the environment offered them.

The Malayo-Polynesian complex

The East African cereal and horticultural systems of the interior of the continent were enriched by successive waves of new plants from the Malayo-Polynesian area. This complex, known as Malayo-Polynesian, essentially comprised sweet bananas, plantains, taro, colocases, etc. According to the commonly accepted scenario, these plants would have been introduced into East Africa at the beginning of our era, in the context of the settlement of Madagascar by Austronesian-speaking peoples. However, recent discoveries have undermined this scenario, which had the advantage of simplicity. Research on the areas where bananas were domesticated in the Pacific reveals a more complex situation, with the possibility of multiple origins and several dispersion phases (Kennedy, 2008). The discovery of banana phytoliths dating from 500 BCE in southern Cameroon, several thousand kilometres away on the western edge of the equatorial rainforest, suggests a much earlier arrival date. Another more recent discovery (Lejju et al., 2006) has reignited the debate on entirely new grounds; a sedimentary core taken from the Munsa site in Uganda revealed the presence of banana phytoliths (*Musa* sp.) in a layer dated to 3500 BCE. If these data are confirmed, the question of the origins of agriculture in tropical wet Africa will have to be completely reconsidered. However, whatever the arrival period of the plants of the Malayo-Polynesian complex, the expansion of the farming of bananas, plantains, taro and other colocases had a remarkable impact in the Great Lakes region. This intensive gardening produced a unique agrarian landscape, supporting some of the highest rural population densities in sub-Saharan Africa.

Conclusion

Successive waves of migration brought new plants to the African continent. The Arab-Muslim expansion introduced lettuce, cabbage, turnips, onions, tomatoes, sugar cane, etc. Sugar cane led to plantation slavery developed by the Portuguese in the Canary Islands in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. American plants made their way eastward. Maize (*Zea maize*) replaced sorghum in many regions of Africa, particularly in Eastern and Southern Africa; cassava (*Manihot esculenta*) replaced yams; and the cocoa tree became a cash crop in Ghana, Cameroon and Cote d'Ivoire. Many other fruit trees, such as avocado and papaya, are today part of the African landscape. Simplifying somewhat,

it can be said that African agriculture developed in successive waves, with the oldest complexes absorbing the more recent ones, each time producing new syntheses. The combination of plants of West Asian and Ethiopian origin is one of these remarkable syntheses. The ease of cultivation and handling and yield rates created the dynamics specific to each of the complexes examined in this text. Depending on the circumstances, certain plants were selected (millet, sorghum, rice, yams, bananas, plantains, maize, cassava, etc.) and others discarded (millet, sorghum, rice, fonio, yams, etc.).

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CHAPTER 10

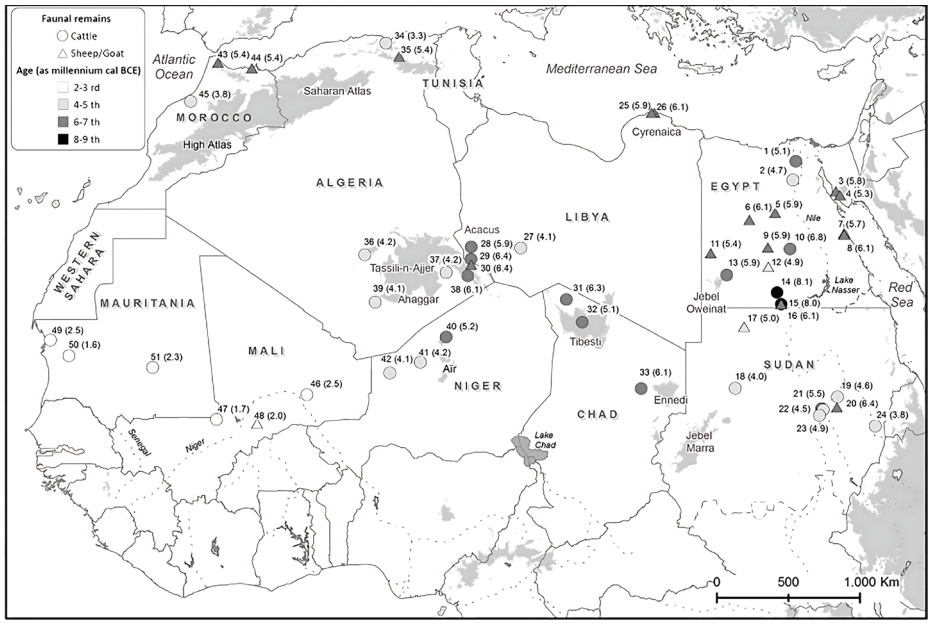
GENESIS AND DEVELOPMENT OF PASTORALISM IN SAHARA AND NORTH AFRICA

Savino di Lernia

Introduction

Millions of people in Africa today rely on pastoral activity. Cattle, camels, donkeys, sheep, goats and other domestic animals provide meat, milk, skin, labour, manure, fuel – to name just a few contributions of livestock to people's daily lives. The social ideology of herders, in East and West Africa in particular, focuses on cattle, and the richness and diversity of pastoral adaptation in Africa reflect a long tradition reaching back to the early Holocene.

The study of the emergence and development of pastoralism is a major domain of Africanist research, which has attracted the attention of several scholars over time. However, large parts of the debate over recent decades have been absorbed by the hypothesis of autonomous domestication of cattle in southern Egypt. This chapter collates all the updated information on the beginning and expansion of herding, focusing on cattle, sheep and goats in North Africa, with a view to synthesizing the main socio-cultural features, and provides a few hints for future research.



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The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.

Figure 1. *Map of principal North African sites with earliest presence of cattle (dot) and sheep/goat (triangle). Radiocarbon dates have been calibrated (OxCal 4.2) and the average age of each site is reported in brackets (e.g., 7.3 = 7300 calBCE). Sites are numbered according to country and by latitude:*

1) Merimde Benisalame; 2) Fayum; 3) El Awag; 4) Abu Gedar 2; 5) Djara 90/1-Cl. 7; 6) Farafra; 7) Tree Shelter; 8) Sodmein Cave; 9) Dakhla; 10) Kharga/E-76-7; 11) Glass Area 81/61; 12) Eastpans 95/2-1; 13) Wadi Bakht; 14) Bir Kiseiba E-79-8; 15) Nabta Playa E75-3; 16) Nabta Playa E 75-8; 17) Burg et Tuyur 85/73-2; 18) Wadi Howar; 19) El Kadada; 20) Shaqadud; 21) Shaheinab; 22) Kadero; 23) Um Direiwa; 24) Kashm el Girba; 25) Haua Fteah; 26) Abu Tamsa; 28) Ti-n-Torha; 27) Murzuq; 29) Uan Muhuggiag; 30) Takarkori; 31) Enneri Bardagué; 32) Gabrong; 33) Délébo; 34) Gueldaman-Akbou; 35) Grotte Capeletti; 36) Meniet; 37) Relidijem; 38) Ti-n-Hanakaten; 39) Adrar Tiouyine; 40) Adrar Bous; 41) Arlit; 42) Tamaya Mellet; 43) Kaf Tahtel-Ghar; 44) Ifri Oudadane; 45) Kehf-el-Baroud; 46) Karkarichinkat south; 47) Kobadi; 48) Windé Koroji; 49) Chami; 50) Khatt Lemaiteg; 51) Dhar Tichitt. Source: GIS elaboration by Emanuele Cancellieri.

For North Africa, in place of the UN definition of countries of the Sahara Desert, I favour instead a geographical designation encompassing the immense region, covering roughly one-third of the continent, and stretching from the Atlantic coast to the Red Sea on the western and eastern sides respectively, limited to the north by the Mediterranean Sea, and to the south by the moving edge of the Saharan-Sahelian belt, thereby including countries such as Mauritania, Niger and Chad (Figure 1).

The emergence of pastoralism in Africa: previous studies and present topics

Cattle, sheep and goats

The emergence of food production in Africa is a complex, non-linear and multidimensional process, highly significant for our understanding of prehistoric societies. Unfortunately, this complex phenomenon has often been oversimplified, focusing on the analysis of the domestication process with particular emphasis on endogenous versus exogenous origins. Unlike south-west Asia and other regions, where, during the Pleistocene-Holocene transition, blooming productive economies were essentially based on agriculture, the beginning of food production in North Africa is characterized by the exploitation of animal domesticates. In addition, the classic equation 'food production = sedentism', well attested in the Fertile Crescent, is also challenged in Africa. In the northern regions and the Sahara, we have semi-sedentary hunter-gatherer-fishers at the beginning of the Holocene, immediately followed by semi-nomadic or transhumant cattle pastoralists.

The issue of animal domestication is framed – in Africa as elsewhere – by Braidwood's concept of 'nuclear zones'. In the African scenario, this notion has held particular theoretical implications. The presence or absence of wild progenitors of cattle and sheep/goat either permitted or prohibited the very attempt to investigate independent centres of domestication. If the presence in Africa of wild prototypes (preferentially forms) of sheep (*Ovis orientalis*) and goats (*Capra aegagrus*) was generally excluded (contra Muzzolini, 1995), the same does not apply to cattle, with *Bos primigenius* well distributed in northern Africa from the Middle Pleistocene onwards (Stock and Gifford-Gonzalez, 2013). For this simple reason, almost nobody advanced the idea of the independent domestication of sheep/goats. In contrast, starting from Dechambre (1950) and Mori (1961), many researchers have suggested the autonomous domestication of cattle in Africa, at least until recently.

Among the various reasons for advancing arguments for the independent domestication of cattle, several authors point to the high symbolic value of aurochs within Late Pleistocene Saharan foragers, implying a special human-animal relationship (see di Lernia, 2013, for a review).

While theories proposing the independent domestication of cattle in Africa are no longer valid today, such claims should probably be placed in their cultural and historical context. However, it is important to must stress the difficulty in identifying any traces of pastoral exploitation at the very early stages of the

adoption process. Domestication is a co-evolutionary process, where different socio-cultural actions on animals precede full morphological changes (Zeder, 2008). All of these initial steps are barely visible in the zooarchaeological record. In Africa, previous approaches generally combined the presence of morphologically domestic bones and radiocarbon dates, leading to the creation of maps showing the distribution of earliest domesticates and inferring potential routes of dispersal across the continent. Other approaches, such as linguistic and genetic (e.g. Blench, 2006; Stock and Gifford-Gonzalez, 2013), are common in African studies and offer insights into this issue, but again may suffer either from chronological problems or circular arguments.

Nowadays, combining archaeological, archaeozoological and genetic data, the most parsimonious hypothesis for the emergence of pastoral exploitation in Africa points to an introduction of *Bos taurus* from South-west Asia in the early Holocene around the mid-seventh millennium calBCE[1] (di Lernia, 2013). On the basis of the available evidence – especially genetics, faunal remains and rock art – it is probable that the first herds of cattle were humpless. The small groups of herders, with their domestic stock, entered regions intensively inhabited by bands of hunter-gatherers, whose social organization, food security and landscape exploitation were rather sophisticated and regionally diversified. Penetration was then intermittent and multifaceted: consideration should be given to social and cultural negotiations between groups having different traditions, given the persistence of groups of hunter-gatherers in northern Africa at least up to the mid-fifth millennium BCE (Barham and Mitchell, 2008, p. 358).

Based on the presently available radiocarbon dates (Figure 1), bones of the earliest cattle are present in a vast area of north-eastern Africa, encompassing Egypt, Chad, Libya and Sudan, clustering in the long seventh millennium calBCE. Although it is difficult to track any preferential routes of this penetration, two aspects may be noted: i) the quasi-contemporaneity of radiocarbon measures and (taking into account the standard deviation and their 'statistical' value, if any); ii) an apparent north-east to south-west cline. These aspects may imply, at least at the beginning of the process, and a rather rapid, leap-frogging movement, whose reasons may be found in the climatic and environmental context. A huge amount of literature on climate change in North Africa is available today, suggesting wet and warm conditions at the beginning of the Holocene, including the so-called Green Sahara. These conditions were brusquely interrupted by an abrupt, cold and dry phenomenon

1 Radiocarbon dates are reported as calBCE (Before Common Era).

at *c.* 6400-6200 calBCE (the so-called 8.2 calBP event) recorded in many parts of Northern Africa and the Mediterranean basin. Without seeking a prime mover, it is possible that unexpected harsh environmental conditions, especially in South-west Asia and in the north-eastern corner of the continent, may have favoured a rapid dispersal of these small groups of cattle herders. It could be added that the pace of dispersal of the earliest groups of domesticates strongly slowed down west of the central Saharan massifs (Figure 1). Despite the fact that latitudinal expansion should be easier and faster than longitudinal, a major step in radiocarbon dates is visible in the westernmost regions of North Africa – a topic barely investigated in the past – and is likely connected to both the function of *refugia* of the central Saharan massifs and the different traditions and cultural complexity of local hunter-gatherer groups.

The archaeozoological and archaeological evidence for small livestock is also intricate. Again, poor state of preservation and taphonomic reasons may explain the rarity of faunal remains of sheep/goats in the early Holocene record. The picture is made more difficult by the presence of remains of *Ammotragus lervia* and *Gazella dorcas*, which makes the identification process even harder. Dry and hot conditions also render difficult the retrieval of organic substance in the faunal remains, hampering the possibility to undertake genetic and chemical studies directly on the bones, not to say direct radiocarbon dates. With these limits, we have again to rely on rather poor archaeological evidence and accept the presence of only a few new sites available for analysis, compared with the evidence of a couple of decades ago.

The distinction of sheep versus goats is also difficult in most of the cases: however, archaeological, genetic and rock art seem to suggest the presence of thin-tailed sheep in North-East Africa and the Sahara, where fat-thin sheep seem to be found later and with a different, mostly western distribution: present distribution is also complex, and further data are necessary (Muigai and Hanotte, 2013). Unfortunately, small livestock are represented less than cattle in the parietal rock art, with the same chronological uncertainties, and only a few conclusions can be drawn.

However, bones of sheep/goats are attested at a few sites, partly overlapping the contexts with early domestic cattle, albeit with slightly younger with radiocarbon dates younger (even if the differences are not statistically significant). Several sites in Egypt, Libya and Sudan highlight the existence of sheep/goats from around the second half of the seventh millennium calBCE (Figure 1). Given the rarity of radiocarbon dates and their statistical distribution, a cut-off date for the arrival of small livestock may be placed around 6500-6200 calBCE. Multiple corridors

of penetration are possible, again on the basis of their geographic distribution: via the Red Sea from the Arabian Peninsula or via Sinai and Negev from the Levant. However, despite the short distances between regions of North-east Africa and South-west Asia – in particular those along the interface marked by the Red Sea – any transmissions implying societal transformations require specific times, each with a different pace. A maritime path along the Mediterranean coast is also possible, especially considering genetic and faunal evidence from sites in the Maghreb, at least for goats (Pereira, 2006). The direction of dispersion in the inland regions of Northern Africa, including the Sahara, is a matter of speculation. Looking at the 'Acacus gateway' (Holl, 2004), new radiocarbon dates run on bones of cattle and sheep/goats from Uan Muhuggiag and Takarkori indicate the very early presence of domesticates (both cattle and sheep/goats), from 6500 calBCE (di Lernia, 2013). These early dates from the Acacus indicate again the fast pace of dispersal of the first herding groups across the north-east corner of the continent.

In short, the assumption of the arrival from south-western Asia of both domestic cattle and small livestock raises the question of whether these animals arrived together or at separate stages. Radiocarbon dates of the earliest cattle and goats in South-west Asia may support both hypotheses, as well as radiocarbon measures from North African contexts. The idea of a first expansion of cattle in the early Holocene followed by the introduction of sheep/goats from south-west Asia around two millennia later was in the past merely based on the Nabta-Kiseiba hypothesis, placing an autonomous centre of domestication in Africa around 8500 calBCE. Given the scarce archaeozoological evidence at Nabta-Kiseiba and the lack of genetic proof for an African origin of domestic cattle, we should then reject Wendorf's claim and look for a parsimonious explanation. The quasi-contemporaneity of the strongest, earliest radiocarbon dates for both cattle and small livestock (sheep/goats) in North Africa should be seen as a multi-step unitary process – no matter, then, who came first. It is likely – but still difficult to support with the present archaeological evidence – that the introduction of cattle and small livestock was therefore almost contemporary. Pathways and timings are still problematic to assess but could reasonably consist of multiple arrivals and different paces of expansion (also based on the specific animals following the herders). The variety of landscapes and climate ecozones could also explain the absence or presence of specific animals in particular locations.

Cultural traditions: regional diversity within a common substratum

Early pastoral groups of Northern Africa present distinctive facets of food security, material culture, settlement strategies and ideological values. We may isolate some major traditions, although sites are few, distance immense and chronological attributions often difficult (e.g. Barich, 2014; Kuper and Kröpelin, 2006; Linstädter et al., 2012). Comparing the latest hunter-gatherer groups and the earliest pastoralists, the main discontinuities visible in the archaeological record could refer to ceramic production, lithic organization, funerary practices and rock art.

The earliest pottery in Africa is represented by a few undecorated sherds dated to the tenth millennium calBCE in Mali. Other centres of production of nearly coeval age, but more abundant and richer, are in the southern and eastern Sahara. The main characteristics of these ceramics made by hunter-gatherer-fishers are the sophisticated technology, the large size of the vessels, and the use of impressed or incised decoration with wavy decorations or packed zigzags. Among the changes visible in the early pastoral production, I would signal the emergence or development of different techniques, and the increased presence of a distinct neck in the vessel shape, and in general of different body morphologies, coupled with different types of decorative syntax. Ceramic traditions along the Mediterranean coast, and especially in the westernmost regions, are different from the Sahara: they appear late and reflect a different network of connections.

Although it is very difficult to make any generalizations on the lithic organization (strongly depending on raw material availability, functionality and seasonality, among other factors), early pastoral productions in large parts of North Africa show a decrease in bladelet-oriented technology, the decline of geometric microliths and in general more so of backed tools (both traditional characters of the latest hunter-gatherers), featuring at the same time a more expedient use of stony materials. In different areas, the introduction of small bifacial tools or arrowheads in lithic assemblages might also represent important cultural discontinuities due to the arrival of newcomers, and constitute an expression of a new pastoral socio-economic world.

As previously noted, transitions to and/or the incorporation of food-producing systems within hunter-gatherer groups generally presented marked differences (Smith, 2005). The change from an acquisitive organization to a producing organization is not a mere economic process; it is a complex phenomenon encompassing intense transformations, especially in the ideological world. As such, funerary practices are another important marker of societal change in the

early Holocene cultural dynamics of the first pastoral groups. In particular, the western regions of North Africa reflect the influx of late Pleistocene traditions, with burial grounds in caves and shelters (Mariotti et al., 2014). In the southern Sahara, the exceptional site of Gobero in Niger (Sereno et al., 2008) shows marked physical and cultural differences between pre-pastoral, Kiffian populations and pastoral Neolithic, Tenerean groups. The same is evident in the Acacus Mountains in the Libyan central Sahara, where remarkable contexts such as Uan Muhuggiag, Fozzigiaren and Takarkori feature enduring traditions of a pastoral world, with women and children – no males – interred in the recessed parts of the rock shelters (di Lernia and Tafuri, 2013). While some aspects of the ritual seem to be ubiquitous (such as the position, contracted on the side, of the deceased), others seem to be region-specific (such as the avulsion of the incisors, common in northwest Africa but absent in the larger Sahara).

Rock art also provides powerful evidence of major ideological changes in the early Holocene populations in North Africa. Following the recent discovery of late Pleistocene rock art at Qurta (Huyge et al., 2011), it is now quite difficult to sustain the existence of 'aniconic' cultures of hunter-gatherers in North Africa (Muzzolini, 1995) and relate all rock art to food-producing groups. Recent research in the central Sahara definitely connects Round Head paintings to Late Acacus groups, a local culture of hunter-gatherer-fishers firmly radiocarbon dated to 8300-6100 years calBCE (di Lernia et al., 2015), as suggested by many authors in the past. When compared to the foraging universe of Round Head art, the pastoral iconography shows profound and marked differences. In particular, landscape, subjects, themes and artistic narratives yield an unprecedented and vivid view of the cattle herders' world, where cattle are the main focus (Figure 2).

Nobody wants to offer an undifferentiated view of the prehistoric pastoral world across the northern regions of the African continent. Yet, demarcations are strong – from place to place, and from region to region. Nonetheless, some elements mirror a common substratum: food security is based on the intensive utilization of wild plants (but no agriculture), the exploitation of domestic livestock and hunting.

The emergence of pastoralism in Northern Africa is thus characterized by many differences but also several similarities, reflecting a kind of cultural *koine*, where the ideological aspects are the most significant traits (a focus on cattle, funerary practices, rock art), rather than technological ones. This is clearly noticeable for the larger Sahara and the oases around the Nile Valley, whereas in other regions analytic data do not, unfortunately, allow for a better and tighter assessment.



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Figure 2. *Wadi Bedis, Messak Settafet (south-west Libya). Pastoral scene (base c. 1 m) with cattle possibly carrying water containers among the horns, branches and weights*

Becoming herders: ideological aspects of North African pastoralists

If a 'cut-off' date around 6500 calBCE could be considered a reliable age for the earliest emergence of pastoral adaptations in North-east Africa, it will take several centuries (up to more than a millennium in several regions) to fully develop a pastoral system, with significant differences from one region to another. As a whole, at the end of the sixth millennium calBCE, great parts of Northern Africa are characterized by an economy fully based on pastoralism, including the exploitation of cattle secondary products, as indicated by milk residues on potsherds from Takarkori rock shelter in the Acacus Mountains (Dunne et al., 2012).

Although food security and mobility are focal aspects in the study of pastoralists, the best way to identify a full pastoral system is to examine its ideology. Accordingly, a few noteworthy archaeological aspects help to illustrate the pathways to the complexity of North African herders.

Animal burials: an African phenomenon at the roots of African pastoralism

Dry stone monuments of different architectural morphology with buried animal remains constitute remarkable evidence of prehistoric pastoral ideology from around 5600-5400 calBCE. These monuments mostly contain cattle – even though sheep, goats, donkeys, Barbary sheep and gazelles, are also known. The earliest examples are dated to the second half of the sixth millennium calBCE and are spread over a large region: Nabta Playa in Egypt, the Messak plateau in Libya and the Air mountains in Niger. High standard deviations of radiocarbon dates east to west do not clearly indicate a geographic cline, but a rapid diffusion seems the simplest hypothesis (di Lernia et al., 2013). Interestingly, similar monuments are present in the Arabian Peninsula – at present with a younger age – and may provide evidence of cross-regional ideological and multi-directional cultural interconnections.

The burial of animal carcasses, either articulated or disarticulated, is an enduring social tradition crossing regional and cultural boundaries. The ritual is indeed very old, diversified and – at least in the Libyan Messak – highly codified. Despite the many differences (architecture of stone superstructures; species, sex, age and quantity of buried animals; presence of grave goods; presence of rock art; etc.), the habit of killing animals (mostly cattle), sharing the meat

and buring the bones highlights again a common cultural substratum. The meaning of this ritual varies greatly, depending on the environmental features, cultural and social contexts. At Nabta, Wendorf and associates (2001) suggest and viewing the animal burial as mediation between humans and superhuman entities practised by 'rainmakers' to favour climate amelioration in a drying area. In the Messak, the gathering of different human groups for the performing of collective ceremonies mirrors an egalitarian structure, but also the need of social promotion and intergroup cohesion within Middle Pastoral herders (di Lernia et al., 2013). Other contexts of later chronology, scattered in several parts of North Africa, show the existence of elaborate burials associated with human graves, suggesting the emergence of 'animal grave goods' for ranked inhumations. Pathways toward social complexity in Africa often intersect the animal universe, especially cattle.

Pastoral art iconography

Northern African rock art is an astonishing witness to herders' ideology. Although the earliest rock art dates to the late Pleistocene, the boost in richness and diversity is undoubtedly linked to the Holocene pastoral world. Petroglyphs, pictographs and earth figures are ubiquitous in North Africa, with remarkable concentrations in areas such as the Atlas, the Saharan massifs and the Nile Valley (Figure 1). Most scientific efforts have been directed towards the chronological assessment of these artworks, although a few researchers have investigated the meaning of this artistic production from a more socially oriented perspective.

The ubiquitous presence of artworks in caves, rock shelters and rock cliffs should be considered a mark of pastoral landscape, socially built and continuously revitalized across time. For rock art too, the regional differences are strong in many respects. The very existence of pastoral rock art in such quantity and substance makes this iconographic dimension a particular trait of the African world.

However, the difficulty of dating artworks, and the lack in many regions of robust archaeological sequences, make interregional comparisons challenging. For example, it is not clear where (and if) rock art originated in North Africa. The nature of interconnections with other regions – such as South-west Asia and South-west Europe – is difficult to trace. The earliest rock art in North Africa seems to consist of naturalistic engravings of wild animals, namely aurochs, stylistically similar, according to Huyge et al. (2011) to European/Mediterranean contexts. However, engravings in the so-called Bubaline style, paintings in the Round Head style and the whole corpus of pastoral artworks seem very

different from preceding artistic expressions and reveal strong Northern African connections. Considering that domestic stock can be reasonably assumed to have been introduced from South-west Asia starting around 6500 years calBCE, we should either admit the diffusion of rock art focusing on domestic animals from the same area, or an independent elaboration of artistic expressions in North Africa, and especially in the Sahara. Unfortunately, rock art research in the Near and Middle East has been rather sporadic, creating difficulties for comparative analysis. However, rock art in South-west Asia seems stylistically and thematically different. Furthermore, stylistic and thematic aspects highlight a robust network of connections in Northern Africa rock art and specific local traditions, such as in the Sahara. Hence, we are able to track rather well the diffusion of small groups of herders with their stock, but struggle to map the expansion and relations of rock art evidence, if any.

In my opinion, it is likely that rock art developed locally in many and distinct regions – as evident from the high stylistic variability across North Africa – but shared a cultural background and benefited from intermittent and repeated mixing with different cultures and traditions across the continent. In this case, it would be crucial to investigate the relations between North African early Holocene hunter-gatherers and first pastoralists. A theoretical shift will be needed to bring North African research on rock art closer to other, more mainstreamed regions, such as South Africa, where approaches other than stylistic-chronometric have been rarely used.

Final remarks and future perspectives

Emerging in the early Holocene, pastoral activity based on the exploitation of domesticates and particularly cattle, sheep and goats deeply influenced the history of the continent. The slow pace of cattle dispersion across Africa is largely due to environmental differences and the presence of endemic illness within wild ruminants, but we should also consider the cultural role played by pre-existing groups of hunter-gatherers, which may have resisted or favoured the incorporation of a food-producing system. The addition of other animal resources across time, such as donkeys and camels, make the evolutionary dynamics of African pastoralism even more complex.

Largely absorbed by the 'Nabta/Kiseiba' debate on the African origin for domestic cattle, theoretical aspects and societal transformations of pastoral systems in North Africa have been partially neglected. Thus, there are several

reasons to keep studying prehistoric pastoralism in order to better understand the cultural trajectories of African cultures. Many aspects of present African pastoral groups are deeply linked, in fact, to their prehistoric legacy. For example, the ideological central role of cattle, particularly in Eastern and Western Africa, likely dates back to the earliest 'cattle cult' in the Sahara. In many places, labour is still dependent on animals such as donkeys, or camels in desert environments, and the understanding of the mechanisms of adaptation and exploitation of such resources in the past might also be fundamental today. Furthermore, traditional and local knowledge are among the possible keys to better address animal exploitation in the future. Migratory drifts across Africa can be also traced by mapping lactase persistence: in the central Sahara, the evidence for cattle milking dates at least from 5200 calBCE, and likely earlier, providing hints and fresh information on past migrations.

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CHAPTER 11

THE ADVENT OF DOMESTICATION IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

Felix A. Chami

Introduction

The beginning of domestication can be seen as the beginning of human civilization as it is known today. 'Domestication' refers to the activity of humans to domesticate plants and animals as their primary means of subsistence. It requires enormous work and involves grappling with the environment to secure water and dealing with changes in climate. It is actually what led humans to discover irrigation methods and even improve life in the Nile Valley, Mesopotamia and other places in the world.

This chapter focuses on the advent of domestication in Eastern and Southern Africa. It discusses different opinions on the subject and looks at available data on its occurrence in these regions in ancient times.

In archaeology, the earliest domesticating period is also known as the Neolithic. Australian archaeologist Vere Gordon Childe (1925) considered it to be a cultural revolution (Rindos, 1984). It is known as an intensive period for the making of pottery, which first appeared in the Mesolithic period. It is also during this period that archeologists observe significant population growth and the emergence of large settled communities, leading later to urban life and kingdoms (Scarre, 2005; Stewart et. al., 1981).

There has been some questioning whether evidence such as pottery, stone tools, geometric microlithics and gridding stones, without actual remains of the

domesticates, qualify as determinants of Neolithic lifeways. There have been some disagreements on the utility of such a concept in African archaeology. Phillipson (2005) advocates its avoidance, while others (Chami and Kwekason, 2003) point to its utility when the finds are in the relevant contexts.

The beginning of domestication

The beginning of domestication, in Africa and elsewhere, has been widely debated by a number of scholars (see Rindos, 1984; Scarre, 2005; Stewart et al., 1981; Watkins, 2005). For Africa, the issue has been dealt with by Harlan (1971, 1993), Clutton-Brock (1987, 1993), Phillipson (2005), and many others. For the geographic area under consideration, there has been more research and publications on Eastern Africa, for unclear reasons, but I will speculate why here. Tentatively, the strong focus on the East African Neolithic period derives from two main causes. The first is the mid-1960s Bantu project, which aimed at exploring the origin and spread of the Bantu speakers of this region of Africa (Soper, 1971). The archaeological survey conducted not only discovered Early Iron Age (EIA) sites, but also those of the Neolithic period. The second revolves around archaeological surveys sparked by Louis and Mary Leakey's work, which led to the discovery of early hominids and hence many cultural aspects of the Stone Age at Olduvai Gorge (Leakey, 1923; Leakey and Leakey, 1950).

There is little controversy about the beginning of domestication in Eastern Africa. However, as shown below, there is major controversy on whether there was Neolithic domestication in Southern Africa, and coastal East Africa. Scholars agree that East Africa was a land of hunter-gatherers until pastoralists, partly agriculturalists, expanded from today's Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia in the north (Ehret, 1998; Phillipson, 2005). It is generally accepted that the people who were moving with this new cultural 'package' were Cushitic speakers (Ehret, 1998). Whereas domestication is attested in that region of the Horn of Africa and the Nile Valley by 6000-5000 BCE (Marks et al., 1991), its arrival to Northern Kenya and particularly the Turkana area is dated to *c.* 5000-4000 BCE (Barthelme, 1985; Phillipson, 2005). By 2000 BCE, domesticates spread to many parts of East Africa, as far south as the Serengeti and Kilimanjaro in Tanzania (Lane, 2004; Robertshaw, 1990). It had also spread to all parts of the Lake Victoria region, on the Kenya side, the Uganda side, and the Tanzanian side. For unknown reasons, there was a consensus according to which the tradition did not spread east of the Serengeti to coastal East Africa. The regions

south and west of the Tanzanian Eastern Rift Valley were also considered, up to very recently, to have adopted agriculture at the arrival of Bantu speakers in the early centuries of the modern era (Lane, 2004; Phillipson, 2005).

There are similar views on the late adoption of domesticates in Southern Africa. It was thought that the region remained one of hunter-gatherers until the mid-first millennium CE, and actually in some parts until the arrival of Europeans in the sixteenth century CE. However, it was also accepted that domesticates were introduced in the larger part of Central Africa, and the rest of Southern Africa, by the fourth or fifth century CE with the alleged arrival of the Bantu speakers (Huffman, 1994).

A handful of researchers pointed to the existence of Neolithic tradition sites in Southern Africa in the 1960s (Cooke, 1963; Robinson, 1966; Summers, 1961). This observation relates to the discovery of Bambata pottery, found in association with other Neolithic cultural remains – microliths, and bones of domestic animals – at Matopo and Great Zimbabwe sites. The materials were under EIA cultural remains, suggesting cultural continuity from the earlier to later traditions as presented below. At the beginning, Neolithic cultural remains were thought to be of (EIA) Bantu speakers. However, the context, dated to 600 BCE, was considered too early for the alleged arrival of the EIA culture in Southern Africa.

Mazel (1992) and Reid et al. (1998) have provided detailed descriptions of what would be the Neolithic tradition of Southern Africa. The former is certain that this was pre-EIA agriculturalist culture, dated to before the BCE/CE transition. The latter are quite fluid in describing the settled life of the Bambata tradition, but like their predecessors who discovered the tradition, they think that it may rather be that of intrusive EIA agriculturalists from the regions of the north. They have made this assertion despite the Bambata pottery not looking like that of the EIA tradition. Huffman (2007) strongly argues that Bambata domesticators were Kalundu, of the EIA tradition. He makes this argument using unrelated pottery attributes, and despite some dates from those Bambata sites being older than the EIA Southern Africa traditions (see Huffman, 2007).

Ehret (1995) tried to solve the controversy of what constituted the Bambata domesticating tradition. According to him:

> The southern outliers of eastern Sahelians settlement apparently had reached as far, by sometime between 500 and 300 BC as the edges at least of the Kahwe country, in the dry savanna and steppe south of the middle Zambezi River. Archaeological manifestations of this era of economic interaction may possibly be represented by sites in far southeastern Zimbabwe and the adjoining Botswana, which contain

livestock remains and a type of pottery called Bambata ware and date as early as the fourth or third century BC (Ehret, 1995).

The consensus according to which the area east of Serengeti and to the south did not adopt Neolithic tradition was shaken by the 1980s by Carolyn Thorp's (1992) discovery of Neolithic culture remains in the Nguru Hills, the hinterland outliers of the Tanzania coast. It was, however, not accepted until scholars had related it to other hinterland East Africa Neolithic sites, as well as those newly found on the Tanzania coast (Chami and Kwekason, 2003).

The assumption was that Neolithic sites could only be found in the territories today settled by Cushitic speakers (see Phillipson, 1993, pp. 156-7). This view has now lost currency. According to Phillipson (2005), 'The scheme was developed with exclusive reference to pottery from the Rift Valley, and it has not proved easy to extend it to neighboring areas. Retention of this scheme has hindered better understanding of the East African archaeological record of this period.' As the Cushitic or Sahelian preconceived notion of Neolithic was eschewed, many sites of Neolithic tradition have now been found on the coast of East Africa (see below, and Kusimba et al., 2001). From these sites we also have dates which indicate that domestication had been adopted by 3000 BCE or even earlier.

The academic problem which ensued after this new understanding of the Neolithic tradition was whether the appearance and the change of traditions or their spread was caused by immigration of a particular ethnic group, or due to another reason. As advised by Phillipson (see above) we should avoid relating the appearance of the Neolithic tradition with a particular movement of an ethnic group. It has also been the argument of Gramly (1978), and also my argument, that Bantu speakers had been in their regions from the time of the Stone Age (Chami, 2006a; Gramly, 1978; Gramly and Rightmire, 1973), and therefore they had been domesticators since the Neolithic. In support of Bantu speakers' Neolithic tradition are recent discoveries from Cameroon, Gabon and Congo suggesting that Bantu speakers were domesticators by 7000 BP. This cultural tradition was spread southward and may have had reached the Angola-Botswana region by the first millennium BCE (Russell et al., 2014). The Bantu speakers' Neolithic tradition then became the EIA tradition in different parts of the regions, and also in different times, as discussed elsewhere (Chami, 1999).

Actually, there is evidence in support of the theory of continuity from Neolithic to the Early Iron Age. Several archeologists have shown that in several sites, in the two regions of East and South Africa, the Neolithic archaeological layers are superimposed by the EIA cultural layer in a continuous manner, with

no hiatus. This point was clearly noted above in relation to the South African Bambata sites. In some sites of East Africa, the materials of the two traditions are mixed up, suggesting the use of these different traditional materials by the same people (Karega-Munene, 2002; Kyazige, 2013).

Evidence of Neolithic and EIA domesticators

Current evidence suggests that Africans crossed the channels which separate the mainland of Eastern Africa from the islands from 30,000 years ago or earlier (Chami, 2009). In the period from 60,000 up to 12,000 years ago, the world was under the Last Ice Age, which held water at the Earth's poles and on mountains, causing the sea level to fall to 125 m. This caused some shallow parts of the ocean to uncover islands, or land bridges, which were used by humans and animals to cross to other land masses. (For conspectuses on this see Shackleton, 1987 or Bernardi, 2008). Zanzibar was first settled during this period. Of course, humans were also sailing by the Neolithic time period and could have crossed the channels to settle on the islands as circumstances required, and as described below.

Two existing theories, that the Bantu speakers could not sail in ancient times, and that the islands were first settled by foreigners/non-Africans, fell apart when this author and the African Archeology Network team launched a series of archaeological studies on all of the islands, from Madagascar in the south, to Zanzibar and Pemba in the north. Below are some of the findings.

The Mapangani site in Pemba

Pemba is one of the islands which, together with Unguja and smaller islands, make up the archipelago of Zanzibar. Whereas Pemba is 60 km from mainland Tanzania, Unguja is only 30 km away. Mapangani is a limestone cave, 3 km north of Ngezi forest, and 3 km north of Konde in the Micheweni District north of Pemba. The excavations of the site, described in Chami et al. (2011), present Neolithic material at Pemba Island, showing that Neolithic activities documented in Unguja also occurred on Pemba. The Neolithic level was reached at a depth of 115-120 cm. It was dated to 664 BCE, uncalibrated date of 2615 ± 38 BP, from a land snail shell sample. The sample was associated with bones of domestic animals, including cattle, goats and chickens.

Machaga cave, Unguja

This cave is at Pete, near Jozani Forest, 30 km south of Zanzibar town. The interesting Neolithic finds of this cave are bone tools, including a harpoon, in association with geometric microliths, and a chicken bone. The associated pottery is similar to the one found in the Rift Valley dating to 3000 BCE. Similar pottery has been reported as being Nderit Elementaita from the Stables Drift site (Ordner, 1972). It seems, from the finds of Machaga cave, that domestication began on the coast and islands of the western Indian Ocean at the same time as the Rift Valley. The date of Machaga's Neolithic layer from charcoal is calibrated to 4120 ± 40 BP, hence 2847 ± 40 BCE.

Kuumbi cave, Unguja

Kuumbi is the largest archaeological limestone cave site known today. It has two large lighted halls, each about 30 m x 20 m, with a permanent water pool. The site is 3 km from the shoreline of Jambiani town in the southern part of Unguja Island. It is an elevated area *c.* 26 m above sea level. A Neolithic layer with a large amount of ash suggests the use of the cave as a living place. Bones from many wild and domestic animals and fish, as well as marine shells, microliths, bone tools, and pottery, were found there. Recorded bones from domestic animals include chicken, cattle (Figure 1), ovicaprids, dog, cat and donkey. Lithic material analysis revealed the presence of volcanic stone artefacts (Figure 2), likely originating from Comores Islands, the closest volcanic system. This find suggests some long-distance sailing activities in the Neolithic period. Two pot sherds recovered from the layer look like those of Machaga cave, described above. They resemble the Nderit tradition, similar to those of the Rift Valley mentioned above (Barthehelme, 1977) and dated to 3000 BCE. The recorded Neolithic level from the Kuumbi is dated to 3000-4000 BCE (Table 1).

Table 1. *Carbon-14 dates from Kuumbi and Machaga Neolithic layers*

Site	Sample dated	Lab. number	Radio Carbon Age, BP	Calibrated date	Neolithic object dated
Kuumbi	Charcoal	GrA 37811	5110 ± 35	3949 BCE	Cattle, goat, chicken bones
Kuumbi	Charcoal	Ua-24921	5330 ± 45	3330 BCE	Cattle bone
Kuumbi	Charcoal	Ua-24919	4005 ± 40	2005 BCE	Chicken bone
Machaga (see above presentation)	Charcoal	Anal. GrA 14155	4120 ± 40	2847 BCE	Microliths and chicken bone

Source: Felix Chami.



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Figure 1. *Cattle teeth from Kuumbi cave's Neolithic layer dated to c. 3000–4000 BCE*
Source: Mbassa, 2009.

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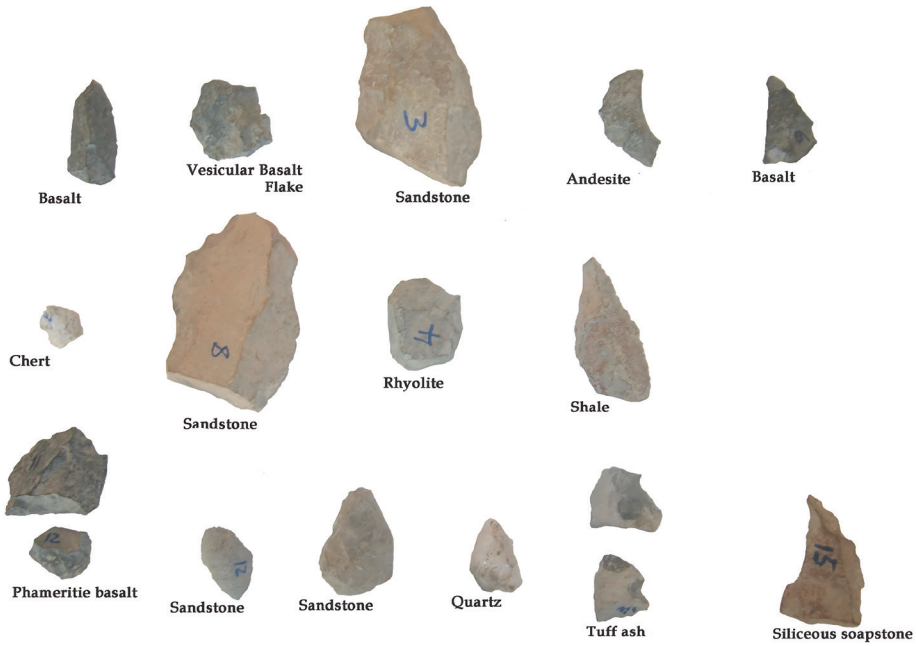


Figure 2. *Stone artefacts including volcanic examples, associated with bones of domesticates, from Kuumbi Cave, Zanzibar*

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Figure 3. *SGA paintings from Madagascar with an image of humped cattle.*

Comoros Islands

Archaeological survey work done on the islands of Comoros, in the southern part of Ngazija Island, discovered several ancient remains of the early domestic period. Of great significance were Late Stone Age artefacts in association with bones of domestic animals including a goat horn, a tooth from cattle, and a chicken bone. These were recovered from a cave excavation at Male village (Chami et. al., 2009), and the bones were identified by Professor Gabriel K. Mbassa (Mbassa, 2009) of Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania. (For the report on the stone artefacts, see Chami, 2011.) Pot sherds from the Early Iron Age, domesticating tradition, were also discovered at Muhoro and Male (Chami et al., 2009; Chami, 2011). These finds suggest that domesticating people had managed to sail to the Comoros, probably from Zanzibar or from mainland Africa.

Madagascar

At this point we should mention recent discoveries of a rock shelter with schematic, geometric and amorphous (SGA) rock paintings, similar to those found in many other parts of Africa (Willcox, 1984). Some of the paintings were images of humped cattle (Figure 3). Stone tools were also found in excavations associated with pot sherds, probably of the Neolithic, as two were of cuneiform decoration, similar to those of the Nderit tradition mentioned above (for a conspectus, see Rasolondrainy, 2012; see similar pottery in Figure 4). Since no material for dating was recovered from excavations, the relative dating of the pottery would suggest a date of the Neolithic period, probably of 3000 BCE or slightly later, similar to the dates of Kuumbi cave in Zanzibar (Table 1). SGA rock paintings have been dated to the period of the Early Iron Age or before in the Neolithic period (Kwekason and Chami, 2003, 2008l; Willcox, 1984). It would seem here that the sailing of the domesticating population, which also reached the Comoros, went further south to Madagascar in the same time period.

Littoral and deltaic parts of central and southern Tanzania

Recently some interesting discoveries of Neolithic pottery traditions have also been made on the central and the southern coast of Tanzania, vindicating how this domesticating tradition had spread to the larger part of the southern coast of Eastern Africa towards Mozambique in Southern Africa as it was reported before (Chami and Kwekason, 2003).

The Rufiji Delta

On the Rufiji Delta site of Misimbo, research done in 2009 found a half vessel of Nderit tradition (Figure 4), and a trench excavated on the same site had a Neolithic cultural layer below that, of Early Iron Age tradition. That Neolithic layer was dated to 3000 BCE (for a conspectus, see Valerian and Chami, 2012; see Table 2).

Kilwa Island

On the island of Kilwa and Mikindani, near the Mozambican border, excavations were done by Kwekason (2011) on Neolithic sites, some of which had been reported earlier in survey work (Chami, 2006b; Chami and Kwekason, 2003). The Kilwa site known as Nguruni or Masakasa was dated to about 700 BCE (Table 2). In the Mnaida site at Mikindani, a date of 2579 BCE was obtained (Table 2) (Kwekason, 2011).

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Figure 4. *Nderit cuneiform pottery from Misimbo Rufiji Delta, central coast of Tanzania.*

Table 2. *Dating of Neolithic sites from the central and southern littoral of Tanzania, near Mozambique*

Site	Lab. number	Radio carbon date BP	Uncalibrated dated date BCE
Misimbo Rufiji	Ua 38919	5043 ± 34	3093 ±34
Kilwa	Ua 3915	2690 ± 35	740 ± 35
Mikindani	Ua 35918	4520 ± 40	2570 ± 40

Source: Felix Chami.

Discussion

The doubt over the spread of Neolithic cultures to some parts of Eastern and Southern Africa before the beginning of the EIA cultural tradition is no longer tenable in the presence of the evidence provided above. However, archaeological research is also fueled by ideologies or pre-conceived notions. These are very difficult to get rid of, even when there is evidence to work against them. This is because the discipline is used to justify group, ethnic, or racial interests. It should also be noted that finding sites with domestic cultural traits before that of the EIA tradition in many parts of Eastern and Southern Africa also supports the theory that Bantu speakers had been in the areas of the two regions before the Neolithic period. As noted above, they were there in the Stone Age and they arrived from nowhere (Chami, 2006a; Gramly, 1978; Russell et al., 2014).

The fact that the radiometric dates suggest that the East Africa coast could have acquired food-producing traditions from as early as 3000-4000 BCE correlates well with the advent of such traditions in the northern part of East Africa and further, in the upper Nile Valley. This correlation brings us to a problem of explaining how the tradition could have spread so fast to cover such distant regions. Could trade communications (Chami, 1999) be one of the correct explanations? Knowing that there was no argument for independent invention, trade should now be considered to have spread domesticates. Evidence of trade between the Neolithic cultures of the Rift Valley and the coast is known to have existed from the time of the Narosura Neolithic period, about 400-600 BCE. This argument is supported by the discovery of marine shells and trade beads at the Ngorongoro crater sites in the Tanzanian Rift Valley and in Njoro cave in Kenya's Rift Valley (Leakey and Leakey, 1950).

At this juncture we should look at the role played by trade missions of Egyptian civilization in the spread of domestication to Eastern and Southern Africa. Actually, Smith (1928) was among the first scholars to recognize that Egyptian missions abroad triggered cultural diffusion. He argued that the Egyptian civilization diffused domestication to other parts of the world. For Eastern and Southern Africa, if we have to consider Egyptian missions for the fast adoption of domestication on the coast of East Africa, then we have to rethink the location of the Egyptian land of Punt, or the 'God's land'. It was from there, the land of the south, where Osiris and his wife Isis came (Casson, 1966). There are Egyptian reports of several voyages to Punt from the third millennium BCE or before. Whereas many scholars have thought that Punt referred to the regions of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, recent rethinking by several scholars now puts Punt on the coast of East Africa, around Zanzibar Island. According to Professor Kitchen, 'All the data, down to Rameses III, 3rd century in the second millennium BCE, give a clear and consistent picture of the route followed, while the Old Kingdom and New Kingdom data clearly favor an East African location' (Kitchen, 2004, p. 27; and personal communication). According to Bolliger and his colleagues:

> The references in Hatshepsut's account 'to the two sides of sea' and 'terraces' on both sides, cannot refer to Somalia, which faces open water and has no facing, terraced hills. Though it remains uncertain, the most likely location for Punt is farther south, around Zanzibar. Here, the ocean narrows between island and mainland, the coast is marshy, and the land is terraced on both sides, moreover, goods from central Africa have long been brought here for trade (Bolliger et al., 2005, pp. 296-97).

I have also discussed my reasons for why Punt should have been located in East Africa and not further north (Chami, 2006a). Probably one major reason scholars did not previously consider the East African coast as the land of Punt – and its islands as the islands of Punt – was the lack of archaeological sites, which could have provided indication of trade and Neolithic culture (Kitchen, 2004). As shown above, we now have such sites on the coast of East Africa dating to Pharaonic times. The bones of animals shown in the frescos of the Egyptian voyages to Punt have since shown up in the archaeological finds of Kuumbi in Zanzibar (Chami, 2009). They include the above-mentioned domesticates, and wild animals such as baboons, giraffe, leopards and elephants, parts of which were required for trade.

The spread of domesticates to Africa or from Africa to Asia in ancient times, probably through trade missions, has been accepted by many scholars. It is

accepted that humped cattle arrived from Asia to Africa by ship. According to Clutton-Brock (1993, p. 67), 'these cattle were first introduced by sea into the Horn of Africa'. Harlan (1993) has also argued that some African crops may have reached India from Eastern Africa in the Neolithic period: 'Finger millet probably reached India around the same time as sorghum and pearl millet. There are no known possible wild ancestors of finger millet, or pearl millet, in southern Arabia'. Marshall (1989, p. 238) has also provided archaeological evidence showing that millet and sorghum, first domesticated in Eastern Africa, spread to India and the Arabian Peninsula before the turn of the first millennium BCE.

Austranesians are also credited with bringing crops such as banana, coconut, taro and sugar cane to East Africa (Jones, 1971; Simmonds, 1962, pp. 143-149). Harries (1978) has argued that botanical evidence suggests that coconut of Asian origin must have been on the coast of East Africa before the turn of the first millennium CE. The Neolithic period would be accepted for the arrival of those crops today, due to the find of several Neolithic sites with materials such as chicken bones, and banana phytoliths have been found in Cameroon dating back to 500 BCE (Mbida et al., 2000). It has also been argued that it must have taken a very long time for bananas in Eastern Africa to have developed into different cultivars (Langhe et al., 1994-95; Simmonds, 1962). And there is botanical evidence that the coconut type which is found on the coast of East Africa must have reached there, at the latest, in the early centuries BCE (Harries, 1978, p. 305). I have also argued in several places (Chami, 2006a) that the discovery of chicken bones in archaeological contexts dating back to 3000 BCE or earlier should support the idea of sailing in ancient times, which would have spread chickens of Asian origin to East Africa.

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CHAPTER 12

AFRICAN FOUNDATIONS OF ANCIENT EGYPT

A Social and Archaeological Perspective

David Wengrow

Introduction: the legacy of racial studies

The field of Egyptology originated in Europe as part of a 'family' of new disciplines, linking the study of ancient Egypt to that of the ancient Near East, India and China. Histories of Egyptology cite as its founding event the decipherment of hieroglyphs by Jean François Champollion le Jeune, announced between the years 1822 and 1824. The subject developed alongside, and crossed paths with, the emerging fields of comparative linguistics and language typology. Early histories of ancient Egypt (e.g. Maspero, 1886) used the concepts of language family, nation and race interchangeably, illustrating the main human types with relief carvings drawn from standing monuments such as the mortuary temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu. Egypt, in these early histories, appears as a sort of 'cradle of the world', where the first struggles for national supremacy were played out among what were then, in the late nineteenth century, referred to as 'Libyans', 'Asiatics' (or 'Semites'), 'Nubians' (or 'Negros') and 'Europeans' (or 'Indo-Germans', often described as naturally 'warrior-like' and always 'restless in their isles').

Given this background, it is not surprising that subsequent attempts to reposition the study of ancient Egypt in Africa focused heavily on historical linguistics and physical anthropology, with the analysis of genetic diversity replacing racial classification in the later part of the twentieth century as a primary method for

reconstructing population history. The contribution of archaeological data to this endeavour has been relatively limited, by comparison (see O'Connor and Reid, 2003). Exceptions include studies that situate Egypt's prehistoric development in an African context by focusing on processes of environmental adaptation. In particular the widespread adoption of animal husbandry across the northern part of the continent during the Middle Holocene, *c.* 6000 to 4000 BCE, has been viewed as a regionally specific response to climatic stress, linked to the use of cattle as ritual and symbolic media in ways comparable to some modern Nilotic cattle-keepers (see e.g. Di Lernia, 2006). However, similar patterns of cultural response to shifting rainfall patterns have now been documented across a much broader zone of the prehistoric Old World, including the southern portions of the Arabian Peninsula and the Indian subcontinent. Neither the adoption of specialized pastoralism, nor the existence of 'cattle cults', insofar as that term has any descriptive value, are adequate to serve as defining features of Africa's later prehistory.

A social and archaeological approach

Outside Africa, prehistoric archaeology has played a more direct and prominent role in defining large-scale patterns of social change, characteristics of particular world regions or 'areas'. It has been suggested, for example, that a distinctly European prehistory can be defined in terms of alternations between different modes of ritual behaviour and ways of venerating ancestors – one centred on the creation of visible monuments (megaliths and tombs), and the other on more ephemeral rituals in which material goods were sacrificed to the ground (in hoards or burials) – and that these cycles can be traced in the archaeological record over some thousands of years, from the later Neolithic through the Bronze Age (Bradley, 1990). Arguments for long-term uniformities have been made on a comparable scale for the Middle East, where the focus is instead on the patriarchal household as an institution for integrating settled and mobile populations within common frameworks of authority; and again these consistencies of cultural form have been traced over a period of millennia, across ethnic and linguistic boundaries, and from late prehistoric to early literate societies. The development of societies around the Mediterranean basin has been similarly characterized as following regionally distinctive rhythms and institutional forms, shaped by the distinctive ecology of an inland sea, which can be reconstructed as a common thread running from prehistoric times to the era of Graeco-Roman civilization (Broodbank, 2013). And recent work in a

similar vein on the prehistory of Arabia (using mainly archaeological evidence, but taking as its starting point the *Muqaddimah* of Ibn Khaldūn) traces long-term oscillations between the values of urban and non-urban civilization, unfolding sequentially from the Middle Holocene through to the Sabaen and other kingdoms of the Iron Age (McCorriston, 2011).

The institutional and theoretical underpinnings of area studies such as these are much debated in the social sciences. But in practice what constitutes the prehistory of a given area – 'Europe', the 'Middle East', the 'Mediterranean', etc. – tends to be defined in terms of a loose mixture of institutional and ecological factors. In each case archaeological evidence forms the backbone for reconstructing durable patterns of social change that transcend local differences across a wider region, cutting across the boundaries between 'literate' and 'non-literate', 'state' and 'stateless' societies, and forging links between past and present that have the potential to inform contemporary notions of cultural identity. Demonstrating the existence of such long-term patterns does not require a continuous unity of culture, gene flow, or language transmission; nor does it imply the outward spread of 'civilization' from an identifiable centre of origin (as in earlier 'diffusionist' accounts of prehistory). And neither does it rest on the (anthropologically unlikely) claim that uniformities observed across a given region must be completely absent from other regions or periods of world history.

In this sense, the inclusion of Egypt within a general framework of African prehistory should present nothing controversial and would logically begin by mapping and comparing the development of prehistoric societies throughout the whole of the Nile Basin – the lifeline connecting the northern and southern portions of the continent. In recognizing why such an inclusive prehistory has been slow to emerge, it is worth briefly considering the legacy of recent colonialism, and the different ways in which archaeology developed in Egypt and, especially perhaps, in neighbouring Sudan. In the early twentieth century, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan lay on the cusp of a wider division of academic labour within Africa. A (1964) review of *Sudan Notes and Records* noted that in the time of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium (1899-1956) there had been a 'strong bias' of research towards ethnography in southern Sudan – notably among the Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, and Azande – and an 'even heavier emphasis' on archaeology in the northern part of the country, with its 'wealth of visible sites … [which] inspired many officials to become amateur field archaeologists' (Sanderson, 1964; and see Wengrow, 2003).

Viewed on a wider scale, the impact of this regional distinction between the pursuit of archaeology (in an 'Oriental' north) and social anthropology (in an 'African' south)

remains clearly in evidence. As Michael Rowlands (1994, pp. 137-8) has remarked: 'It is striking that archaeology was least developed in those parts of the colonized periphery where British anthropology was most powerful. We still know virtually nothing in fine-grain detail of the archaeology of vast tracts of west Central Africa, whereas ethnographically it formed the backbone for British structural functionalist anthropology'. Still today we can probably say more – in historical terms – about the formation of the ancient Egyptian state on the lower reaches of the Nile, around 5,000 years ago, than we can about the emergence of the Shilluk state on the Upper Nile just a few centuries ago. The archaeological record of South Sudan remains largely undocumented and unknown, and only in recent decades has knowledge of prehistoric periods in the Republic of Sudan begun to accumulate, largely as a result of salvage excavations conducted in the context of hydraulic dam construction.

Any attempt to understand ancient Egypt in an African context therefore faces a number of obstacles, including the traditional insularity of sub-fields such as Egyptology, and continued unevenness in the historical and archaeological records of Egypt and her neighbours in Africa. This may be a further reason why historical linguistics and genetics have been privileged over archaeology as ways of exploring links between Egypt and the wider continent.

The present chapter sets out to lay foundations for an alternative approach. It considers whether the emergence of Egypt as Africa's first territorial and dynastic polity of any scale can be understood in terms of wider processes of social transformation, which are also detectable in the continent's more recent past. Such an approach requires a consideration of Egypt's early development in light of the historical sociology of African polities, with a focus on processes of social change, rather than the comparison of isolated traits (e.g. the much-discussed phenomena of 'cattle cults' and 'divine kingship'). It also requires some direct proof that Egyptian civilization emerged from an institutional setting that is firmly rooted in a wider African context, clearly distinguishable from contemporaneous developments in Eurasia.

The cultural convergence of Nilotic societies in later prehistory

Evidence of this kind has been steadily accumulating for half a century. Only recently, however, has it been integrated into a coherent account of the unity of Nilotic societies in later prehistory. Prehistoric archaeology in North-East Africa has traditionally focused on isolated technological features – in particular

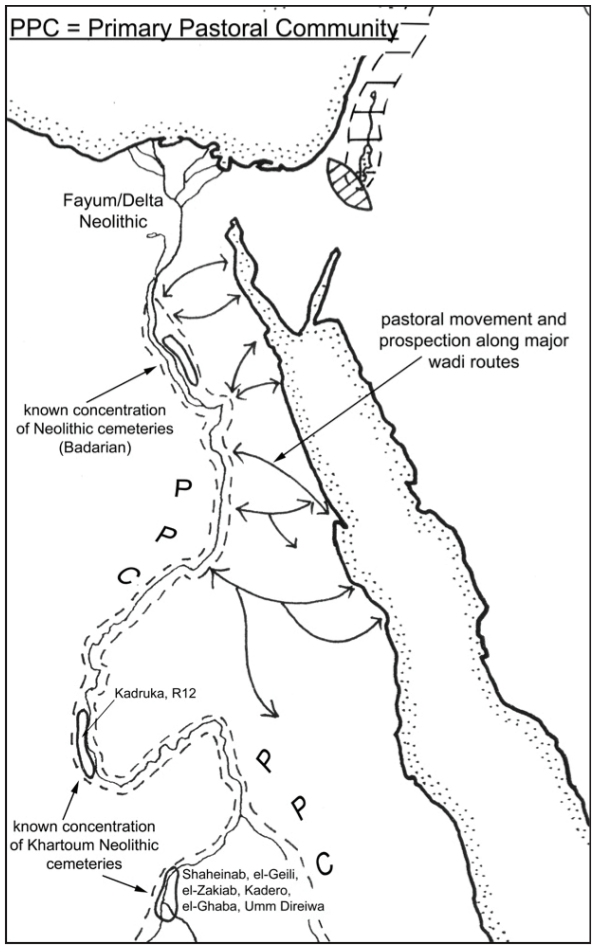


Figure 1. *Approximate locations of Neolithic sites in the Nile Valley*

stone tool assemblages, or ceramic types – as key markers of cultural affiliation, creating a fragmented picture of the archaeological landscape, which does not account for deeper trends. It was also long assumed by archaeologists that the early development of farming societies in Egypt followed a pattern similar to South-West Asia, with cereal-based agriculture and sedentary village life at its basis. However, it has been apparent for some time that in the Nile Valley, as in most other parts of Northern Africa, mobile pastoralism in fact preceded cereal farming by many centuries, and was initially combined with established techniques of hunting, fishing and foraging (Marshall and Hildebrand, 2002). Moreover, a growing body of evidence (now supported by a suite of radiocarbon

dates) points to the fifth millennium BCE – or Neolithic period – as a crucial phase of cultural convergence, in which communities along the Nile Valley followed a common trajectory of development, distinct from that of western Asia (Wengrow et al., 2014).

Perhaps the most novel feature of that period (*c.* 5000–3800 BCE) is the appearance of cemeteries and elaborate grave assemblages along both the Egyptian and Sudanese courses of the Nile Valley (Figure 1). They frequently occupy high places, on natural and anthropogenic mounds. Others are located at the mouths of seasonal rivers descending into the floodplains of the Nile. Over a period of centuries, a new type of cultural landscape took form along the low desert bordering the valley. Studded with ancestral burial grounds covering richly furnished graves, its emergence represents a clear break with earlier prehistory and suggests the inception of new forms of territoriality along the main axis of the river. Aside from cemeteries, human habitation at this time, both in the Egyptian and Sudanese parts of the valley, is attested mainly from the ephemeral remains of seasonal herding, fishing and foraging camps, with few signs of investment in sedentary life or cereal cultivation (Wengrow, 2006, pp. 44-50).

Throughout the entire Nile Valley – a distance of some 1,800 km – Neolithic cemeteries share a number of striking features, which signal widespread changes in the treatment of the dead. Bodies of the deceased now typically went to the grave ornamented with a rich array of coloured stone beads, pierced shells, worked bone, tooth, studs from the nose or lips, ivory bangles around the limbs, and other such attachments. The body, heavily decorated, was wrapped in skins and matting, and placed within a simple pit, usually in a supine position with knees contracted and hands cupping the face. Cosmetic vessels and implements were placed upon and around it. They usually included stone palettes for grinding body paint, combs of bone or ivory, and spoons or spatulas used for mixing and ingesting liquids (Stevenson, 2009; Wengrow, 2006, pp. 50-59). While each interment constitutes a unique configuration of objects and human remains, the majority follow a similar pattern of deposition. This points to the spread of a common set of ideas relating to the presentation of the human form (no doubt in life as well as death), together with an associated range of equipment. Most of this material is highly portable, and so consistent with the requirements of a mobile lifestyle. In terms of function, much of it relates directly to the presentation, modification and extension of the body – in particular the hair and skin – while the presence of piercing devices, miniature vessels and spoons indicates a concern with accessing, storing and transmitting bodily fluids and medicinal substances (Figure 2).



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Figure 2. *Neolithic grave goods from el-Badari, burials 5112 (above) and 5130 (below). Above: fragment of hippopotamus-ivory spoon handle (UC9193), shell and pebble beads (UC9195), hippopotamus-ivory comb (UC9194). Below: siltstone cosmetic palette (UC9060), clay plugs (UC9055, UC9056), bone awl (UC9052), group of nine pebbles (UC 9065, UC9073), hippopotamus-ivory vase (UC9054), string of beads (UC9064), fragment of hippopotamus-ivory bangle (UC9047), lump of malachite (UC9061), copper pin (UC9059).**

The range of raw materials now used as enhancements for the body greatly exceeds what is attested for earlier phases of Nilotic prehistory and marks a new threshold in the exploitation of geological and organic resources. Minerals hardly attested in earlier periods such as jasper, carnelian, serpentine, and also pigments – notably green malachite, red ochre and yellow limonite ground up with pebbles to make body paint – were now routinely employed. Most derive from deposits extending eastwards from the Nile Valley towards the Red Sea Hills, implying regular prospection along wadi routes connecting the valley to its desert hinterlands where burials of the same, visually striking type are documented. Neolithic cemeteries containing a similar repertory of cosmetic and decorative grave goods have also been found far to the west of the valley, at locations such as Gebel Ramlah, some way into the Sahara (Kobusiewicz et al., 2010).

The complexity of this new repertory of materials implies a sophisticated corpus of knowledge about the care of the body, which included the extraction of animal fats and plant resins to produce ointments, some with aromatic and antibacterial properties akin to those used in later practices of mummification (Jones et al., 2014). Through the perfection of the corpse and the donation of grave gifts, such knowledge was deployed to produce an idealized funerary image of the deceased and their relations to a wider group. A broad contrast can be drawn here with Neolithic societies in neighbouring Western Asia, where core social knowledge – encompassing relations among the living and the dead – was manifested primarily through the enhancement of domestic buildings and their furnishings, rather than through the direct extension of bodily schema (Wengrow, 2003).

Kingship before the state

The ritual-territorial system of the Neolithic Nile Valley, with its distinctive emphasis on mobility and its complex regimes of corporeality, also created new possibilities for the expression of hierarchy. These are perhaps most clearly exemplified by findings from the northern Dongola Reach, upstream of the Third Cataract, and particularly in the vicinity of Wadi el-Khowi where Neolithic remains were preserved to an exceptional degree by the arid climate and absence of later occupation (Reinold, 2001). At Kadruka, a completely excavated mound known as KDK-1 produced almost a hundred Neolithic burials arranged concentrically and in a clearly hierarchical pattern, reflecting differences of age and gender, and organized around a central grave containing an adult male (Figure 3b). His body was covered with cow hides stained yellow

and surrounded by an unrivalled wealth of grave goods including ivory combs and bangles, agate beads, numerous stone mace-heads, cosmetic palettes, and ceramic jars and goblets, all framed by two carefully placed pairs of cattle horns. Such ordered representations of hierarchy are rare in Neolithic cemeteries but point towards a potential for status inequalities that must have conditioned social relations more widely among the living.

Over time, and into the fourth millennium BCE, this potential for inequality in ritual performance and display was increasingly exploited. In Egypt this subsequent period (*c.* 3800-3300 BCE) is conventionally referred to as 'pre-dynastic'. It precedes key features of the dynastic state, such as the establishment of literate administration and the extension of royal sovereignty throughout Upper and Lower Egypt. But the origins of Egyptian kingship and the origins of the dynastic state are not one and the same. It is now generally agreed that key features of the institution of kingship can in fact be traced back to the much earlier, less centralized, and non-literate societies of the 'pre-dynastic' period, and perhaps even earlier still. As John Baines argued in a seminal discussion, Egyptian kingship had a 'small-scale point of departure', and its traditions and symbolism can be followed deep into prehistory, and much further back than 'the "historical" events that have traditionally been held to mark the appearance of the state and kingship' (Baines, 1995, pp. 95-97).

Evidence for some form of 'kingship before the state' derives mainly from the archaeological record – especially funerary remains – and also from highly suggestive features of prehistoric iconography. Core symbols of Egyptian monarchy, including complex regalia such as the 'red crown' (Figure 4) and a conventional imagery of conquest and domination, had made their appearance in Upper Egypt no later than 3500 BCE (Wainwright, 1923). While specific meanings of these images are difficult to ascertain for such early periods, their correspondence to later royal symbols can hardly be fortuitous. Moreover, the development of royal symbolism in the early-mid fourth millennium BCE is accompanied by growing disparities of wealth and status in the funerary record. These are evident in new and more complex treatments of the corpse, such as mummification and post-mortem dismemberment, which were reserved for a privileged minority and greatly extended the scope of funerary rituals, allowing for greater outlays of material wealth and labour in the preparation and furnishing of graves. Social differentiation can also be traced with increasing clarity in the uneven distribution and quality of grave goods, and in the growing scale of tomb construction, much of which was in mud-brick and also more perishable materials – such as reeds, wood and matting – that served as prototypes for the stone-built mortuary complexes of the early dynasties (Wengrow, 2006, pp. 72-123).

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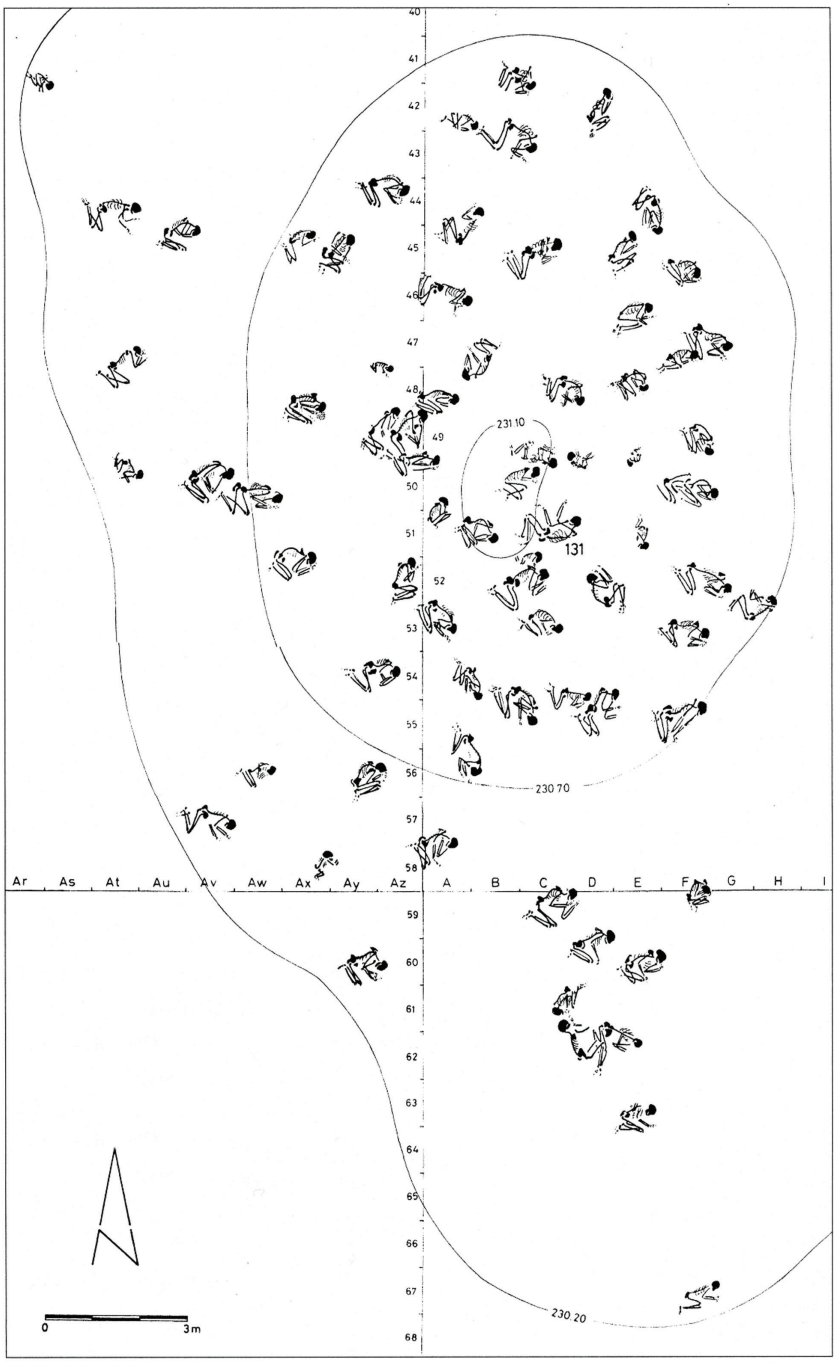


Figure 3a. *Plan of the Neolithic cemetery at Kadruka in the Dongola Reach, Sudan.*

Detailed evidence for these developments focuses on a limited number of locations up and down the Nile Valley. At Hierakonpolis, in southern Egypt, an elite cemetery of the mid-fourth millennium BCE already exhibits striking features of royal imagery and ritual. They include the construction of tombs and anthropomorphic cult statuary on a monumental scale, and also the arrangement of subsidiary burials – including wild animals and humans selected for their exotic features (e.g. dwarfism) – around a central interment (Friedman, 2011). Independent developments at other centres – such as Naqada and Abydos in Upper Egypt, and also Qustul in Lower Nubia – indicate comparable moves towards hierarchy and centralization. These locations are usually thought to have been the foci of small pre- and proto-dynastic polities, although much of the evidence they present for social inequality is confined to the sphere of funerary rituals, and may not have extended uniformly to other spheres of life.

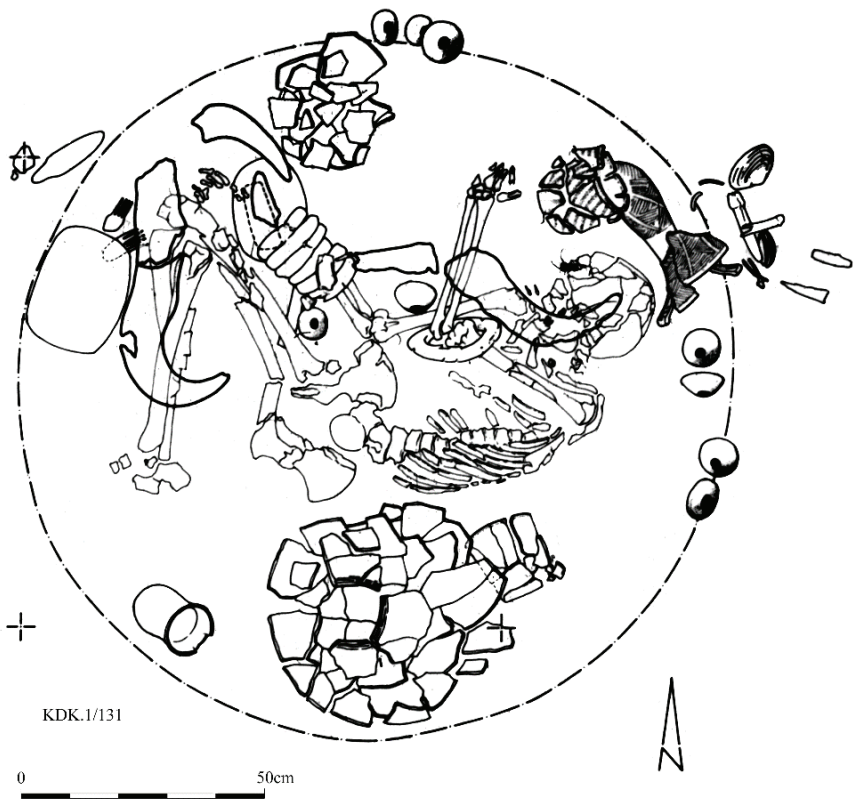
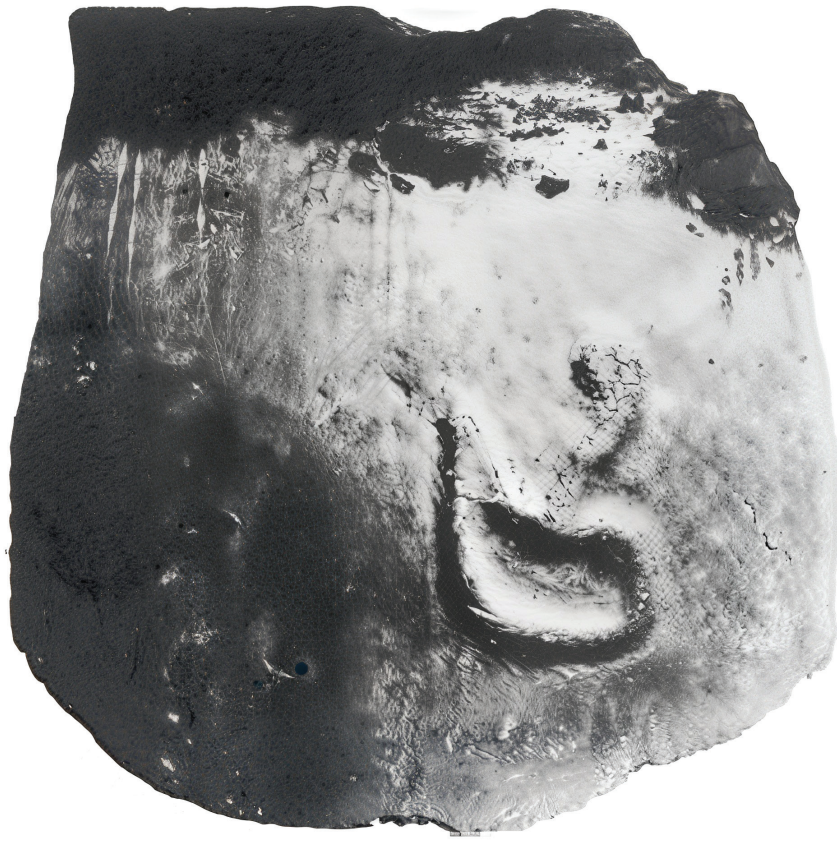


Figure 3b. *Detail of the 'chief's grave', fifth millennium BCE.*

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Many of these early centres retained royal associations, and acquired new ones, following the territorial unification of the Egyptian state in the later part of the fourth millennium BCE. Lower Nubia, however, was excluded from this process. Instead, a political frontier was established on Egypt's southern border, as commemorated in a rock carving at Gebel Sheikh Suleiman on the Second Cataract (Murnane, 1987). Small-scale polities between the First and Second Cataracts were subjugated, and on Egyptian monuments of the early (and later) dynasties their inhabitants are uniformly represented as foreign and subordinate. In this case there is an apparent congruence between royal ideology, emphasizing symbolic encompassment and conquest of a neighbouring territory, and the archaeological record, which presents a lacuna in the development of Lower Nubian settlement and funerary remains extending well into the third millennium BCE. Relations between the early Egyptian state and its Saharan and Levantine neighbours were officially represented in similarly hierarchical terms, but the underlying political and economic realities differed markedly in each case (Baines, 2003).

In terms of political organization, the emergence of a unified territorial state in Egypt (*c.* 3100 BCE) established a clear rupture with Lower Nubia and Sudan to the south. It is worth noting, however, that some of the earliest preserved monuments of the unified Egyptian state, such as those dating to the reign of King Narmer, are ceremonial versions of portable articles – siltstone cosmetic palettes, knives, combs and mace-heads – that make conscious reference, in their forms and functions, to a system of personal etiquette that originates in the Nilotic herding societies of the Neolithic period. To that extent they can be seen to draw from a reservoir of cultural forms that is, in origin, as much Nubian and Sudanese as it is Egyptian. The cultural unity of the Nile Valley was continually reasserted in later periods, with the rise of Sudanic kingdoms – from Kerma in the Bronze Age to Meroe in the early centuries CE – that were at one and the same time Egypt's political rivals and closest cultural relatives. Together with Pharaonic Egypt, these later African kingdoms (discussed elsewhere in this and later volumes) can be considered to form a 'family of societies', sharing common ways of maintaining boundaries – such that their underlying resemblances are never more apparent than in their attempts to differentiate themselves from one another.



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Figure 4. *The 'red crown' rendered in relief on a ceramic fragment of the early–mid fourth millennium BCE (Early Predynastic period).*

Egypt in the context of African political evolution

To what extent can the pattern of development just outlined be considered ancestral to later patterns of African political evolution? As noted earlier, the historical sociology of Africa spanning the last few centuries remains separated from its deeper prehistory by formidable gaps in evidence. Some common strands can nevertheless be brought together. Historically, stateless societies in various regions of the African continent have tended to take one of two forms – either confederations of kinship groups organized on segmentary lines,

with common descent as the main criterion of political identity; or independent small-scale polities organized hierarchically, and with territorial primacy as the main criterion of political identity. In a classic analysis of West African cases, Robin Horton (1972) argued that it was in the latter type of society (his 'Type 2') that royal and non-royal lineages tended to diverge, leading in some cases to the emergence of large-scale kingdoms and empires such as those of the Yoruba and Akan. In such cases, royal power preceded the state in the sense that rulers exercised territorial sovereignty on a personal basis and in the absence of any sort of administrative apparatus. Even small-scale social units of this type were suffused with hierarchy in the conduct of ritual and political relations, with complex etiquettes and forms of deference developing among intimate kinship and age groups. In short, they were courtly societies in miniature.

In his analysis of the 'African frontier', Igor Kopytoff (1987) discussed how social orders of this kind reproduced themselves through a process of disjunctive migration, with smaller groups of junior sons 'hiving off' to create autochthonous land units in territory that was vacant (or at least perceived and treated as such). Social reproduction depended on the existence of a frontier, within which new micro-polities could establish themselves, claiming superior status to those who followed – a sort of continuous 'structural drift'. This produced a political landscape comprising large, centralized kingdoms with 'no-man's lands' around their immediate periphery, while still further afield extended a countryside studded with autonomous micro-polities of similar hierarchical character. Within these smaller polities, access to authority was widely available to male elders: 'The principle is frequently celebrated in sayings to the effect that "every man is a chief" – or, as the title of Henderson's study of an Igbo polity puts it, "The King in Every Man"' (Kopytoff, 1987, p. 18). Political centralization, in turn, did not require the creation of new forms of power so much as a progressive reduction in the number of individuals who could legitimately lay claim to established ones.

Conclusion

From a sociological and historical vantage point, the question of ancient Egypt's 'African-ness' can be usefully explored in terms of its fit (or lack thereof) to this overarching set of models and expectations. This constitutes a large and ambitious project, and it is only possible to make a small contribution within the scope of this chapter. My aim here has been to summarize archaeological

evidence for the initial emergence of an expansionist ritual territorial system in the Nile Valley (both its Egyptian and Sudanese extents) during the fifth millennium BCE, which corresponds to the Neolithic period of later prehistory, and to the widespread adoption of pastoralism (based on a mixed herding economy) as a central feature of North African economies. This emergent system, which I have characterized elsewhere under the rubric of a 'primary pastoral community' (Wengrow et al., 2014), shares key attributes of other non-state societies in the *longue durée* of African history. They include the potential for elaborate status hierarchies within small groups, sanctioned and expressed through a complex system of cultural practices that focused on the storage and transmission of bodily substances, and on the enhancement and display of the body, as ways of marking and reproducing social distinctions (Cf. Warnier, 2007). As part of the process of dynastic state building (*c.* 3300-3000 BCE) this system of bodily practices and classifications – once widely available to the population at large – was increasingly monopolized by Egyptian elites, becoming tightly focused on the body of the ruler and members of the court.

The emergence of the Pharaonic polity also involved a self-conscious process of territorial closure: the establishment of the 'Two Lands' (Egypt) as a cosmologically bounded space, unified and protected by a sacred monarch, and bordered – in theory but not in practice – by a surrounding belt of 'no man's lands'. This development restricted, but never entirely erased, the potential for further 'micro-polities' to emerge within Egypt. Simultaneously, and again following a classic African pattern of development, it created new frontier zones further beyond the country's immediate borders – in Libya, Nubia and elsewhere – where new micro-polities would subsequently emerge, eventually reaching a scale that allowed them to rival and sometimes conquer the primate centre. Within Egypt itself the overall pattern is also typically African, insofar as the key institutions that underpinned royal power can be seen to have emerged long before the dynastic state, in relatively small polities up and down the Nile, during the pre- and proto-dynastic periods. In defining the African character and foundations of ancient Egypt, these archaeological and sociological factors should be granted the same importance as the evidence of historical linguistics, genetics, or physical anthropology.

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CHAPTER 13

MEGALITHS OF NABTA PLAYA

Ritual Complex and Astronomical Observatory

Hebat Allah A. A. Ibrahim

Introduction

The term 'megalith' means a stone block of large dimensions. Megalithic architecture is 'simple' when it involves a standing stone in an intentional relationship with the natural elements of a landscape. It is 'open', but more 'complex', if several standing stones are aligned or arranged in a circle. It is 'closed' when the blocks are used to construct a temple cell or burial chamber. In this case, the megaliths are often associated with stone curbs, earth or rubble, or even wooden structures, and the buildings are covered with mounds or tumuli (Mohen, 2006, pp. 161–163). Several unique megalithic sites occur in the Nabta Playa area (Figure 1) and represent an important African cultural heritage: the alignments of megalithic stelae, the four groups of megalithic structures, the Late Neolithic solar calendar circle, the rock tumuli of the Valley of Sacrifices, and the triple stone ring the 'tumulus of the Little Lord of Nabta'.

Nabta Playa contains several hundred Holocene-age sites representing the entire time span of human settlement in the Western Desert, with dates ranging from the early Holocene, at about 11,000 BP, to the Late Holocene, at about 4500 BP, when increasing aridity forced the general abandonment of the desert, with one minor break, until today. During much of that time, until around 5600–5500 BP, all evidence indicates that the Egyptian Nile Valley settlers

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Figure 1. *Location of Nabta Playa in Egypt*

did not know how to produce pottery and focused on fishing in the summer, along with gathering nut-grass tubers and other wild plants, and hunting ducks, geese and gazelle. The desert people in the meantime were domesticating cattle, making fine decorated pottery and learning how to live in the desert year-round. Despite the challenging and unstable climate of the Western Desert throughout the Holocene, those who occupied the desert made a remarkable adjustment that enabled them to live there during all but the driest of times (Schild and Wendorf, 2004b, pp. 1-3).

Although the prehistoric area of Nabta Playa was explored from 1973, the megalithic sites went unrecognized for a long time. The Combined Prehistoric Expedition, directed by archaeologists Fred Wendorf and Romuald Schild, explored early human occupation and behaviour along the Nile and in the Desert. The group began to realize the significance of the megaliths only in

1992, and initiated research to learn more about their role in the spiritual and religious life of the Neolithic pastoralists of the South-Western desert. The megaliths of Nabta stretch for about 2500 m, in an approximately north-south direction, with a slight deviation towards the west.

The monumental architecture of early civilizations represents a combination of engineering skill, communal management, and aesthetic qualities, indicating that more than just massive labour went into creating it. Four basic kinds of monumental architecture are found in the early civilizations: fortifications, palaces, temples and tombs (Trigger, 2001, pp. 76–77). Many of these kinds of megalithic features are found across most of Sahelian Africa, but in a much later context; they are usually dated to the Iron Age or later (Wendorf et al., 1997, p. 100).

All of the Holocene populations of the Eastern Sahara of Africa may have participated in a food-producing economy, in which pottery and domestic cattle were present in varying degrees from settlement to settlement. Eastern Sahara Neolithic is subdivided into several major taxonomic units, differentiated on the basis of their lithic assemblages and associated ceramics. The entire Neolithic of the Eastern Sahara is contemporary with the Holocene wet episode (Wendorf, Schild and Close, 1984, p. 409). Through time, the changes in settlement patterns in the desert dramatically reflected known changes in climate. There are suggestions that, at any time, the desert may have served as a centre for innovations that only later affected the Nile Valley. One of these may have been experimentation with methods of food production (Hobler and Hester, 1969, pp.120–122).

Until the discoveries of the megalithic complex of ceremonial features at Nabta, the pastoralists in the Western Desert of Egypt and Sudan had long been regarded as an insignificant factor in the emergence of complex society along the Nile. In part, this was because many important features of the Nilotic Neolithic, particularly the use of domesticated plants and small livestock, were obviously derived from South-West Asia (Wendorf and Schild, 2004, pp. 24–25) but the apparent presence of a 'cattle cult' at Nabta Playa is intriguing and significant, particularly in light of the importance of cattle in early Egyptian mythology (Hassan, 1994, cited in Wendorf et al., 1997, p. 96).

The occupation of Late and Final Neolithic 'cattle herders and the megaliths builders' between 6500 and 4100 BP mainly depended on cattle, and is responsible for the famous ceremonial centre of Nabta Playa, where large stone constructions, including the megalithic alignments, the groups of megaliths, and the Neolithic solar calendar circle, were erected. The creation of these features required a high level of complexity and social organization, and the clustering of these features led the archaeologists to refer to Nabta Playa as a 'regional ceremonial centre'.

The megalithic alignments of Nabta Playa

Three independent groups of large stones forming different alignments occur near the centre of Nabta Playa (Figure 2). Almost all of these megalithic units were shaped by flaking. A paleo-astronomical study of these megalithic alignments revealed an aspect of the Late Neolithic and Final Neolithic cosmology. All the alignments are associated with star features that were also of importance to the belief system of ancient Egyptians (Wendorf and Schild, 2004, p. 18).

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Figure 2. *One big megalith still partially imbedded in playa sediments in its original place, Alignment A. Looking west, Gebel Nabta can be seen in distance.*

The three megalithic alignments are of large quartzitic sandstone slabs, ranging from 3×2×0.5 m to 1.5×1×0.35 m, set upright in the playa basin. A few slabs are still partially imbedded in playa sediments (Figure 3). Many of the megaliths are now broken into large blocks. It is evident that the aligned megaliths were quarried nearby, because outcrops of similar sandstone occur in the vicinity, some only a kilometre or so from the alignments (Wendorf and Schild, 2002, p.17).

Alignment A

Around a 600-m-long row of menhirs, Alignment A (Figure 2) extends along the northern hill. It consists of thirteen clusters of large stones, some of which are still embedded, sometimes down to a metre, in playa sediments deposited at the onset of the dry phase at the end of El Nabta/Al Jerar occupation (Wendorf and Malville, 2001, pp. 490–493). All were facing north. According to the early Egyptian mortuary texts known as the Pyramids Texts, this is a place where the stars never die and where there is no death at all. It is the Field of Offerings, in which the departed will live as an 'effective' spirit (Schild and Wendorf, 2004a, p. 14–15). The Combined Prehistoric Expedition paleo-astronomer subdivided the 13 clusters of this line of megaliths into three sub-alignments that were aimed, in different times, at the point where Dubhe, or the brightest star of the Big Dipper, σ *Ursa Majoris*, rose between *c.* 6700 and 6000 years ago, or around 4600-4200 BCE (Wendorf and Schild, 2004, p. 19).

Alignment B

Alignment B is a 250-m-long double alignment of blocks (Schild and Wendorf, 2004a, p.12), which consists of seven clusters of large stones arranged in a south-east/north-west alignment. Many of the rock clusters have refits indicating that each cluster was once one large block (Wendorf and Malville, 2001, pp. 492–94). Alignment B is pointing towards the point where the brightest stars in the belt of Orion, ε *Orionis*, rose between around 6170 and 5800 years ago (Schild and Wendorf, 2004a, p. 12).

Alignment C

The third megalithic alignment is located about 500 m east of Alignment B, 800 m south-east from Alignment A, and consists of six megaliths. The identification of these large stones as an alignment is less certain. They are only 30 m from a sandstone outcrop and may have migrated down by slope creep onto the playa. However, the size of the stones, their linear arrangement, and their distance from the outcrop suggests that humans placed them there (Wendorf and Malville, 2001, pp. 494–95). Megalithic Alignment C is slightly shorter but quite distant from the two others and points toward the position of Sirius, *σ Canis Majoris*, around 6,800 years ago (Schild and Wendorf, 2004a, p. 12). At around 4775 BCE, this would place the erection of this alignment of megaliths as occurring during the Ru'at El Baqar Late Neolithic (Wendorf et al., 2001, p. 669).

The dates of the C and A alignments, between 4800 and 4000 BCE, established by precession, are consistent with the development of a ceremonial centre at Nabta in the Late Neolithic between 5500 and 3500 BCE. The single row of megaliths C, which was oriented to Sirius in approximately 4700-4800 BCE, is a credible astronomical association, as both the date and the star are archaeologically and culturally reasonable. The megalithic alignments may not have been designed as sighting devices to establish calendrical time but may have rather commemorated a perceived connection between heaven and earth, which was especially vital at the time of summer solstice and monsoon rains. The evidence of attention to the prominent stars, Sirius, Dubhe, and those of the belt of Orion, coupled with the recurrent symbolism of cattle on the earth and in the sky, suggests cultural connections across both space and time in southern Egypt. The astronomical traditions of Nabta may have been part of the inheritance of the nomadic cultures passed to populations of the Nile Valley (Wendorf and Malville, 2001, p. 502).

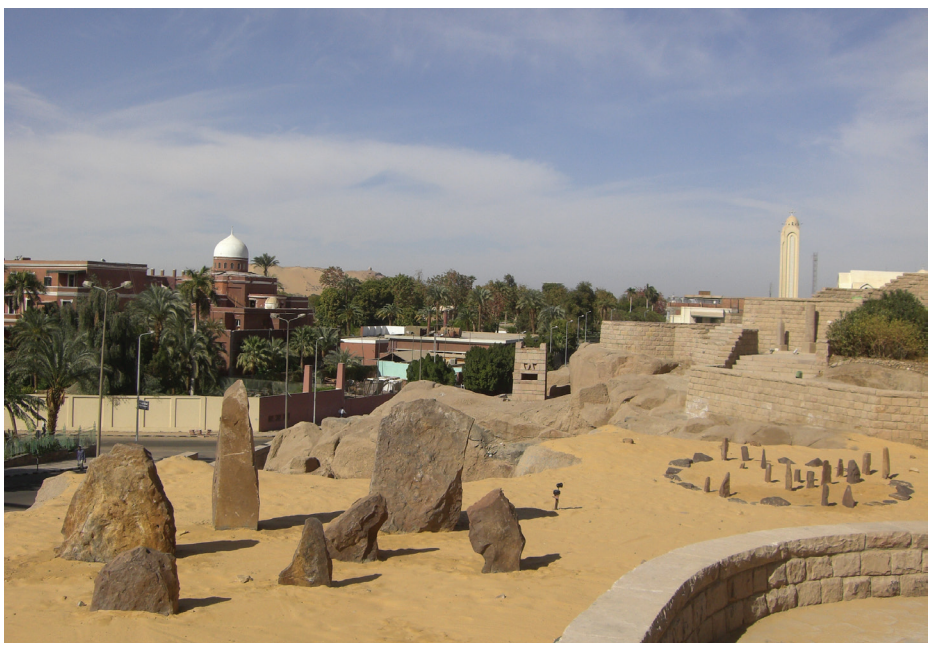
The megalithic structures of Nabta Playa

There are four large groups of megalithic structures at Nabta Playa that are composed of concentrations of whole and broken, horizontal, quartzitic sandstone blocks. They were placed on top of low hills or knolls. These knolls were carved in the ancient lake clays by the desert winds of the hyperarid phase that immediately preceded the wet period of the cattle herders (Late Neolithic occupation). They were located beyond a low elongated hill to the south of the Valley of Sacrifices (Figure 2). All the hills are flat-topped and contain megalithic structures erected by the Bun'at El Asnam, or megalithic builders (Schild and Wendorf, 2004a, p. 12).

Most of the megaliths have been shaped by knapping into sub-rectangular plates with rounded, pointed, ogival, or shouldered tops and flat or round bases. They vary in size and weight, from stones weighing several tons to medium and small sizes. Originally upright, they were placed on top of large, infilled pits in which mushroom-like erosional sandstone remnants occurred (Schild and Wendorf, 2004b, p. 2).

The Combined Prehistoric Expedition discovered the megalithic structures of Nabta Playa in 1992, and started to identify, test and study some of them by excavation. The work which showed that they were two big groups of complex structures was published in the first volume of the *Holocene Settlements of the Egyptian Sahara* in 2001. Between 2003 and 2007, the members of the

expedition began to uncover all the structures from beneath the sands, to map them in detail and try to refit the broken individual megaliths. It was still early on in the project when they began to realize that many, and in some instances, all of the blocks were shaped in the same fashion as the blocks of the alignments. They also varied in size and weight, from megaliths weighing several tons to some weighing a few hundred kilos. A few upright, broken bases were found still embedded in the clays, clearly indicating the megaliths had originally been set vertically (Schild and Wendorf, 2004a, pp. 13–14). They were surrounded by smaller upright ones and placed on top of large, infilled pits. The pits led to mushroom-like erosional sandstone remnants, which were also intentionally altered by people (Schild and Wendorf, 2004b, p. 2). Some quartzitic sandstone quarries are still visible at the southern part of the Western Group, where the blocks were extracted. Five sites of quarries at this area had been excavated by the Combined Prehistoric Expedition during the 2004-2006 seasons. The project ended during 2008 with the transportation of some megalithic structures to be reinstalled at the Nubia Museum in Aswan, which was their original home.



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Figure 3. *The re-installed megalithic group of stelae and the calendar circle at Nubia Museum, Aswan, southern Egypt.*

Studying the dispersal of the broken fragments of megaliths and their position led to a reconstruction of the 'individual megaliths' original arrangement and the understanding of the kinetics of collapse and the reason for their fall. The responsibility was found to lie with the prevailing northerly desert winds, which had carved out holes in front of the megaliths and caused their collapse. This means that all the individual stones were generally facing north, toward the area of the night skies occupied by circumpolar stars. The fact that so many megaliths are shaped, some into anthropomorphic shouldered figures, suggests that they might have served as (stelae) memorials commemorating the dead. The discrete groups of stelae at Nabta might also suggest that they represent family or clan lineages (Schild and Wendorf, 2004a, p. 13). It is clear that the pits dug under the megalithic structures required major effort cutting through heavy silts and clay, but not significantly greater than that expended in excavating the larger water wells (Wendorf and Królik, 2001, pp. 503–504).

The Western Group of megaliths

This is the largest group, which contains more than thirty clusters of stelae, covering an area of approximately 1 sq. km located on the western shore of Nabta's paleolake, about 1 km south of the calendar circle. The megaliths are grouped in an area about 200 m long and 100 m wide (Wendorf and Królik, 2001, p. 503). Further beyond the long alignment of menhirs (Alignment A) are two groups of megalithic sandstone block clusters placed over two neighbouring flat clay rises, termed the Western and the Eastern groups of megalithic structures. Both groups are composed of concentrations of whole and broken, horizontal flattish sandstone blocks of various sizes, some several tons in weight. At the southern end of the largest western group, a big sandstone quarry is still visible. This is the place where the blocks were erected (Schild and Wendorf, 2004a, pp. 12-13).

The Eastern Group of megaliths

This group is located on top of an elongated low hill to the east of the Western group. It can be observed as a few clusters of stelae, of quartzitic sandstone, located on the playa remnant to the east of the biggest group, the Western, situated in an area about 70 m long and 30 m wide. It has a north-south axis, and, as with the Western Group, is well away from any contemporary settlement

of concentration of cultural debris (Wendorf and Królik, 2001, p. 503). One of the biggest stelae of the area is located in the southern part of this group. It has collapsed on the ground and broken into a few blocks of sandstone. It measures about 3×2.5 m.

The South-Eastern Group of megaliths

A few clusters of collapsed stelae are located on top of another low hill, south-east of the Eastern and Western groups. The stelae of this group are not as well preserved as the other groups, because they were shaped of eolized quartzitic sandstone blocks, and are so shattered as to be nearly obliterated.

The Southern Group of megaliths

This is a large cluster of collapsed stelae located south-east of the Eastern and Western groups, and east of the South-Eastern group. A large Barchan dune covers the middle cluster of stelae. This group is in the southernmost part of the Nabta Playa Basin. One thick stele of the northern part of this group shows the anthropomorphic shouldered shape, which was moved to be displayed at the Nubia Museum.

Several locations of megalithic stelae at Nabta Playa have been tested: all were embedded and there were pits under each one of them dug into the playa silt and refilled after fixing the stelae. The shallow holes in front of several of them were created later by the north-west desert winds during the arid phase, after the area became a desert, and were the main cause of their collapse. The megalithic structures appear to be unique to Nabta. It should be noted, however, that they are difficult to recognize, and may be more widespread in the Eastern Sahara than now believed. If Nabta was a regional ceremonial centre, there may be others in the desert, some of which, like Nabta, are not far from the Nile. It is not known how the Nabta people managed to find and shape the deep buried table-rocks, or why they wanted to. No traces of human burial under the megalithic monuments, and no secondary chamber or pits, were found, although the excavations were carried beyond the limits of the original pits that had been dug to expose the tablerock. Several hypotheses have been put forward to explain the function of the megalithic structures and stelae of Nabta Playa, but it remains a mystery (Wendorf and Schild, 2002, pp. 17–19).

The Late Neolithic solar calendar circle

The calendar circle of Nabta Playa is unique for its time period. At the end of the Valley of Sacrifices at the western shore of the basin, is a low hill, on top of which is a stone construction interpreted as an ancient solar calendar (Schild and Wendorf, 2004a, p. 12). The site is a young fossil dune mound of about 2 ha in size covered with numerous Late Neolithic rock hearths, innumerable flaked stone artefacts, ceramic and groundstone fragments, faunal remains, and not far away, several human burials (Applegate and Zedeño, 2001, pp. 463–464). The hearths, together with the occupational debris, surround the structure and also the surface of the dune to the south of the circle. Charcoal from one of the closest hearths of the calendar circle is dated 6000 ± 60 yrs BP (Wendorf et al., 1997, pp. 98-99). The geological setting of the site and its environs reflects both the climatic sequence proposed for the region and its use by Late Neolithic occupation. The lithic artefacts from the surrounding surface of the mound are also consistent with a Late Neolithic occupation (Applegate and Zedeño, 2001, pp. 463–465).

The calendar circle consists of a series of small slabs arranged in a circle about 4 m in diameter. It is comprised of approximately 55 Nubia sandstone slabs ranging in size from 20 × 20 × 2 cm to the few larger slabs that are as large as 70 × 20 ×10 cm. Several slabs remain upright, embedded into the ground. Many more lay flat, forming an apparent circle with four pairs of sight slabs around the circumference and an additional six upright stones in the centre, arranged in two roughly east-west parallel lines of three stones each. The erosion or other agents seems to have brought about the collapse of several probable upright slabs and has led to the movement of other pieces from their presumed position (Applegate and Zedeño, 2001, pp. 463–464). Within the ring of stones there are four pairs of large stones, each pair set close together and separated by a narrow space, or gate. The gates of two opposing pairs align generally north-south, the gates of the other two form a line running 70º and 245º–250º east of north, which aligns with the calculated position of sunrise at the summer solstice around 6,000 years ago (Malville et al., 1998, pp. 452–479).

It is not a precision marker of that event, because the gaps between the gates are too wide to have been used to determine precisely the exact date of the summer solstice. Nevertheless, people standing outside the gates would have an approximate estimator for the solar event. Therefore, it is suggested that the structure served as a focus for ceremonies performed at the solstice, the approach

of which would have been very important to the people of Nabta because the summer solstice heralds the approaching summer rains so necessary for the gathered plants and livestock (Applegate and Zedeño, 2001, pp. 465–466).

The paleo-astronomical data situates the last use of the device in time. According to the data and associated archaeological artefacts, it was the Ru'at El Baqar people who erected the calendar circle, as well as the Valley of Sacrifices tumuli (Schild and Wendorf, 2004a, p. 12).

It is important to mention that in 2008 the Combined Prehistoric Expedition moved and reinstalled the stone calendar circle of Nabta along with some other megalithic structures from Nabta Playa to form an exhibition at the Nubia Museum in Aswan. That was as a result of the increasing danger of destruction of the sites by illegal tourism, which began in the area around 2005.

The Valley of Sacrifices' tumuli

On the western edge of the largest wadi to the north of Nabta basin occurs a group of rock tumuli (Schild and Wendorf, 2004b, pp. 1-2). This group of preserved tumuli were built of broken sandstone blocks, placed along the rocky west bank of the shallow wadi entering the basin and discharging its waters into it. The obvious function of the tumuli gave the area its name, the Valley of Sacrifices. The Valley is the earliest ceremonial centre in Africa and marks the dawn of complex societies (Schild and Wendorf, 2004a, pp. 11–12).

These stone-covered tumuli seem to occur only in the Late Neolithic and are confined to the Valley of Sacrifices. There is considerable variation among these tumuli. Nine were excavated, and of these all but two contained animal bones. One of the tumuli contained disarticulated elements of four cows. Another tumulus had partially articulated elements for three cows and a sheep/goat. The third tumulus contained disarticulated bones of a juvenile and a sub-adult cow, while a fourth had disarticulated bones of a cow and a sheep/goat, and another included disarticulated bone fragments of a cow (Wendorf et al., 2001, pp. 668).

One of two exceptions revealed an articulated human burial in a shallow pit, minus the skull (Wendorf and Schild, 2004, p. 17). A single adult male was recovered in an articulated, flexed position. The body was resting on the right side, spine to the east, head toward the north. Most of the bones on the right side of the body had been crushed. The cranium, mandible, and a majority of scapulae were not preserved, perhaps because they weren't positioned within the depression (Applegate et al., 2001, pp. 477–478).

The last tumulus was more complex. It contained the remains of a complete, fully articulated young cow, placed in a circular pit about 75 cm deep and 2 m in diameter. The pit was surrounded by a mottled clay collar covered with wooden sticks and sealed with a layer of clay. Finally, a mound of unshaped sandstone blocks was heaped over the pit. One of the sticks covering the burial pit yielded a radiocarbon date of 6470 ± 270 yrs BP. A stratigraphic study of the sediments which partially covered the tumuli places their construction at the onset of the wet event in the Western Desert, which is dated around 6500 BP (Wendorf et al., 1997, pp. 95–96).

The tumuli or the cattle burials that were found and excavated in Nabta Playa represent the greatest concentration of their kind in prehistoric North Africa. They are seen as a part of a complex ritual and ceremonial centre in the Late Neolithic in Africa (Di Lernia, 2006, pp. 50–51).

The tumulus of the Little Lord of Nabta (Site E-04-2)

During the 2003 field season a double stone cromlech was found on a prominent sandstone hill located 500 m to the west of the Western Group of megalithic structures (Figure 2) (Schild and Wendorf, 2004a, pp. 13–14) considered one of the largest tumuli in the area, which was flattened by desert wind. Raised on a mound built of sandstone, this burial monument measures 17 m in diameter and dominates the skyline. The tumulus was encircled by a ring of stone slabs and originally concealed, beneath a sandy superstructure, a chamber made of sandstone blocks. At its centre was a grave pit containing the skull of a small boy, referred to as the 'Little Lord of Nabta' and dated to around 5500 BP (Bobrowski et al., 2010, p. 17). The tumulus, which was named site E-04-2, was excavated in 2004. It has a circular shape around 12 m in diameter, and the stone structure was found to cover a shaft, which had been subsequently robbed. The shaft contained two pieces of a young male skull and two sherds of a deep conical open bowl, black-topped red ware, dated to the final Neolithic. The shaft is 110 cm in diameter, and 80 cm in depth. The site was dated to 3500 BCE, and anthropological study proved that the skull was of a sub-Saharan boy, aged between 6 and 7 years old. The special location of this tumulus suggests the boy was of high status (Schild and Wendorf, 2004b, pp. 1–3).

These North African megalithic sites in Nabta include standing stones, flat, tomb-styled stone structures and a stone circle that predates Stonehenge. This particular megalithic site is regarded as one of the oldest in the world.

The megalith society of Nabta

The concentration of the megalithic alignments and the large complex groups of megalithic stelae at Nabta Playa not only required significant effort, but close management of that effort over whatever period is represented in their construction. This would suggest the presence of a religious or political authority with control over human resources for an extended period of time (Wendorf et al., 2001, p. 674).

Patterns of labour mobilization are very versatile; the construction of the megalithic structure could have been part of a seasonal calendar, triggering people to gather where ordinarily they may have been dispersed in small, scattered camps.

The question to be answered is whether the Late Neolithic groups existed under a series of strong leaders or were characterized by significant social differentiation with some individuals or groups having greater access to exotic goods and power. Unfortunately, only one of the few graves excavated at Nabta had grave goods, too small a sample to resolve the question of social ranking (Wendorf et al., 2001, p. 674).

Recently, several Late and Final Neolithic burials were discovered in Gebel Ramlah basin, located 30 km north-west of Nabta Playa. The burials had rich grave offerings, including palettes of exotic stone, pottery, and necklaces of Red Sea shell beads (Wendorf and Schild, 2004, pp. 22–25). But, while the evidence remains uncertain, there is nevertheless a strong possibility that these Saharan cattle pastoralists lived in a hierarchical society with social ranking established through individual differences in wealth or power. Pastoralists' economies, where the animals are individually owned, are fertile ground for an emergence of differences in wealth. In a setting where every individual starts out with the same number of animals, differences in skills or just plain luck will soon result in some people having many more animals than others, while some may lose all their animals. It is in this setting that animals become a symbol for wealth and power for their owners (Wendorf et al., 2001, p. 674).

The emergence of social complexity in Egypt has long been a topic of considerable discussion. Social complexity is frequently regarded as an expression of the degree of structural differentiation and functional specialization evident in a society. This can occur within a society when craft and other specialities emerge, because as the division of labour increases, so does the need for control. Or it can develop from external forces where there are two radically different economic systems in close physical proximity, as is

often found where agriculturists with a centralized political system have close relationships with pastoralists. These two processes of structural differentiation are not mutually exclusive, but mutually supportive. It is this setting that makes the Late Neolithic cattle pastoralists and their regional ceremonial centre at Nabta of particular interest. One of the interesting aspects of Nabta centre is its possible role as a contact point between the early Neolithic groups living along the nearby Nile with their agricultural economy and the cattle pastoralists in the Egyptian Sahara. The functional separation of these two different economies may have played a significant part in the emergence of complexity among both groups (Wendorf et al., 2001, p. 674).

A likely possibility of a symbiotic relationship between the cattle pastoralists in the Sahara and the Neolithic groups in the Nile Valley points to an important role for the Nabta regional ceremonial centre. As is already known, regional centres among East African cattle pastoralists, because of their integrative role, are frequently placed near boundaries between different segments of a tribe, or between different tribal groups. The Nabta centre, located between the pastoralists in the desert and the Neolithic farmers along the Nile, could well have served that purpose (Wendorf et al., 2001, pp. 8–10).

In the Eastern Desert, several archaeological sites related to the Predynastic period with its crude megalithic stone architecture were recorded in the Eastern Desert. In Wadi Elei, east of Wadi Allaqi, which contains tumuli burials, stone circles with upright stelae were found. The suggested dates relate this area to the fifth to second millennia BCE (Sadr, 1997). The remarkable cemetery of 'Er Arib', in Wadi Shurafa el-Sharki, at the south-eastern corner of the Eastern Desert, contains megalithic standing stones and stone tumuli that date to the C Group or later, who inhabited Lower Nubia in the Middle Kingdom and possessed cows (Murray, 1926). Finally, at the centre of the Eastern Desert is found the tomb of Wadi Atulla, north of Wadi Hammamat, which indicates multiple occupants. The finds closest to this site are parallel with the Tasian. The provided dates relate the site to between *c.* 4970 and 4455 BCE (Friedman and Hobbs, 2002).

The idea of megalithic structures, which started at Nabta large basin in the Western Desert, appears to have spread to other areas in the Nile Valley and the Eastern Desert during the Neolithic and into the following periods of Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt. The megalithic tradition appears to be continued in the later periods of Predynastic and Early Dynastic, although with different representations, and to differing degrees and uses. A limited number of examples have been found.

Conclusion

Much organized work and effort went into building the megalithic complexes. The discrete groups of stelae at Nabta Playa might suggest lineages of such families. The archaeology of the cattle herders as well as the megalith builders shows that both societies were nomadic pastoralists whose economy was based, or largely dependent, on cattle husbandry. The erection of the tumuli and the groups of megalithic structures imply that both are an expression of an elaborate ceremonialism unprecedented in Africa. Largely similar, although generally much later, regional ceremonial centres with megalithic alignments, tumuli and stone circles are reported from the Sahelian and sub-Saharan parts of the continent. Close resemblances to the centre in Nabta Basin are found among modern cattle pastoralists in the Sahelian belt of Northern Africa (Schild and Wendorf, 2004a, pp. 14-15).

The megalithic structures of Nabta Playa provide strong evidence that this locality was a regional ceremonial centre that functioned between 6500 and 5300 BP, making it one of the oldest expressions of this phenomenon known in Africa. Regional ceremonial centres with megalithic alignments, burial mounds, and stone circles similar to those at Nabta have been found in Sahelian and sub-Saharan Africa, from Ethiopia to Senegal and north to Morocco. They are particularly numerous in West Africa, where thousands of tumuli and megaliths have been found (Martin and Becker, 1974, cited in Wendorf et al., 1997, p. 100). Most of these have not been dated but are usually assigned to the Iron Age or later (Wendorf et al., 1997, pp. 100–01).

The Late and Final Neolithic societies of the Western Desert lived in a symbiotic relationship with their agricultural counterparts in the Upper Nile Valley. This relationship is clearly seen in the presence of many imported goods from the Nile Valley. The ceremonial centre of Nabta Playa also shows that at least some of the roots of ancient Egyptian beliefs, magic and religion are present there (Schild and Wendorf, 2004a, pp.13–14).

The world of megalith builders of the south-western Desert collapsed around 4500 BP when the deadly desert again returned to the area. And it is there that the prehistories of Upper Egypt and the south-western Desert may have met. The well-organized and usually very troublesome desert herders, probably speaking the same or a similar language as the people in the Nile Valley, were pushed towards the relatively crowded Valley, which was inhabited by traditionally peaceful peasant societies. This movement may have served as a catalyst for these processes (Schild and Wendorf, 2004a, p. 15).

The Combined Prehistoric Expedition team believes that if social ranking or complexity were present in the Sahara they resulted from local causes, and that similarly the rise of complexity along the Nile probably did not result solely from the spread of ideas from the Sahara but from local causes as well. However, one possible factor in the increasing complexity in the Nile Valley was the migration of the Saharan pastoralists to the Valley at the onset of the modern period of aridity, and the competition and conflict that resulted therefrom (Wendorf et al., 1997, p. 91).

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CHAPTER 14

POPULATIONS OF PHARAONIC EGYPT

Genetic Characteristics Disclosed by Ancient DNA Research

Jean-Philippe Gourdine

Pharaonic Egypt: more than 3,000 years of history

To understand the settlement of Pharaonic Egypt, one must realize that this civilization has more than 3,000 years of history, three millennia during which several eras and periods succeeded one another: from the Predynastic to the Archaic period, from the Old Kingdom to the Middle Kingdom, from the New Kingdom to the Late Period, and finally to the Macedonian/Ptolemaic and Roman/Byzantine periods, with three intermediate periods in between (Figure 1). Over the course of three millennia, Egypt, whose geographical area extended from modern-day Sudan to the Sinai, sometimes passing through Palestine, interacted with neighbouring civilizations from the same continent, such as Nubia, Asia Minor (the Hittites) and Europe (the Greeks), for a variety of reasons: trade, war, invasions, etc. For example, wine jars from Palestine, cedar from Lebanon, turquoise from Sinai and obsidian from Ethiopia have been found in Abydos in Upper Egypt from pre-dynastic times (Dreyer, 2011). Thus, studying Egyptian settlement by limiting oneself to a single period and location does not allow us to grasp the complexity of the settlement of Pharaonic Egypt.

As Eric Crubezy points out, 'To understand the Nile Valley means to understand Africa' (2011). Thus, to understand the population of Pharaonic Egypt, one must take into account the geological African context within

which it sits, along with the migratory movements of *Homo Sapiens* after the desertification of the once green Sahara, the drying up of mega-lake Chad and the return from Asia to Africa (Drake et al., 2011).

A number of disciplines, including archaeology, historical linguistics and anthropology, enable us to paint a picture of people of the Pharaonic population, their family ties and cultural influences during different periods of history. Archaeology has revealed the complexity of cultures that probably contributed to ancient Egyptian culture: prehistoric sites in the Sahara such as Tassili in Algeria, Tibesti in Chad, Gilf el-Kebir in Egypt/Libya (Lequellec and Flers, 2005), the Badari/Nagada complexes in Upper Egypt and Nubia (Williams, 2011), and the Maadi-Buto complexes in the Nile Delta (Tristant and Midant-Reynes, 2011).

Many anthropological works have shown that from the very outset Egypt used local African food production methods and imported Middle Eastern traditions that spread via the delta. Ancient Egypt and Nubia demonstrate their cultural affiliation to the same East African substratum (Williams, 2011). Indeed, the kinship between ancient Egyptian cultures and present-day African cultures, debated at the UNESCO Symposium in 1974 (Mokhtar, 1980) was illustrated, among other things, by the signs and words common to the Omotic-Kushitic-Chadic lexical universe (Anselin, 2017), royalty, particularly the symbolism of regicide (Campagno, 2005), hairstyles adapted to curly hair (Ashton, 2011; Tassie, 2013), headrests (Lam, 2003), combs (Ashton, 2011) and pastoral crop practices shared across the Sudanese-Egyptian region, among other things (Wengrow et al., 2014).

The Middle Eastern contribution to ancient Egypt is particularly demonstrated in the delta by the introduction of sheep, pigs and wheat (Tristant and Midant-Reynes, 2011). A relative fusion of cultures took place at the birth of the Egyptian nation with the spread of the political and cultural model of Upper Egypt/Nubia to Lower Egypt from 3200 BCE (Tallet and Laisney, 2012; Tristant and Midant-Reynes, 2011; Williams, 2011).

Linguistic studies place ancient Egyptian in the Afro-Asiatic, Afrasian, or Ethio-Chadic phylum, formerly known as Chamito-Semitic (Berber, Chadic, Kushitic, Egyptian, Omotic, Semitic); however, there is no agreement on the origin of the proto-language. Most linguists (Ehret, Bender, Fleming, Takacs) lean towards an African origin for the proto-language spoken between 13,000 to 15,000 years ago; others, including Milatarev, position the origin of the proto-language in the Middle East around 10,000 years ago (Blench, 2006).

Physical anthropology, particularly a comparison of teeth (Irish, 2006) and skulls (Keita, 2006), has provided valuable information about the African

affinities of Neolithic and predynastic remains at the Nagada and Badari sites in Upper Egypt. More recently, the African origin of the Adaïma population in Upper Egypt (4000 BCE) has been confirmed by a study of children's teeth, twenty-five per cent of which had 'Bushman' upper canines typical of people from Khoi-San (Crubézy, 2010). The presence of this phenotype does not indicate a direct Khoi-San contribution to the ancient Egyptian ancestral pool, but rather a shared pool possibly dating back to the dispersal of modern humans out of Africa.

Although linguistics, anthropology and palaeontology are powerful tools, population genetics is proving to be the best to better understand the peoples of Pharaonic Egypt and their dynamics. Indeed, since the 1990s, molecular genetics has enabled us to understand population migrations around the world, as human DNA, contained in all human cells, is the 'black box' of human populations (Gourdine, 2006).

Modern DNA, ancient DNA – concept, advances and limitations

Molecular genetics – methodology

Two types of DNA are usually studied: nuclear DNA, inherited equally by both parents, and mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA), transmitted mainly by the mother.

DNA mutations occurring over time can be amplified, sequenced and compared to form phylogenetic trees to understand the relationship between individuals, populations and more. The diversity of these mutations, or genetic polymorphism, is generally studied using different markers, most commonly single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) and tandem repeat sequences (microsatellites or short tandem repeats, or STRs) (Gourdine, 2006). Y-chromosome markers and the hypervariable region of mtDNA, known as haplogroups, are used to estimate paternal and maternal ancestries, respectively; they are well documented in various populations (Lott et al., 2003; Willuweit and Roewer, 2015).

New generations of DNA sequencing have made it possible to determine more quickly a larger number of SNPs, estimated at 10 million in the human genome (Genetic Science Learning Center, 2017). Population SNP comparison software such as Admixture (Alexander et al., 2009) allows populations to be compared in all their complexity by removing the restriction of single-parent markers. In addition to human DNA, the DNA of parasites (microscopic creatures, viruses

and bacteria, etc.) that co-evolved alongside humans can also be analysed in the same way, for example, markers of tuberculosis bacilli, hepatitis virus, malaria plasmodium, skin and head lice, etc. (Gourdine, 2006, 2013).

By calibrating the appearance of a genetic mutation from fossils, the molecular clock method can estimate the date a mutation appeared in a given population (Soares et al., 2009). It is also important to note that a complex approach that takes into account multiple markers in addition to parasite DNA is more robust than single-parent marker methods (mtDNA, maternal line only, and Y chromosome, paternal line only).

Modern DNA and the global population

Current genetic data from various mtDNA markers, the Y chromosome, SNP, etc., support the paleontological hypothesis that *Homo Sapiens*, modern humans, emerged in Africa around 300,000 years ago and populated the rest of the world sequentially between 80,000 and 40,000 years ago, moving to South Asia, Australia, Europe, East Asia and then the Americas around 15,000-35,000 years ago, and finally the remote islands of Oceania (Quach and Quintana-Murci, 2017). These data are backed by DNA analysis of diverse parasites such as hair lice (Kittler et al., 2003). *Homo Sapiens* arriving in Eurasia also mixed with other *Homo* species such as Neanderthal and Denisovan (Pääbo, 2015).

The genetic history of continental Africa has been broadly studied using modern DNA from speakers of African language families (Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, Niger-Congo and Khoi-San) and in accordance with their geographical location (Campbell et al., 2014). Data demonstrate complex prehistorical and historical migratory movements: (1) extinct archaic African populations (Mendez et al., 2013), (2) migrations and mixed ancient populations with genetic markers found in present-day Eurasian populations and (3) ancient intra-African migrations and mixing that travelled from east to west and vice versa, from west to south-east (Busby et al., 2016). Furthermore, languages and genes do not necessarily coincide. For example, current speakers of Nilo-Saharan languages share markers found throughout Africa, indicating ancient interconnections (Campbell et al., 2014; Busby et al., 2016). Thus, 'African' does not only mean 'sub-Saharan'. On the one hand, estimates of current sub-Saharan populations do not reflect the distribution of ancient African populations because the types of ancient African marker during the wet Sahara period are currently unknown. On the other hand, population mixes with Eurasian markers have been found

in Africa, hence they form an integral part of the biological history of Africans, as indicated by Busby et al. (2016).[1]

Genetic approach in the context of the settlement of Pharaonic Egypt

Can molecular genetic tools be successfully applied to the study of Pharaonic populations? The answer is yes. Several technical problems do arise, however, such as: (1) potential contamination due to post-mortem handling, either ancient or more recent, by archaeologists and laboratory researchers; (2) difficulty in obtaining organs with high-quality ancient DNA, as DNA is less well-preserved in hot and humid environments than in cold and dry environments or in peat bogs; also, DNA concentration is low in bones, although these are abundant; and (3) economic reasons – despite new sequencing methods that can reduce prices, costs can remain prohibitive as the starting material is so scarce. Ancient (fossil) DNA is more difficult to access, of lower quality and has a high risk of contamination, although it is ideal for understanding population history because it is well established in Egyptian chronology and can be dated using Carbon-14.

Nevertheless, if modern DNA researchers take steps to avoid contamination, ancient DNA can provide valuable information about the origins of ancient populations (as well as other information, such as presence of disease), provided this is done in accordance with Egyptian chronology. For example, DNA analysis of mummified cats and crocodiles from ancient Egypt has been carried out without generating controversy about the viability of these methods, supporting the possibility of studying human remains in the same way (Habicht et al., 2016). Moreover, new DNA sequencing techniques can augment and identify the DNA of humans and other organisms (Khairat, 2013), even with museum samples from tropical environments, such as ancient DNA of seventeenth-century Afro-Caribbean slaves (Schroeder et al., 2015).

Although contemporary DNA is easily accessible in present-day Egyptian populations, it only partially reflects Egypt's 3,000-year history between Lower and Upper Egypt. Also, studying only one geographical area would not shed

1 'Admixture into and within sub-Saharan Africa.' *Elife*. e15266, p. 1: 'We show that coastal populations experienced an influx of Eurasian haplotypes over the last 7,000 years, and that Eastern and Southern Niger-Congo speaking groups share ancestry with Central West Africans as a result of recent population expansions. In fact, most sub-Saharan populations share ancestry with groups from outside of their current geographic region as a result of gene-flow within the last 4000 years.'

light on the country as a whole. Some researchers have ventured to use modern DNA to draw conclusions about the history of ancient populations in Egypt (Krings et al. 1999), but as recent studies of ancient DNA have shown, present-day populations do not necessarily correspond to ancient ones. For example, the ancient populations of Easter Island around 1400 CE were closer to present-day Polynesians than to Amerindians and current inhabitants of the island (Fehren-Schmitz et al., 2017). The example of the Ötzi mummy (3400 BCE), found in the Austrian Alps, shows more genetic affinities with the current populations of the Tyrrhenian islands (Corsica, Sardinia) than with the current inhabitants of the Alps (Sikora et al., 2014). Thus, well-calibrated ancient DNA is key to understanding population dynamics through the dynamics of ancient populations. Furthermore, a multidisciplinary analysis supported by archaeological, historical linguistic and anthropological work in a geographical and temporal context is to complement biological analysis (Keita, 2006).

In this chapter we will discuss, in light of Egyptian history, the results of ancient DNA research on mummies of different eras, taken from the American medical and scientific database www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov, specialist journals in genetic anthropology, and reports from private genetic genealogy companies.

Genetic research in ancient Egypt and molecular Egyptology

Predynastic necropolis at Adaïma, 3700 BCE

Genetic analysis of the population at the Adaïma necropolis (more than 6,000 skeletons, including several from a children's cemetery) confirmed the presence of ancient DNA related to current sub-Saharan populations (Crubézy et al., 2002). Crubézy et al. did not specify the markers used; however, in the current populations of Adaïma, among the Copts and Muslims, the Y-chromosome haplogroup E1b1 is present in 74 per cent of cases and the mitochondrial haplogroup L0f in 3 per cent of the inhabitants (Crubézy, 2010). E1b1 is the most common paternal marker found in Africa (Trombetta et al., 2011), while the maternal marker L0f is common in the current Khoi-San populations of South Africa (Crubézy, 2010) and the populations of Tanzania (Rito, 2013). Could these be remnants of proto-Khoi-San populations in Adaïma? According to new sub-Saharan ancient DNA data (Skoglund et al. 2017), ancient populations closely related to the San of modern-day South Africa were once present in East Africa. Also, the mitochondrial haplogroup L0f probably

does not originate from trans-Saharan trade, which never reached South Africa (Crubézy, 2010). Archaeology has also shown typical hunter-gatherer cultures in the early days of Egyptian civilization (Crubézy, 2010). These results on ancient DNA from the Adaïma necropolis are preliminary and need to be confirmed by other laboratories using new sequencing methods.

Sickle-cell disease in predynastic mummies – 3200 BCE

Three predynastic mummies from the Egyptian Museum in Turin, Italy (3200 BCE, exact location not specified), tested positive for sickle cell disease markers (Marin et al., 1999). The sickle cell haplotypes have not been specified, but those currently known distinguish between the Benin, Senegal, Bantu, Cameroon and Arabo-Indian types based on specific markers found in the populations of these regions. We had hypothesized the possibility of a Benin haplotype, frequently found in West Africa and around the Mediterranean today, but this remains to be confirmed (Gourdine, 2006). It is likely that sickle cell traits emerged in the Sahara during the humid period, were maintained under the evolutionary pressure of malaria, and spread throughout Africa with human migrations (Keita, personal communication). Indeed, *Plasmodium falciparum*, a malaria parasite, has been found in numerous mummies from predynastic until Roman times (Nerlich et al., 2008).

Tuberculosis in the Archaic, Middle and New Kingdoms, and the second intermediate period

Research on mummies from various royal tombs from the Archaic, Middle Kingdom, New Kingdom and Late Period in Upper Egypt revealed the presence of *Mycobacterium* tuberculosis complex. Among these signatures, the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis and Mycobacterium Africanum I* have been found in the oldest mummies (Zink et al., 2003a and 2003b). *Mycobacterium Africanum I* is currently specific to West Africa and seems linked to certain ethnic groups in West Africa, according to Winglee et al. (2016, p. 1).[2] Might this be a West African strain carried by Saharan populations who found refuge in Egypt during Neolithic times? In the absence of genotyping of these mummies, the question is worth posing.

2 'Possible reasons include a geographically restricted animal reservoir, a unique preference for hosts of West African ethnicity, and an inability to compete with other lineages outside of West Africa.'

Royal mummies from the 18th and 20th Dynasties, around 1300 BCE

In order to determine the relationship between several royal mummies from the New Kingdom (Thuya, Yuya, Akhenaton, Amenhotep III, Tutankhamun and Ramses III), the team led by Pusch, Zink and Hawass used eight of the thirteen genetic markers (STR) from the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) used by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in forensic analysis, in addition to paternal markers (Hawass et al., 2010, 2012). The paternal haplotype E1b1a, found in Ramses III (Hawass et al. 2012), is widespread in modern-day sub-Saharan Africa (Trombetta et al., 2011) and particularly among speakers of Bantu languages (Campbell et al., 2014). These data reinforce the idea of an ancient sub-Saharan foothold in North Africa, as suggested by meta-analyses of both paternal (Keita, 2006) and maternal markers (Frigi et al., 2010). Therefore, the sub-Saharan genetic contribution preceded the trans-Saharan slave trade, often used to justify the sub-Saharan contribution in North Africa.

We have estimated the ethnicity of the Amarna mummies using STR with Pop Affiliator 1 software (Pereira et al., 2011) and found that they had strong affinities with current sub-Saharan populations: 41 per cent to 93.9 per cent for sub-Saharan Africa, compared to 4.6 per cent to 41 per cent for Eurasia and 0.3 per cent to 16 per cent for Asia (Gourdine, 2018). L. Martin, whose company DNA Tribes[R] specializes in genetic genealogy, has gone further when analysing the genetic markers of the Amarna mummies by using their algorithm and large database of STRs from ethnic groups (Martin and Valaitis, 2008). According to Martin, the majority of the Amarna mummies have strong genetic affinities with populations from the Great Lakes region, Central and Southern Africa, and some have shown affinities with people from the Near East and West Africa (Martin, 2012 and 2013). This is not exclusive, as only eight of the thirteen CODIS markers were used (Gourdine, 2013).

Mummies from the Greco-Roman period, 806 BCE

The team led by Pusch used the new DNA sequencing method (Next Generation Sequencing) on mummies from the Greco-Roman period (Khairat et al., 2013). Mitochondrial haplotype 12, probably from Asia, was identified in one of the mummies. These research results demonstrate the robustness of new sequencing methods using DNA that is even partially degraded, and despite the embalming process (ancient DNA from parasites was also sequenced on these mummies).

Study of mummies from the Late New Kingdom to the Late Period at a site in northern Egypt

A study of 151 mummies from Abusir el-Meleq in northern Egypt, dating from the end of the New Kingdom to the Late Period (with the exception of Nubian dynasties), was conducted by a team led by Krause (Schuenemann et al., 2017). Ninety of these mummies were used to determine maternal lineages, and three – with dates estimated at 769–560 BCE, 97 BCE–5 CE and 776–569 BCE – had their entire genomes sequenced. The authors concluded that the ancient Egyptians originated in the Near East and that the modern Egyptians have a recent African contribution linked to the trans-Saharan slave trade (Schuenemann et al., 2017, p. 1).[3]

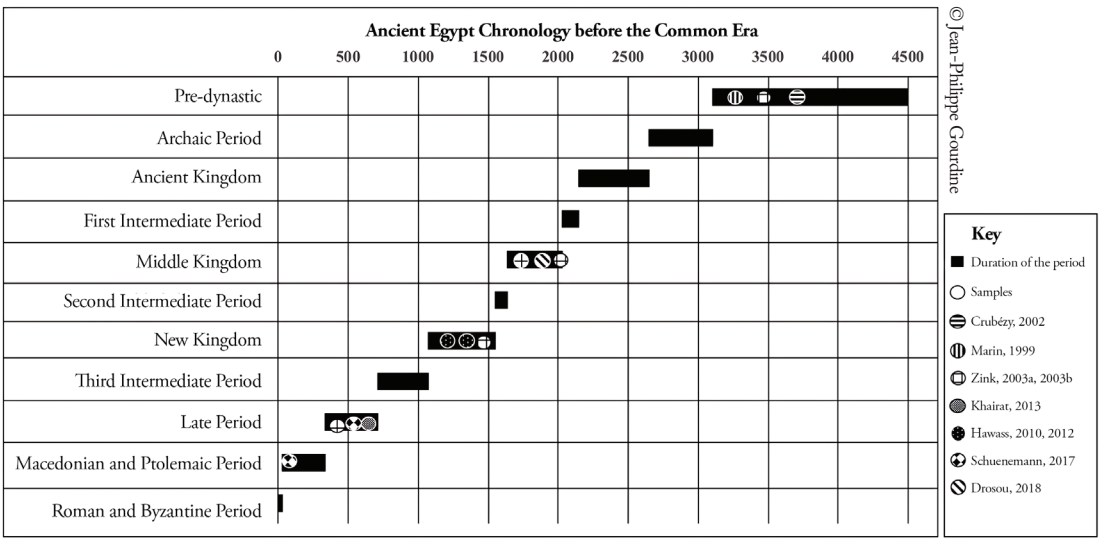


Figure 1. *Studies on ancient DNA sourced from Egyptian mummies mapped on the Egyptian timeline (BCE)*

Note: Ancient Egyptian Timeline BCE: Predynastic, Archaic Period, Old Kingdom, First Intermediary Period, Middle Kingdom, Second Intermediary Period, New Kingdom, Third Intermediary Period, Late Period, Macedonian and Ptolemaic Period, Roman and Byzantine Period.

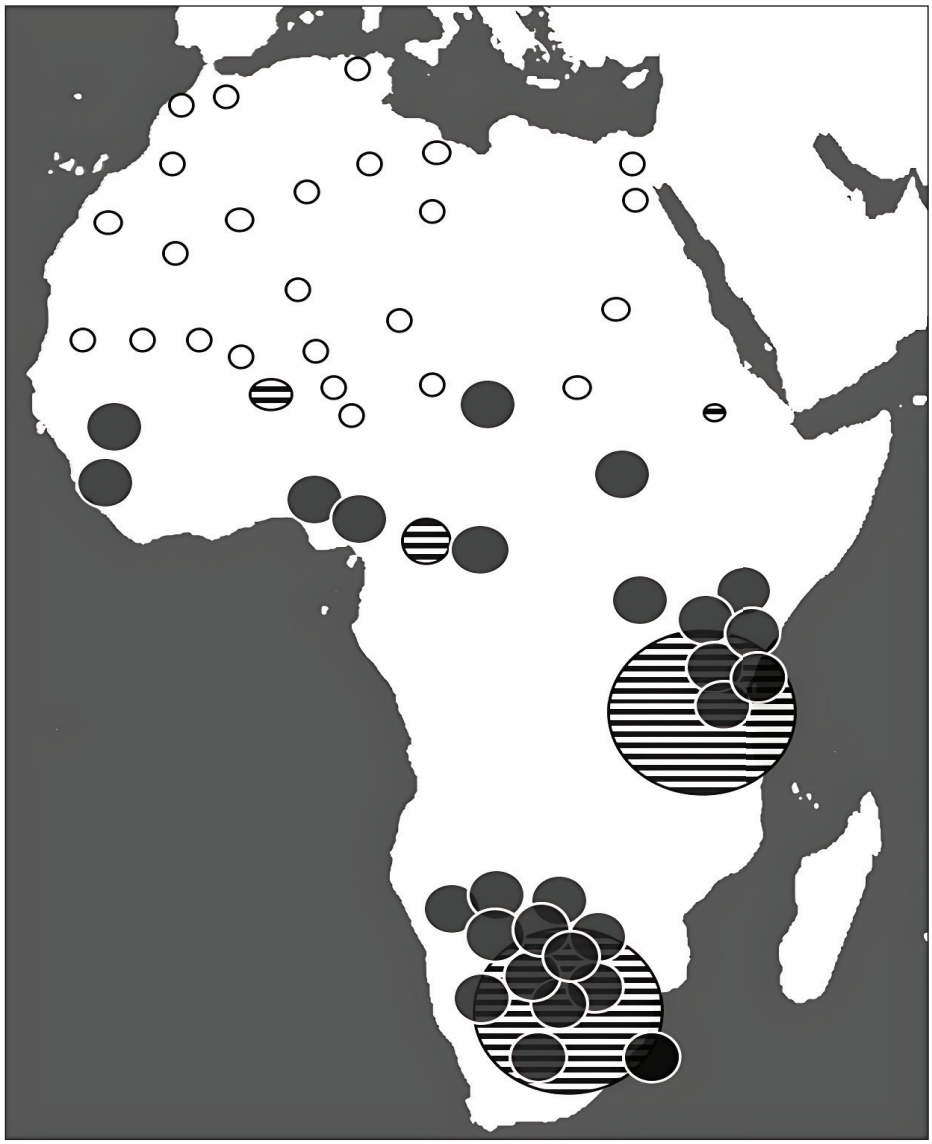
3 'Our analyses reveal that ancient Egyptians shared more ancestry with Near Easterners than present-day Egyptians, who received additional sub-Saharan admixture in more recent times.'

These data seem to contradict the analyses of Amarna mummies discussed above. However, there are numerous biases in their interpretation from the following perspectives: (1) statistical: non-representative sample size: only three complete genomes (n=3) and only one genetric marker (mtDNA) analysed for ninety individuals from a single location, and creation of three virtual population groups based solely on mtDNA (pre, post and Ptolemaic); (2) chronological: mummy data from two periods (late New Kingdom and Late Period), excluding ten Egyptian periods spanning more than 3,000 years (see timeline, Figure 1); (3) historical: no information on the origin of the tombs, nor any mention that ancient northern Egypt had been home to Asian colonies since predynastic times (Tristant and Midant-Reynes, 2011), as well as to prisoners of war (Bestock, 2017), diplomatic marriages with Asian kingdoms such as Mittani and Hittite, and Asian domination (Murnane, 1990); and (4) geographical: the authors[4] claim to have used samples from Middle Egypt outside Abusir el-Meleq in northern Egypt, yet there were forty-two administrative regions stretching from north to south, and cultural differences between the south and north of Egypt have been known since the predynastic era. Yet this did not prevent the authors from using a biased sample of mummies (n=3) from a single location (n=1) and generalizing it to the whole of Egypt.

In addition, the authors do not mention the origin of the sample with the paternal haplotype E1b1b1 (was it for sample JK2134, JK2911 or JK2888, all dating from before Islamic expansion?), nor the fact it is very widespread in present-day East Africa (Rowold et al., 2014). Similarly, many samples on this site have mitochondrial haplotypes found in Africa today, such as JK2955 (haplogroup L3) and JK2963 (haplogroup M1a1i), dating back to 391–260 BCE and 1211–1126 BCE, well before the arrival of Islam and the trans-Saharan slave trade in Egypt (Hirbo, 2011). Moreover, though the African roots of the haplogroup prior to the trans-Saharan slave trade in Egypt have been confirmed, they are hardly discussed in this article.

Finally, when it comes to the sub-Saharan contribution of the current populations of northern Egypt sampled, the data do not coincide with maps of the trans-Saharan slave trade but, rather, with data provided by L. Martin, DNA Tribes[R] on the Amarna mummies (Figure 2). The trans-Saharan slave trade never reached South Africa. Could this be a remnant of the proto-Khoi-San populations whose dental signatures Crubézy found in Adaïma (Crubézy, 2010)?

4 Schuenemann et al. 2017, p. 1. 'The samples recovered from Middle Egypt span approximately 1,300 years of ancient Egyptian history from the New Kingdom to the Roman Period.'



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Figure 2. *Map of the genetic affinities of the Amarna mummies, the Egyptian population of Abusir el-Meleq, with current African populations, compared to trans-Saharan transit maps.*

Striped circles: genetic affinities between Amarna mummies and modern-day African populations, adapted according to L. Martin, DNA Tribes[R] (Martin, 2012, 2013) using data provided by Hawass et al. (2010, 2012).

Black circles: Genetic affinities in *current* Egyptian populations of Abusir el-Meleq with African populations, adapted from Schuenemann (2017).

White circles: Main trans-Saharan slave routes, adapted from Lovejoy (1983).

Study of two Middle Kingdom mummies, Nakht-Ankh and Khnum-Nakht, from Rifeh, Middle Egypt (1985–1773 BCE)

A team from the Manchester Museum conducted research on two Middle Kingdom mummies, Nakht-Ankh and Khnum-Nakht, dating from 1985–1773 BCE (Drosou et al., 2018), based on uniparental markers. Partial STRs for the Y chromosome failed to identify paternal markers; however, the mitochondrial haplogroup M1a1 was found in both mummies, suggesting a maternal relationship and thus that they may have been siblings. The presence of haplogroup M1a1, found in Egypt, supports the hypothesis of an African origin for haplogroup M1 (Hirbo, 2011). According to the alternative hypothesis of an Asian origin for haplogroup M1 (González et al., 2007), it is possible that it arrived in ancient Egypt through African migratory waves via the Arabian Peninsula, given the prevalence of haplogroup M1 in East Africa and Yemen (Hirbo, 2011; Vyas et al., 2016).

Conclusion and outlook

The ancient DNA data from predynastic and dynastic populations currently available are not representative of the entire history of Egypt, as few samples have been analysed (see Figure 1). They are fragments of a puzzle that is thousands of years old and highlight its complexity: the possible presence of a proto-Khoi-San population in the predynastic period and individuals with a type of tuberculosis well documented in West Africa, royal subjects from the New Kingdom characterized by genetic markers currently known in Central and Southern Africa and the Great Lakes region, as well as subjects from the late New Kingdom and the Late Period, offering traces of African and Asian markers. The data as a whole suggests that the area of origin of the ancestors of the ancient and modern Egyptian populations, which show points of kinship, should be redefined. Could the Pharaonic populations therefore form a genetic mosaic resulting from encounters and exchanges between populations from the Sahara, Lake Chad and the Near East in the Nile Valley at various periods?

Only further use of molecular Egyptology can answer this question within a framework of cooperative scientific and Egyptological research, promoting new molecular genetic technologies, reproducibility and transparency of results on representative samples. Some recommendations can already be made with regard to new excavations and mummies already available in museums: the systematic use of new DNA sequencing methods, the continuation of now

standard analyses of mitochondrial and Y-chromosome markers, but also other autosomal markers (e.g. from the CODIS complex if whole genome sequencing remains too expensive), the consideration of markers for African, European and Asian genetic diseases, and DNA from human parasites consistent with the ecological, historical, chronological and societal context of ancient Egypt (royal or popular tombs, local or migrant).

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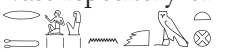
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CHAPTER 15

KINSHIP AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE IN KEMET, ANCIENT EGYPT

Kimani Nehusi

Introduction

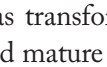
A language is a record of, and a witness to, a people's progress through space and time. It preserves evidence of their values, attitudes and rituals, what they did, and how they did it; where they went, their life, their cosmogony and cosmology. The image  represents the language of ancient Egypt: written *Mdw Ntr* and pronounced *Medew Neter*,[1] it literally means 'Words of the God' or, in the Greek translation, 'Divine Words'. This language of hieroglyphs is a vast repository of information about the ancient Egyptians, or  or  *rmṯ n kmt*, 'the people of Kemet' as they called themselves. These ancient African people were the creators of, participants in and witnesses to events and processes that unfolded in their society, and in this language they have recorded these, as well as their own thoughts. The evidence here is usually uncontrived, even unselfconscious, and therefore without the biases or even prejudices that are often encountered in the documents of those who set out to create a particular image in their texts, of themselves and of other people. The language and texts of these people are a key source in the recovery of information about  *Kmt: Kemet* (ancient Egypt). The use of the language to supplement other sources of information on

1 Ntr (neter) is preferred here instead of the usual Egyptological NTr (Netjer).

the family and society of Kemet highlights its significance, including its genetic relationship with modern African languages. It also illustrates the preservation of many principles of living Africa, in their earliest known representations – that is, linguistically and culturally in situ. Understanding this language enables present scholarship to apprehend much of the sociology of the past. Such knowledge is also an important step in understanding whether, as well as how, that past may be related to the present, and therefore to the future.

In Kemet the family was the foundation of the society. It was the base upon which rested the social structure, as well as substantial aspects of the economic system, and served as the first repository of the society's fundamental values. Additionally, the family, in its several elements (father, mother, sister, brother), was the archetype and model for many social structures, agencies and institutions that evolved from it or were indirectly influenced by it. In the social history of Kemet, the family is central to the provision of a range of services for the increasingly diverse needs of a society that, over its long history, grew more complex as it expanded quantitatively and developed qualitatively.

Like the family structure, kingship was an aspect of the larger social structure. Here each geopolitical level of the society was conceived as one big family, beginning with the 'family of families' as the clan, then in turn the 'clan of clans' as the state, and then the 'state of states', a confederation of states that was expressed as the nation, with the king as the father of the nation and the queen, the mother. It is important to avoid oversimplifying these representations, as innovations and other developments did not always correspond exactly to this model. But evidence of this pattern is present in the terminology, functions, functionaries and representative symbols of these various levels of organization, from the family itself to the nation.

Both the family and the society were social structures based upon a system of common values. They functioned as an integrated and enabling context for the social processes in which the human being, both individually and collectively, was transformed from an unknowing and unaware infant into a well-rounded and mature being existing in  *mꜣꜥt: Ma'at*,[2] which in our context may be rendered as 'social order,' though its application was usually universal. In this process the individual acquired desired values, attitudes, behaviours, skills, knowledge and insights. This grand outcome was achieved through the construction of society and the simultaneous nurturing of the person through society's socializing events (rituals and ceremonies) and processes (socialization, parenting, mentoring and

2 For the most recent and comprehensive scholarly treatment consult Karenga (2006).

co-mentoring, apprenticeship, schooling, professional development), all of which unfolded within their various agencies and structures (family, clan, school, secret society, workplace, etc). This social process is fundamentally the liberation and humanization of biology from  *Isft: Isfet*, the very opposite of *Ma'at*. The meaning of *Isfet* in this context is the state of chaos and disorganization of primitivism that existed at the very birth, in nature, of the creature that would become human in and through this process. *Isfet* here is therefore a representation of both the human creature before the invention of society and the individual human at birth; that is, before entry into the processes of socialization to achieve humanization. The expansion of human goodness through this transformation of the person for the better was achieved in the conscious and deliberately arranged processes of socialization and its historically later adaptation as education, which first occurred in the world in Kemet.

Family structure

Some Egyptologists have recognized the 'extended' nature of the family in Kemet (Tyldesley, 1995; Troy, 1986). The majority opinion has been that the people of Kemet had nuclear families (Donadoni, 1997). And yet, they included the following categories of persons as parts of their families: divinities, ancestors, elders, parents, siblings (which included 'cousins') and others who, though not actually kindred, were doubtless related by the roles they undertook, as well as the quality of the relationships expected of and fulfilled by them. 'Nuclear' families were not unknown. However, the empirical evidence shows that this was not the dominant arrangement. In fact, this was more often a temporary stage in the evolution of the average family, most of whom experienced expansion and contraction, as individuals, and often entire sub-groups, were added through birth, marriage and acquisition of new friends, while others parted chiefly through marriage or disagreement – not necessarily through death, for the 'dead' are never dead, in Kemet as in the rest of Africa (Obenga, 1995; Robins, 1993).

The origins of the relevant ancient Egyptian kinship terms which translate into approximate English terms as 'mother', 'father', 'elder', 'ancestor', 'brother', 'sister', 'son', and 'daughter' are so old that they are lost in the mists of the time before the invention of writing in Kemet and the founding of the federated state, that is, before 3000 BCE (according to the most conservative estimate). None of these terms indicates only a blood relationship. Though the origins of these individual relationships were in consanguinity, the roles that distinguished them

were rooted in a system of shared values that imposed mutually understood and accepted rights and obligations upon members of the family, and within the wider society. The terms used by the people of Kemet for relationships in the family, and for the concept of family itself, remained those originally used for consanguineous relationships, though the concepts they denoted shifted from relations that were biologically determined to those which were value-defined. In essence, the terms remained static; the concepts they covered evolved.

The term 'kin' in European culture connotes a narrow web of ties that are based upon, if not indeed limited to, very close blood relations. Such a group is usually termed the nuclear family. However, in the African tradition, of which Kemet is the earliest representative for which scholars possess many details, the concept of the family usually indicates a set of relations that is much wider, more complex and significantly different in quality from that encountered in the European tradition, though there are of course similarities in the way this core institution is organized and functions in all cultural traditions. In fact, as is further detailed below, the composition of the family in Kemet was substantially different from that of the nuclear family of Europe; and some elements of the family of Kemet, such as divinities, ancestors and the unborn, do not exist or are not usually counted as members of the family in other cultural traditions. The meaning of each of the ancient Egyptian terms for the constituents of the family – such as mother, father, sister, brother, son and daughter – is far broader than a blood relationship. The same is true for the concept of family. It was not blood alone, or even blood at all, that linked those individuals in families, clans, nomes (states) and the confederation of Kemet. At each level, the fundamental links between people were shared values and a common purpose. It began with the family, both conceptually and in practice, in the evolution of a somewhat distinctive African civilization within a specific geographical area over a particular period of time.

The individual

The individual was the smallest unit in the entire family and society. She or he was made up of a  *ḥꜣt: khat*, the physical body or temple that housed her or his non-physical aspects. These were the spiritual (*ka*, *ba*, *shut, sahu* and *akh*) and social aspects (*ren, sekhem* and *ib*). These non-physical or non-biological aspects of the individual were identified as the  *ḳẖ* (*ka*), or vital force, which is fundamental to every created being and thing; the  *bꜣ* (*ba*), or individual vital force, often translated less accurately as 'soul'; the  *ꜣḫ*, *akh* or revered

spirit (which is inherited from the Ancestors); the  ib, *ib* (literally 'heart' but really the seat of consciousness, intelligence and morality – the 'mind' in modern translation); the  rn, *ren* or name, which often announces such details as circumstances at birth, family and clan origins and association, admired values and therefore also general social orientation; the  *sekhem,* or power, that may be either constructive, destructive or both simultaneously (hence the potential of the person); the  *s•hu: sahu*, the spiritual envelope around the body, and the  Swt: *shut* or shadow. The meanings of these terms for various parts of the person, as well as the number of the parts, were not static over the long history of Kemet; some evolved.[3]

Already in the construction of the individual in Kemet we see, in the non-biological aspects of the person, that the human being is a site in which sociology is separated from biology, and liberated and humanized in and through the processes of socialization and the latter's (historically later) adaptation as education. At the foundation of these two important processes is the recognition and understanding that each person is composed of different aspects, that some of these aspects may be improved upon by the acquisition of useful knowledge, skills, insights, values and behaviours, and that such enhancement of humanity may be achieved through the deliberately organized processes of socialization, education and training. This is the understanding articulated by Ptahhotep in the observation that 'No one is born wise.'[4] This observation is at the foundation of the wisdom, education and practice in Kemet (Carruthers, 1995). Africans in Kemet had discovered the trainability and teachability of certain aspects of the human being (the *khat* and the *ib*: mind and physical body) and therefore rendered possible the addition of value to humans in the socialization and education processes. It was a significant step and a qualitative leap forward, in the humanization of the biology bestowed upon every human being by nature and in the invention of civilization in the world. As society became more complex and expanded outwards from the family, other sites were instituted that specialized in specific aspects of this humanization of humanity. These included all of those rituals and sites of transformation observed in the circle of life: rituals of birth, naming and childhood; initiations into adulthood, marriage and parenting; initiations into professional and philosophical societies, and

3 The human being as comprising these aspects has not received much attention in the literature, which is characterized by many passing references. One of the more recent and comprehensive statements is Gomez (1994, pp. 82-114).

4 The *Sebayat* of Ptahhotep, in Lichtheim (1975, p. 63).

vocations, apprenticeship, mentoring, schooling and graduation; elevation to eldership; death and ancestorship; occasional elevation to divinity, and rebirth. However, not everyone achieved each of these social objectives.

In the ancient Egyptian and living African tradition, the human individual is the basis of society. However, she or he is at best incomplete and unbalanced, even while possessing much individuality and independence. Therefore, an individual does not and cannot exist in isolation from the community, which is thus strongly marked in African life and therefore in the African explanation of existence. Androgynous children become women and men at the initiation stage, around the age of puberty. Men do not exist independently of women, and women do not exist independently of men; they are different but complementary beings. Women and men unite not only for the biological purpose of procreation, but for spiritual, social and economic reproduction also. Not one of these fundamental human tasks is possible by a woman alone, or by a man alone. The two unite to complement, balance and complete each other through the formation of individual pairs, with each pair constituting a complete unit of the smallest and most basic kind, readying themselves for the great tasks of parenting, and building and leading the social structures in and through which these most important tasks will be accomplished: families, clans, communities, states and nations. This means that in Kemet, the very concept of the person extended beyond the individual. That much is indicated by the social aspects of the person, as well as the spiritual aspect termed the *akh*. Here, as in later Africa, it is scarcely possible to define a person except in relation to a group of other persons with whom she or he shared the same or very similar values, as well as a distinctive way of living them in daily life.

Divinity

Existence in the realm of the divine signalled a status of the greatest importance in Kemet. There was a niche in each house upon which the statue of the god of the clan was placed; often this god was an ancestral figure. Rituals were performed at appropriate times. Some clan divinities were elevated to state, regional and national status, and outstanding ancestors were on occasion also elevated to divine status. Imhotep is perhaps the best-known example, but others exist in Kagemni (Old Kingdom), Hardedef (Fourth Dynasty, Old Kingdom), Amonhotep, Son of Hapu (Eighteenth Dynasty, New Kingdom) and Khaemwaset, son of Pharaoh Ramesses II, 'The Great' (Nineteenth Dynasty,

New Kingdom). The continuation of this practice and the beliefs that dictated it may be observed in living Africa today, where deified ancestors have similar roles. Examples from West Africa include Tsoede, mythical founder of the Nupe Kingdom, Shongo of the Yoruba and Eze Chima among the Igbo, west of the Niger. An example from East Africa is Kintu of the Baganda (Nehusi, 2016, pp. 28-29). Letters to the dead, written by the living, demonstrate the relationship between the 'dead' and the living in both Kemet and, for example, the Gullah/Geechie in the western Diaspora (Manigault-Bryant, 2014).

Ancestors

Ancestors were a part of the family and indeed 'lived' with the family, as illustrated by the physical and spiritual location of family and clan divinities mentioned above. It is not difficult to recognize how many of these family gods became local divinities, as families grew into clans, and clans expanded to become villages, towns and states, or otherwise became leading influences within such entities. The term  *ḳr-ḥt*, meaning both an ancestral spirit and a local divinity (Gardiner, 1988), conveys this influence very precisely. The seated man determinative, or sense (or classificatory) sign:  *šps: Sheps* (masculine);  *špst*: *Shepset* (feminine), deployed in  *ꜣbt*: *abet*, one way of writing the word for family, upholds and articulates the idea that ancestors are part of the family. This sign signifies 'revered person.' It should be emphasized that the existence of *špst*, the feminine form, confirms that both men and women were distinguished in this regard.

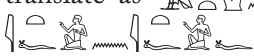
Elders

The concept of the elder in African tradition begins with the idea that there is value in all human beings. The idea and practice are that anyone who is older than another is that person's elder. The elder has the duty of mentoring or helping to mentor the younger; and the younger that of helping out the elder as necessary and/or if called upon to do so. This is one way of ensuring that everyone is mentored, and that everyone mentors someone else.

However, the notion of the elder is usually associated with a person of advanced age and/or someone of great experience who passes on advice to younger people. Wisdom, not necessarily age alone, is an important criterion in determining eldership. Here age is associated with an accumulation of

experience, which is mined for knowledge that, when properly interrogated and evaluated, may in turn be distilled as wisdom. Elders constituted a source of knowledge, tradition and authority. This social device was very present in Kemet. It is a very powerful cultural tool for the imparting of skills, knowledge and attitudes by someone who was more knowledgeable and/or skilled, to another who was less so. This relationship is known today as mentoring. It touched the life of everyone, usually from multiple sources. In Kemet the  *It Neter* or 'father of the God,' was not necessarily a biological father, but an experienced and wise person who performed the role of father, or chief advisor or vizier to the Pharaoh; the  *Mut Neter* or 'mother of the God' ensured that the young ruler or would-be ruler also received advice and guidance from a woman. In later Africa, elders performed similar roles, such as mentoring rulers (Rodney, 1969, p. 54; Niane, 1965).

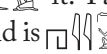
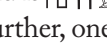
Mother

This designation included grandmothers, however far removed. The term for father carried a parallel meaning. In addition, constructions that translate as  : *Mwt n Mwt.f*, 'mother of his mother',  *It n It.f*, 'father of his father', 'mother of her mother' etc. were in regular use for maternal and paternal grandparents.

The presence of the term  *nbt pr: Nebet Per*, a feminine term which translates as 'the female owner of the house' in the language of the ancient Egyptians, alerts us to the fact that the house in Kemet was a woman-centred zone, though not necessarily a woman-dominated one in a context of male-female antagonism. Production in the home included production of ideas and objects as well as the reproduction of culture. Home remained a key site in the intergenerational transmission of values, attitudes, behaviours and skills, particularly within the dominant ethos of caring and nurturing in this location. All of this suggests that this title was highly valued. It was included in the identification of social roles and the calculation and attribution of worth, power, authority and influence. It is instructive that this term  *nbt pr: nebet per* does not have a masculine equivalent; there was no 'master of the house' in Kemet (Allen, 1998). The absence of a masculine equivalent in a culture that placed so much emphasis upon parallel opposites signals social recognition of the uniqueness of the woman's role in the home. The term points towards women's power and female control over ritual, managerial and social functions

centred within the house, and quite likely its immediate environs. This is entirely logical, not only in the context of male/female complementarity in the cosmology of Kemet, but also in the very practical context in which the woman was the possessor of the house when the man was not physically present for prolonged periods, as he usually worked outside and often away from the home. Terminology such as 'managerial' is common in modern Western society and tends to privilege masculinity, and therefore males, and to obscure females in such roles. The  : *per* or house was the woman's domain, and an important area of society within which she was without doubt the leader.

The  : *Mut Remet,* or 'mother of the people', hints at the queen's pastoral role of looking after the collective welfare of the people, a role that is examined below.

 it: Father: In the *Medew Neter*, the script of Kemet, the word for husband is  (variation) *hi*, *hy*, *hay*; that for male is  *tjay*. Further, one of the terms which mean 'to copulate' is  rx: *rekh*, literally 'to know [a woman]' (Obenga, 1995; Faulkner, 1991) but by extension also 'to know [a man]'. Another term for 'copulate' is the Old Kingdom term  *nk* (Erman, and Grapow, 1982; Faulkner, 1991). Again, both  *nkw* (Erman and Grapow, 1982) and  *nkk* mean 'lover' and 'adulterer' (Erman and Grapow, 1982). Each of these terms is written with the male determinative or sense sign of the male sex organ:  or (Gardiner, 1988), signifying the organ itself and all that is represented by it, issues from it or is performed by it (Gardiner, 1988). While it would be obviously inaccurate to conclude that sexual activity was the *only* notion conveyed by each of these terms, it is certainly clear that it is central to the meaning of every one of them.

On the other hand, neither  , the earliest way of writing it: the word for 'father', nor  , its later form, contains this determinative or sense sign of the male sex organ. Hence, neither way of writing the word for father, nor therefore the concept of father itself, is governed by this notion of sexual activity or appears to rely upon it in any way for meaning. The word for father is significantly different from mere sexual activity and the concept it represents is qualitatively different too. The inescapable conclusion appears to be that the ancient Egyptian made a sharp distinction between sexual activity and relations that are confined to or characterized by such activity, on the one hand, and on the other, the construction of fatherhood and, by extension, that of motherhood and parenthood. Hence a basic fact that may be noted of the ancient Egyptian construction of fatherhood is that it was not limited to a mere biological progenitor. In Kemet, biology was not the only, nor by itself a sufficient, marker of

paternity. We may at this point recognize the very same for maternity and other aspects of kinship in Kemet. In this society there were many fathers, mothers, siblings and other members of the family who were not biologically determined. In fact, even when there was what in Western terms is a biological relationship, biology was not the only factor in the determination of the relationship and the estimation of its worth. All of this is consistent with a basis of society that is not located in biology, but in quality relationships of mutual rights and obligations. Being a father was something much grander than being a mere agent, one of two parties, in biological reproduction. The latter produced only the corporeal or physical basis, the material platform upon which spirit, name, morality and other vital forces, roles and non-material aspects of the person were erected, transmitted, inherited and nurtured into maturity. In Kemet the sexual act was understood as the beginning of a process of nurturing the resulting human being into a socially valuable product. The evidence from recent and emerging studies which approach Africa on its own cultural terms suggest continuity in the construction of fatherhood in the African world. To take but one example, Oyěwùmí found that, among the Yoruba in Nigeria, the tradition was that 'fatherhood did not depend upon being the biological father' (Oyěwùmí, 1997).

Children and childhood

An individual who was not yet an adult, or an adult who was not yet married, was regarded as incomplete in fundamental ways. In the *Medew Netjer* the terms for child and childhood, biologically male or female, singular and plural, are governed by  , a gender neutral sign (Gardiner, 1988). Biologically male and female children occupy a single non-specific gender category. They are therefore socially nebulous until status transformation through initiation. The ascription of gender occurred simultaneously with the attainment of adulthood. Both were signalled by the ritual of circumcision, which is part of the process of initiation. Circumcision was a hugely symbolic ritual of negligible anatomical impact. It removed something male from the female and something female from the male. In each case it transformed an androgynous child into a female or male adult with gender specific roles that were often both interchangeable and defining, so that a person of either sex may have become a specific gender for the duration of his or her performance of a particular role.

Siblings

The terms  *sen* and *senet* are normally translated as 'brother' and 'sister.' Again, this usage does not indicate *only* a biological or blood relationship. The meanings of these terms were much wider. All of the children in the same household were siblings, just as all adults were parents in that they all performed the roles of parents, though it was usually one's biological parents who took the lead in these roles. Concepts such as 'step' or 'half' relatives are alien to this model of the family. In addition, there were also ritual siblings belonging to the same age set or age group. These were acquired through sharing the same circumcision ceremony and initiation process and promoted lateral integration of the society. Egyptians did not possess terms for cousin, uncle, aunt or niece. Cousins were children of the same (consanguineous or extended) family; therefore, they were sisters and brothers. Each of these other relationships was designated by way of a combination of terms for other primary relationships, such as 'brother of my father' (paternal uncle in European conception), 'sister of my mother' (maternal aunt), 'my spouse, daughter of her mother …' followed by the name of her mother (wife). These terms are very accurate and affectionate. Further, they also unerringly locate these relations within the family. These very linguistic structures, as well as the texture and ethos of the sociological and psychological context they communicate, are evident in contemporary African society but alien to the European tradition of the family (Allen, 1998; Obenga, 1995; Diop, 1989). The pre-eminent African scholar, Joseph Ki-Zerbo, in speaking for the entire African experience, notes that 'the meaning of the word "son" is sometimes sociological rather than biological' (Ki-Zerbo, 1981). It was the same with the terms for every other family relationship.

The unborn

The idea of the unborn does not appear to have been either fully worked out or clearly integrated into the standard concept of the family in Kemet. The bodies of babies who were stillborn or who died shortly after birth were placed in clay vessels, baskets, boxes, chests and other containers converted from other purposes, sometimes in proper coffins, sometimes two or three bodies in a single container, and interred near the house, under the floor or, if possible, in the grave of the mother (Szpakowska, 2008; Watterson, 1991). It is almost certain that these babies were not accorded full burials because they were not considered

full persons. The key consideration in this latter status, or indeed lack of status, is that each died before they received a name (Tyldesley, 1995). This is where the cosmology of Kemet and Africa clarifies our understanding of a situation that confronts the observer on the ground. In African thought, ancient as well as modern, beings and things come into existence only when they are named. This is part of the significance of a name in African tradition from ancient times. Physical or biological birth is distinguished from social birth or rebirth. This emphasizes the distinction between the biology inherited from nature and the beginning of the process of humanizing that biology to produce humanity.

The social structure of Kemet

It is not at all incidental that the family structure is the model for the social structure in Kemet. The family is the first location of the humanization of humanity. The social structure is in part an attempt to replicate and extend humanization outwards from the family to all levels of society. It was an attempt to expand human goodness to everyone. The social structure of Kemet was made up of a number of distinct groups that arose from social differentiation and positioning, which in turn represented real and significant differences based on varying access to critical resources such as education and training, power, authority, social value and influence, work and economic accumulation. Each group was a somewhat separate structure peculiar to itself. But it was not completely separate or independent of the larger society in which it was located and with which it shared basic values, rituals, ceremonies, beliefs and culture in general. Some of these groups that made up the social structure of Kemet are examined below.

Farmers

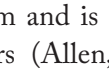
In every society the sustenance and survival of everyone depends upon food production. Food producers therefore constitute an important group in society. In Kemet food production was derived mainly from farming, including cattle farming, though hunting and fishing were also significant activities for acquiring food. The development of drainage and irrigation was stimulated in part by the needs of the farming industry and in turn provided an important stimulus for the rise of political organization, the state and a highly advanced culture in general. The increased efficiency that resulted in the farming industry

released people from the daily tedium of food acquisition and production to specialize in other occupations. Occupational specialization was a significant factor in economic accumulation and social stratification. Farmers, distinct from landowners, were by far the majority of the people of Kemet. They were also the poorest in economic terms and the least dynamic group in the social structure.

Artisans and crafts people

Artisans and people of various crafts may be described as skilled workers, most of whom in Kesmet were male. This category would include stoneworkers, potters, masons, metalworkers, jewellers, goldsmiths, sculptors, scribes (including outline scribes), surveyors, architects and engineers. They were distinguished from others by their possession of a skill or a set of skills that enabled them to specialize in an occupation affording greater returns, and greater leisure time, than most of the population, though they were far from being the elite. Within this group there was significant economic and probably social differentiation, as can be seen in the hierarchical organization of their various occupations. Large urban workshops or craft centres were usually led and directed by master sculptors, master masons, and others who were usually the best at their craft or trade and, not coincidentally, the most professionally accomplished, as well as recognized and rewarded in other ways. For large building projects, such as temples and pyramids, workers were usually organized in teams that were led by foremen and supervisors whose ranks were often hereditary.

The Pharaoh

The etymology of the term  *'Ity* (variation ), *Ity*, the word for sovereign, is derived from and is an extension of  *It:* the word for 'father,' including forefathers (Allen, 2000; Bell, 1996; Jogunosimi, 1986). The feminization of the term produces  *Ityt:* 'queen regent' (Erman and Grapow, 1982; Faulkner, 1991), or, more precisely, 'national mother.' This indicates that '[k]ingship was based on paternal authority in the family' (Bell, 1996). This etymological relationship appears to reflect the sociological origins and development of kingship and sovereignty in Kemet. Fatherhood and ancestor veneration are the sociological bases of kingship in Kemet. This particular idea of kingship was based upon ancestor veneration, which had its

immediate origin in the exaltation of fatherhood. Thus, ultimately, fatherhood was the model upon which was built this idea of kingship, which was one of masculine labour, that is, located in the masculine division of roles but not confined to the male sex for its performance.

The imprint of the father is also evident in both the functions of the state which the sovereign headed, and the terms in which those functions were conceptualized. The functions were: 'to own, control, drive, discipline, and defend ... also to cherish, nurture, shelter and enlarge the population' (Wilson, 1977). In real terms, the Pharaoh was the spiritual, political and military head of the nation and its elite, and these were more or less the same functions as those of the benevolent father on a grand scale. The Pharaoh was the father of the nation, his wife the mother of the nation. Jacob Carruthers is therefore very discerning, as well as decidedly accurate, in translating *Ity* as 'national father' (Carruthers, 1984). This translation is corroborated by Jogunosimi's later interpretation of this office as 'the descendant of the original father of the nation' (Jogunosimi, 1986). The pattern of the king as the 'father of the nation' is repeated in later Africa. For example, in the Mali Empire, the Mansa or 'king' was the 'father' of all of his people, hence he was addressed using the formula '*M' Fa Mansa*' which translates as 'My Father, the King' (Niane, 1981). The influence of the father as the archetype ruler is further elaborated in the role of pastoral care. The Pharaoh had a duty of care to all citizens (Assmann, 1996). This is the original representation of the leader as a shepherd of his people and it is to be found at every level of leadership, from the father to the Pharaoh, a function indicated by : the shepherd's crook, which expressed the pastoral role of the king in the most elementary terms as 'a shepherd who *protected* his herds as well as cherished them' (Drake, 1987, emphasis in original). It is found in the term  *ḥḳꜣ : Heka* (Allen, 2000; Faulkner, 1991; Gardiner, 1988; Erman and Grapow, 1982), which is used to designate a ruler. It is one of the earliest insignias of the king, attested since predynastic times, before the foundation of the federal state of Kemet (Wilson, 1977).

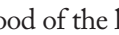
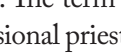
The practice of the kingship in the history of Kemet, like almost everything else, was predominantly conservative, though never static. Tradition was greatly respected; any innovation therefore tended to be gradual. Radical departures were seen only in the domain of spirituality, during the time of Akhenaten, and in the question of the biological sex of the king (though not the gender of the kingship), during the time of Hatshepsut. This first widely known example of a female king in Kemet must be conceptually separated from the relatively more frequent examples of a female regent.

The scribes

Writings from the people of Kemet raise important questions about who wrote in ancient Egypt, whether the scribes were representative of every strata of society on every issue, and the extent to which they therefore reflect the entire society in their writings. Scholars agree that this group was numerically very small, particularly in relation to modern rates of literacy. Estimates vary from 10 per cent (Allen, 2000) to between 0.3 and 1 per cent (Feucht, 1997) and 0.3 and 5 per cent, with the figure increasing as development unfolded in the land (Parkinson and Quirke, 1995).

Even though there was a remarkable degree of social cohesion and stability throughout its long history, Kemet was not an undifferentiated society. A significant increase in the wealth in circulation in the society, especially in the early Middle Kingdom, led to the rise of a middle economic and social group in the early part of that period. Still, it is necessary to remember that the elite culture, however differentiated it may have become, grew out of the culture of the mass of the population. Much of the writings on matters of ethics and morality represent the ideals of Kemet rather than the actual realities on the ground, which must have varied from those ideals; an important issue is the extent to which it did. However, there is no doubt that the people were imbued with a sense of civic responsibility which often dictated action in pursuit and fulfilment of those ideals.

The priesthood

The vocabulary of the ancient Egyptian language announces the presence of both men and women in the priesthood of the land. Here the term  : *wꜥb: wab*, literally 'the purified man', and its feminine forms of  *wꜥbt* and  : *wabet hemet*, 'the purified woman', indicate both the ordinary priests and priestesses at the very basis of the priesthood, as well as the state of ritual purification that was necessary when performing this role. The term  *hem-neter*, or 'servant of the divinity (God)', was used for a professional priest. At first the spiritual welfare of the nation was discharged mainly by a rotation of citizens working in shifts. But as the society evolved, so too did a more complex professional and administrative structure that included several specialists. From the New Kingdom onwards, the powerful post of 'God's wife of Amun', as well as that of other important divinities, was filled with high priestesses, usually women of the royal elite. The considerable economic, social and political weight of the temples and their priesthoods played a significant role in the social structure of Kemet (Nehusi, 2016).

Conclusion

Ma'at, or social order, with its implications for the establishment of truth, justice, order, righteousness, balance, harmony and reciprocity within the individual, the family and society, was the fundamental objective of the organization and functioning of the family and the greater social structure of Kemet. It was attained though the humanization of biology in the processes of socialization and education. Through this achievement, the African people of Kemet assured the tremendous expansion in the quality and quantity of human life and the enrichment of humanity.

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CHAPTER 16

THE INVENTION OF POTTERY IN AFRICA AND THE CONTEXT IN WHICH IT APPEARED

Eric Huysecom

Introduction

In the context of this work on the 'General History of Africa', it is particularly important to examine the emergence of pottery and its context. Many members of the public and decision-makers still consider that the 'African man has not sufficiently entered into history: in his imagination, where everything begins again, there is no room for human adventure or for the idea of progress' (Sarkozy, 2007). But field research carried out over several decades shows that Africa was, on the contrary, one of the cradles of this crucial invention, which was the discovery of firing shaped clay materials (Huysecom and Sanogo, 2008). We will not only review the most recent archaeological discoveries, most of which are still little known to the general public, but we shall also consider the concrete significance of mastering this art of fire, its implications, and its use on the African continent during Neolithic times.

Technical, economic and social significance of pottery

We must first examine the various definitions of 'Neolithic' within an African context, an indispensable step in putting into perspective the archaeological findings that will be discussed later.

For Europe and the Near East, the term Neolithic usually refers to sedentary societies with economies based on a system of food production. A few rare exceptions aside, the Neolithic is characterized in these regions by the adoption, in one form or another, of animal husbandry, crop farming, pottery making and sedentarization, a process which eventually led to urbanization in cereal-based societies (Guilaine, 2015).

By contrast, the process of 'Neolithization' in Africa is unclear. It varies from region to region – even among human groups – and the uneven quality of research has not facilitated matters. There are two conflicting schools of thought, one prioritizing material culture and the other a set of economic activities (Huysecom, 2012). In the first case, the presence or absence of pottery is used to classify material assemblages discovered in Africa, prior to the advent of metallurgy, as Neolithic or not – as pottery is an excellent indicator fossil that is often well preserved due to its physical properties. This is clearly a practical solution for a typological approach to societies, and the term 'Neolithic' is then used as a shortcut without consideration of the specific economic characteristics of each of the populations studied. Although this definition is still used by many researchers working in Africa, who find it relevant from a classificatory and typological point of view, it is clear that it has now lost its validity in many cases, particularly in Europe and the Far East, where the emergence of pottery is clearly independent of a process of Neolithization (Guilaine, 2015).

In the latter case, 'Neolithic' is used only to refer to cultural groups prior to the appearance of metal for which a true production economy could be identified, according to the model of the Near East or Europe. Although this viewpoint could be considered more satisfying from a conceptual perspective, since it takes into account the economic characteristics of the societies concerned, it most often excludes Africa from the Neolithic period. In fact, organic remains such as bone fragments and cereal grains are often so poorly preserved in the iron-rich, acidic, tropical sub-Saharan soil that it is difficult, if not impossible, to find evidence of animal husbandry or agricultural practices. Moreover, Africa has developed societies with original, complementary and highly diverse economies, with evolving mechanisms that were very different from those in the regions used as benchmarks in the West or East. Even today, there are societies in Africa that produce pottery but are not sedentary nor domesticating plant or animal species and still do not fit the classic definition of 'Neolithic' (Huysecom, 1996).

The complex question of an 'African Neolithic' has been a thorny topic of debate for decades, and this chapter is not intended to back either school of thought. However, we believe it is important to emphasize that the invention of

pottery demonstrates a certain degree of human control over the environment, and that the creative shaping of clay and its firing to make containers for storing, fermenting or cooking food and liquids should probably be considered one of the first steps in the transformation of natural elements. It should be noted in particular that, before being consumed, the starches contained in collected grass or cultivated cereals must be processed so that our bodies can assimilate them through amylase, as humans do not possess the digestive enzymes necessary to break them down (Stahl, 1989). Cereals must therefore be treated by heat, whether boiled or roasted, or by fermentation. The use of ceramics thus considerably broadens the range of exploitable food resources by making it possible to consume cereals, both wild and domesticated. Mastery of pottery thus enables societies to strengthen their food security and diversify their diet. They could then practise intensive selective gathering, i.e. targeted, systematic and rational harvesting of certain edible wild plants, which, given their importance, can be considered a genuine strategy for acquiring foodstuffs (Huysecom, 2012). In a historical evolutionary process, this intensive selective gathering preceded agriculture proper, which is characterized by seed selection and ploughing. This form of 'proto-agricultural' economy can lead not only to land use changes involving more or less extensive and regular clearing, particularly by fire, thereby promoting the regrowth of plants sought for their nutritional properties, but also to a certain semi-sedentary lifestyle, with populations staying seasonally in areas conducive to gathering (see also Willcox, 2016). Thanks to pottery, humans were also able to protect their crops from predators such as insects and rodents, which was not possible with containers made of perishable organic materials.

Last but not least, we must consider another point: the invention of pottery also had repercussions on the social division of labour and knowledge, given the expertise required to identify the quality of clay and tempers and to master shaping techniques and firing parameters. If we add to this the fact that pottery is not particularly compatible with a highly mobile lifestyle, particularly due to the need for access to clay sources and the constraints associated with transporting raw clay or fragile finished pots, the regular practice of this craft must have necessarily involved a certain break with the nomadic and more opportunistic lifestyle of hunter-gatherers of the late Palaeolithic era.

Ounjougou: an emergence in a specific climatic and environmental context

As early as the 1980s, certain archaeological finds indicated the emergence of pottery in the Southern Sahara, probably in two distinct locations: around the Central Saharan massifs and in the Eastern Sahara, including the Nile Valley. Approximately thirty Carbon-14 and thermoluminescence (TL) dates situate this emergence between the end of the tenth millennium and the very early ninth millennium calBCE (Close, 1995; Jesse, 2003, 2010), coinciding with the onset of climatic improvement in the early Holocene (Nelson et al., 2002). The origin of this early African pottery – clearly linked to the repopulation of the Sahara after the arid phase of Isotope Stage 2, also known as the Ogolien – is the subject of debate. Two scenarios have been proposed. The first suggests provenance from the regions south of the Sahara (Close, 1995), but the oldest evidence did not date back further than the eighth millennium calBCE (particularly in Kenya: Robbins, 1974). The second hypothesis considers, purely speculatively, that pottery was invented by populations who survived in refuge areas of the Sahara during the hyperarid late Pleistocene (Jesse, 2003, 2010).

Ceramic sherds discovered between 1997 and 2009 in early Holocene layers at two sites in the deposit at Ounjougou made it possible to clarify the data within the context of the emergence of pottery in Africa. This deposit is situated in the Niger River loop, in Dogon country, more precisely on the Bandiagara plateau, some 15 km east of the eponymous town (Huysecom, 2014). Researchers have discovered more than 100 archaeological sites there, located in the watershed of a tributary of the Niger called the Yamé. Topographically, the area in question appears as a series of gullies carved out of a complex succession of Quaternary aeolian, alluvial and colluvial formations, with a stratigraphic sequence reaching up to 16.50 m in places (Lespez et al., 2011). The sediments contain considerable plant debris (pollen, leaves, charcoal, wood, seeds, etc.), all exceptionally well preserved. The various sites of the layer have, therefore, made it possible to link human occupation with climatic and environmental variations over a long chronological sequence.

The ceramic sherds were discovered more than 15 m deep in the early Holocene levels at Ravin de la Mouche and at Ravin du Hibou (Huysecom et al., 2004, 2009; Soriano and Huysecom, 2012). The well-documented stratigraphic context of Ravin de la Mouche (Rasse et al., 2006; Neumann et al., 2009; Lespez et al., 2008) – and several dates obtained using a combination of Carbon-14 and optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) chronological techniques – have made



Figure 1. *Ceramics from the tenth millennium BCE discovered in Mali in the stratigraphy at Ounjougou, on the Ravin du Hibou site.*
Source: APA (Archaeology and Settlement of Africa) laboratory, University of Geneva.

it possible to give the layers a *terminus ante quem* of 9400 calBCE for the oldest of the sherds. Only one shape could be reconstructed: it shows a hemispheric bowl with a straight rim and an opening diameter of 21 cm (Figure 1). Although the function of this vessel cannot be determined with absolute certainty, we can exclude the boiling of seeds in water, since the contents would inevitably have overflowed. However, it is possible that the grains were roasted or fermented in this type of bowl.

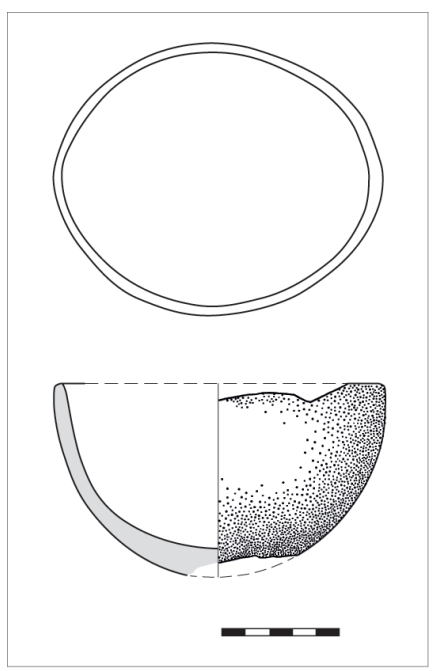
These pottery fragments are associated with a lithic industry comprising small bifacial arrowheads. Geomorphological and sedimentary analyses indicate a powerful hydrological regime that reshaped the landscape of the valley where the layer is situated. This confirms that the emergence of the typo-technical complex coincides with the onset of wetter conditions during the early Holocene. In fact, recent reports have confirmed that the monsoon front reached 14° north latitude around 9500 calBCE (DeMenocal et al., 2000; Lézine et al., 2005; Duplessy et al., 2005; Garcin et al., 2007). Palaeoenvironmental analyses indicate that the landscape was changing. Zones that had been desert for several millennia were now turning into open tropical grasslands with an abundance of available panicoid grasses (Neumann et al., 2009). The typological and technical complex evolved locally from the eighth millennium calBCE at the Ravin du Hibou with the appearance of grinding tools alongside pottery, and the abandonment of bifacial tools for geometric segments.

This discovery not only allows us to decide in favour of the scenario of the emergence of pottery in sub-Saharan Africa but also to link, as in Asia (Habu, 2004; Yasuda, 2002), the invention of clay vessels with climate oscillations during the Pleistocene–Holocene period.

Central and Eastern Sahara: an invention brought by the first populations resettling in the Sahara during the Holocene?

It is likely that this new typological and technical complex observed at Ravin de la Mouche then spread rapidly to northern regions, particularly the Central Sahara, in conjunction with the rise of the intertropical convergence zone, as the Saharan zone became increasingly green. This climate change resulted in the development of grasslands and changes in the composition of wildlife. From an archaeological point of view, if we only consider sites where pottery remains are directly associated with charcoal samples taken for dating, or where sherds are directly dated using the thermoluminescence method, we note that few of them have yielded dates earlier than 9000 calBCE (for a summary of the dates: Huysecom et al, 2009; Jesse, 2010). Two sites should be considered as close to the appearance of pottery in Ounjougou: Temet, in the western Ténéré in Niger, and Bir Kiseiba, in the Southern Egyptian Sahara, both sites having also yielded grinding equipment.

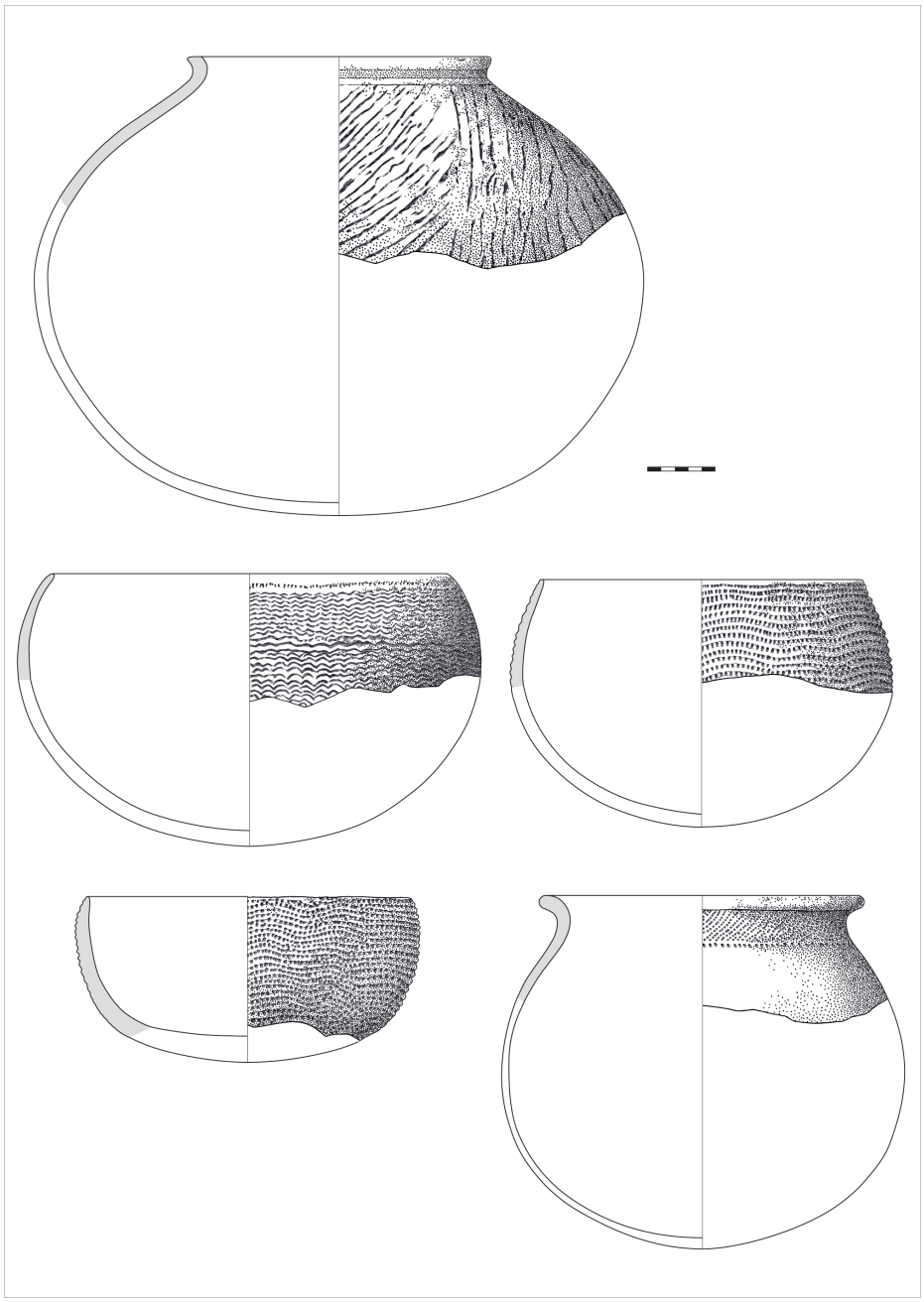
The excavation of the lacustrine deposits at Temet yielded a date indicating the contemporaneity of this site with the HA2 formation at Ravin de la Mouche, at the junction of the tenth and ninth millenna calBCE (9550 ± 100 BCE) (Roset, 1983b, 1996). Moreover, this is the only site to date that has yielded bifacial arrowheads comparable to those found in the HA1 formation at Ravin de la Mouche, indicating a clear relationship between the two sites (Soriano and Huysecom, 2012). Interestingly, Temet contains only yielded fibrolite bowls that were all fragmented, apart from one hemispheric bowl with a straight rim, slightly oval in shape, with an average



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Figure 2. *Fibrolite vase from the stratigraphic excavation conducted in 1981 by J.-P. Roset at the Temet site in Niger, dated to around 9000 calBCE.*

Source: J.-P. Roset, 1983a.



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Figure 3. *Pottery from the ninth millennium calBCE discovered by J.-P. Roset at the Tagalagal site, at the top of the Aïr Mountains in Niger. The chronology is established on the basis of Carbon-14 dating, confirmed by TL dating on the shards.*

Source: J.-P. Roset, 1983b.

diameter of 12 cm (Figure 2). Although smaller, this bowl is similar to the pottery shown above that was found in the lower level of Ravin de la Mouche and was several centuries older. The use of ceramics has been assumed at Temet, but this assertion is based solely on the discovery of a fragment of a chlorite-schist plaque with a denticulated edge. The object was interpreted as a potter's comb after the observation of impressed motifs on surface-find sherds (Roset, 1983a). The sherds cannot, however, be reliably correlated with the occupation of the site during the Early Holocene. Until proof to the contrary, the populations of Temet appear to have opted for the use of carved and polished stone and not fired clay for the fabrication of some of their containers. This is of great interest and could be interpreted as a desire to imitate or revise practices in line with an innovation from further south, as grasslands were beginning to expand to the Central Sahara.

It is equally interesting that, only a few centuries later at the onset of the ninth millennium calBCE, sites in the Central Sahara yielded pottery with diverse decorative elements and elaborate shapes, such as those from Adrar Bous 10 and Tagalagal (Roset, 1983a, 2000), demonstrating perfect mastery of shaping and decorative techniques (Figure 3).

As for the Eastern Sahara and the Nile Valley, the site E-79-8 at Bir Kiseiba yielded three sherds discovered during excavations in sandy sediments (Connor, 1984), located just below the surface of the ground, as well as at depths of 10 cm and 60 cm. In the Connor publication, the excavator indicates for the latter that: 'it is possible that the sherd might have been moved to this depth by traffic over the surface of the site' (1984). Three other sherds were nearby surface finds. The seven Carbon-14 dates obtained on charcoal samples, unfortunately, have large margins of error and therefore a wide calibration range, from the end of the eleventh millennium to the beginning of the eighth millennium calBCE (between 9820 ± 380 BCE and 8920 ± 130 BCE). Without a stratigraphic context to correlate clearly the three sherds and the dates, it is impossible to go further in the interpretation of this site in terms of dating the emergence of pottery. Nevertheless, it is clear that from the ninth millennium calBCE, pottery was well attested at several sites, including Nabta Playa E-06-1, Sarurab 2 and Wadi el Akhdar (Connor, 1984; Jórdeczka et al., 2013; Khabir, 1987; Schön, 1996). Do these early ceramics from the Nile Valley represent the next milestone in the spread of pottery-making from the Southern Sahara, or an independent centre of invention? Future discoveries will certainly tell us.

Conclusion: a turning point for Africa

The mastery of pottery-making can be considered a major invention of prehistoric 'African' societies. It enabled them to master the management of wild grasses and their consumption after cooking or fermentation at a very early stage. Current data confirm this as an invention south of the Sahara, at the latitude of the Ounjougou site, during the climatic improvement of the early Holocene (first half of the tenth millennium calBCE). The invention is clearly linked to an environmental change, as the sub-desert landscape of the previous arid episode gave way to grasslands with edible panicoid plants. From this southern area, populations moved towards the Central and Eastern Sahara around 9000 calBCE, and it is possible that some bowls were initially imitated in stone, such as those found at Temet. Shortly afterward, around the mid-ninth millennium calBCE, pottery-making was perfectly mastered in the Central and Eastern Sahara, as well as in the Nile Valley, with craftspeople producing a diversity of shapes and decorative elements, as finds from the site at Tagalagal indicate. The question of an independent invention in the Nile Valley remains unresolved at present, as the conditions of the discoveries and the quality of the Carbon-14 dating do not allow for a definitive conclusion.

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CHAPTER 17

AFRICAN METALLURGIES

Hamady Bocoum

Introduction

Research findings over the past three decades have led to an unprecedented renewal of our knowledge of African metallurgy, particularly when it comes to the controversial topic of ironworking. A review of literature on this subject now allows us to pinpoint its emergence to at least the second millennium BCE. Excavations, dating and advanced metallurgical analysis show that Africa's heritage regarding the creation of technical installations and the processing of iron is exceptionally original and rich.

The swift and methodical spread of iron, which is present virtually everywhere in sub-Saharan Africa in the first half of the first millennium BCE, as well as adaptations in technical operating methods to suit varied geological and ecological contexts, made it possible for technical integration that promoted sustainable development of the continent. The advent of indirect ore reduction marked a technological disconnect in Africa with countless consequences.

As archaeological data is the best source for the writing of history, we shall attempt to show how it has helped gather the information necessary to rewrite the history of African metallurgy, especially the ironworking field, given that for non-ferrous metals, very little has changed and the stakes are significantly lower for the general history of Africa.

Why so much controversy surrounding the history of metallurgy?

The intensity of controversy surrounding this issue is linked to the crucial role played by metals, and ferrous metals in particular, in the development of our civilizations. From its emergence to the introduction of indirect reduction, which foreshadowed the industrial revolution, mankind everywhere has made remarkable progress in all fields. It is therefore a weighty 'civilizational' marker (Bocoum, 2002). In a recent publication, Killick (2015, p. 311) thought he found the answer to the issues surrounding the independent invention of African ironworking supported by Afrocentrists. This means that the differences are not likely to disappear soon as, despite the weight of archaeological evidence, the ideological obstinacy of theorists about a sleepy and complex-ridden Africa remains strong.

There has always been disagreement about the origins of iron metallurgy in Africa, with some arguing that there was a single centre of invention and that it spread more or less rapidly depending on the context, while others leaned towards the possible existence of several centres of invention. In this summary, we will briefly present existing theories and review the latest research findings to show why the autonomy of the ironworking centre can no longer be challenged in a credible way.

Exogenous theories

These find their justifications in the overall development of archaeological research in Africa. This was marked by a powerful diffusionist movement that left little room for endogenous initiative. When it comes to the question of iron smelting, this variant of technological diffusionism assumes that there was a single centre for the invention of metallurgy, and therefore its main concern is the search for routes of transmission. Among older scholars, the author the most consistent in this opinion was Mauny (1952, 1953), who systemized his ideas in a series of particularly well-documented publications.

His basic theory is that the oldest steel industry is of Caucasian origin, and the work of the Hittites, who discovered the technique during the second millennium BCE. Through them it spread across the Mediterranean to gain a foothold in Egypt through direct contact.[1]

1 The Amarna letters addressed to Ramses II dating from 1300 BCE reported the delay of a delivery to the Pharaoh. Despite this early contact, actual technical initiation would not be truly real, according to Mauny, until the seventh century BC following the invasion of Ashurbanipal.

For West Africa, the author rules out any transmission via Egypt, suggesting that it was introduced indirectly by the Phoenicians. Contact would have taken place in North Africa, with the Berbers gradually introducing it to West Africa towards the end of the sixth century BCE.[2]

An alternative to this theory, supported by other researchers, is based on the assumption that the production of iron requires a mastery of high temperatures. It establishes a causal relationship between the knowledge of copper metallurgy and the existence of technical potential that could lead to the otherwise more complex invention of iron and steel (Killick, 1987, 1992).

Alongside these approaches, another has emerged which challenges the measures put forward by Grébénart (1983, 1985, 1988).[3] More generally, there is a tendency to contend Carbon-14 dating in arid areas where potential carbonization of old timbers can indicate a considerable gap between the use of the coal and the death of the plant used to produce it. More recently, the same process has been used to contest dates obtained at Oboui (Zangato, 2007; Zangato and Holl, 2010). Authors are criticized for having dated a site with hugely disturbed stratigraphy (Clist, 2012) or for presenting remarkably well-preserved items in a tropical context (Killick, 2015). Once again, the archaeological evidence has been completely ignored and assumptions turned into determined arguments.

However, there is not much variation in the elaboration of these theories. In fact, even if all modern work excludes the idea of West Africa's initiation from the Nile Valley – Meroe, like Carthage, is technically and chronologically disqualified as an explanation for the introduction of iron to Africa – theories in favour of trans-Saharan transmission remain in place.[4]

Theories about the indigenous origins of the African steel industry

Theories in favour of the indigenous origins of the African steel industry go back a lot further than imagined and have been endorsed by a number of authors since the end of the nineteenth century. As Diop noted (1973) they

2 Mauny, 1952, argues that the Blacks were Berber slaves in the third century BCE, and that the Berbers initiated them in ironworking techniques: a fine example of diachronic projection and diffusionist conviction.

3 It is true that this author was sometimes mistaken regarding identification of the vestiges of furnaces. More specifically, he mistook charred tree stumps for furnace remains.

4 Alternative routes have been suggested from the Punic city of Carthage (Tunisia) and the Gulf of Syrte (Libya).

include Maspero (1891), Mortillet (1903), Von Luschen (1909), Reinach (1913) and Pedrals (1950), to name but a few. These ideas, developed well before archaeological discoveries, were based on empirical findings that indicated significant differences between African and European iron smelting traditions.[5]

It was Diop (1973, 1976) who best systematized this hypothesis. This author challenged the positions taken by Mauny (1952), which were inspired by Leclant (1938). In his first publication, Diop (1973) argued that iron smelting was an African invention that dated back to the Old Kingdom (2700 BC). To support his theory, he cited several discoveries made in Egypt, the implications of which have not yet been realized in their entirety. He also lays the foundation for a scientific approach to the problem of the invention of iron in Africa by showing that samples of soft iron found in various Egyptian monuments could not, under any circumstances, be the by-products of gold or copper working. This idea, backed by Mauny, in the wake of Leclant, was contrary to chemico-physical laws governing oxidation reduction mechanisms.

A second publication (Diop, 1976), following the dating of the Termit site (Niger), paved the way for a more open theory claiming that Egypt was no longer a compulsory point of passage but rather a link in a chain originating from sub-Saharan Africa.[6] With caution in mind, Diop advocated the use of thermoluminescence to date some installations from that time.[7]

Recent work has confirmed the age of African metallurgy. Findings by D. Grénénart (1983, 1985, 1988), although widely contested, (Killick et al., 1988, Killick, 2015) have now been corroborated by independent research (Bocoum, 2002; de Barros, 2006; de Maret, 2002; Deme, 2002; Deme and McIntosh, 2006; Essomba, 2002; Holl, 2009; MacEachern, 1996; Okafor, 2002; Paris et al., 1994; Quechon, 1995, 2002; Zangato, 2007, Zangato and Holl, 2010) covering the entire continent, where iron was found present almost everywhere in the first millennium before our era.

West Africa is no longer an isolated case, as older or at least equivalent data was found in Central Africa at the Oboui site. Zangato (2007) has revealed significant metallurgy, with the oldest items dated with great precision to

5 As these authors cannot be accused of being Afrocentrists, recurrent criticisms implying 'inferiority complexes' and 'Afrocentrism' of those defending the independence of African ironworking reflect the survival of a Eurocentrism under the guise of 'archaeoscientology', meaning summoning science to focus more on ideology. This course of action is no longer acceptable.

6 Quéchon, 2002, substantiates Diop, 1976 and adds new developments that endorse the seniority of metallurgy in the Niger.

7 Diop, 1976; Killick 2015, p. 311 reiterates the same proposal.

between 2400 and 800 BCE (Saliège, 2007, pp. 131-135). The main outcome of recent Carbon-14 dating measures is to render all diffusionist theories inoperative and literally severed from their chronological foundations. The consequences are significant for the history of African metallurgy.

Significance and scope of recent copper and iron archaeological data

In the study of technical facts there are several levels of analysis: technical facts *stricto sensu,* and the wider spectrum of potential applications/ interpretations whether chronological, historical, economic, cultural or political, and so on. Research on the appearance of copper and its links to iron has developed considerably over the past few years. In sub-Saharan Africa several regions have delivered findings relating to ancient copper metallurgy works. This is specifically the case for the Agadez region (Niger), where a Copper Age straddling the second and third millennium has been formally identified, and for the Akjoujt region (Mauritania), where major copper works dating back to the seventh century BCE are indicated, and the Middle Senegal valley, where copper furniture, perhaps from the Akjout region, has been found.

Although the available data from Akjoujt do not seem to pose any major problems, data from Niger, on the other hand, has been subject to much skepticism. Indeed, Copper I, identified by D. Grébénart (1983, 1985, 1988) at Afunfun 175, gave rise to much controversy. The author clearly made a serious error in interpreting tree stumps (burned while standing) as furnace bases, and the vitrification of the soil after these fire incidents, as slag (waste product of iron industry). This confusion naturally had historical and technological implications that continue to fuel the debate on the origin of metallurgy in Africa (D. Killick et al., 1988).

The only structure comparable to a real furnace with dating in line with Copper I is furnace 8, with a radiocarbon date of 1710 ± 110 BCE (GIF-5172), recalibrated at 2450-1750 BCE according to revised data (D. Killick et al., 1988, p. 381). However, this has been viewed with suspicion because, according to the proponents, the furnace could have operated using fossil coal that was clearly older than the real age of the forge. On the other hand, Copper II – which also corresponds to the Iron Age – is well established during the first millennium BCE.

Nowadays, research from other sites with a better understanding of the chrono-stratigraphic context allows Grébenart's work to be placed in its true cultural context (Table 1). The dating of Termit (Diop, 1976) is now supported

by the Do Dimmi series (between 1010 BCE and 35 CE). According to F. Paris et al. (1992, p. 59) 'The appearance of the first metal objects (iron and copper) was before 1350 BCE within a still largely Terenian context as they were found on a site used by artisans specialized in the manufacture of small scrapers'. As validation of this lower marker, it should be noted that Termit west 9 provided two measurements between 1395 and 820 BCE in revised data (F. Paris et al., 1992, p. 58). In the same area, at Egaro to be precise, two measurements on pottery found with iron items produced dates between 2520 and 1675 BCE in revised data (Paris et al., 1992, p. 58). One measurement even delivered a date of 4000 ± 110 BP, which is to say between 2900 and 2300 BCE.

Remaining in the Niger, in the Azawagh region, the In Tékébrin site yielded copper objects dated at between 2531 and 1675 BCE, and the dating of three different kinds of objects (burnt bones, coal and pottery) found very close to one another removes any question of the reliability of dates with respect to the site.

When it comes to iron, data from Oboui further strengthens the chronological foundation for the autonomy of the African iron and steel industry and shows that we must remain cautious when pinpointing one or more smelting locations. The Oboui series is, to date, one of the oldest and most consistent iron-associated sites in Africa and in the world.

It is clear from the above that from a strictly chronological point of view, any conclusion in favour of the introduction of forging/smelting in sub-Saharan Africa from North Africa or the Nile Valley is rejected on the basis of the earlier existence of African sites compared to their supposed sources. Questions raised by research suddenly shifted to another level. How could this have happened? Is the data reliable? Was the cultural environment conducive to this? There are so many hypothetical and speculative questions that cannot be avoided.

Pyrotechnical culture: the input of experimental science

However challenging it may be, the issue of the autonomy of African iron and steel ironworking can be boiled down to one key question. Given that redox processes are governed by universal principles, did African metallurgists have the technical arsenal to access them? A review of oxidation-reduction principles by Fluzin (1983, 2002, 2007) clearly indicates that the temperature reached in furnaces and the composition of ores are fundamental to the development of extractive metallurgy. Of all the elements involved in the reduction of iron oxides, the most important factor is temperature, as this determines the physical

Table 1. *The most ancient metallurgical sites in sub-Saharan Africa*

Region	Site	Date
Niger (Termit Massif)	Do Dimmi	2925 ± 120 (1302–986 BCE) 2630 ± 120 (911–577 BCE)
	Gara Tchia Bo 48 E	3260 ± 100 (1666–1450 BCE)
	Gara Tchia B 48 W	3265 ± 100 (1672–1456 BCE)
	Tchire Ouma 146	3230 ± 170 (1718–1302 BCE)
	Termit West 95-b	3100 ± 100 (1466–1218 BCE)
	Termit West 8-b	2880 ± 120 (1254–940 BCE)
	Tchi Gguinbe	2950 ± 100 (1309–1031 BCE)
Nigeria (Nsukka region, Nok culture)	Opi	2305 ± 90 (530–246 BCE) 2170 ± 80 (337–115 BCE) 2080 ± 90 (254–6 BCE)
	Lejja	1715 ± 35 (370–266 BCE) 2370 ± 40 (520–410 BCE) 4005 ± 40 (2571–2491 BCE)
Cameroon (Mandara Mountains)	Ghwe Kiva Level 24	2639 ± 160 (556–984 BCE)
	Doulo Igzawa I 6	2500 ± 60 (519–741 BCE)
Cameroon (Southern)	Olinga	2820 ± 70 (1096–910 BCE) 2380 ± 110 (700–370 BCE) 1954 ± 250 (272–324 CE) 1860 ± 70 (75–229 CE)
Gabon	Otoumbi 2	2640 ± 120 (883–691 BCE) 2400 ± 50 (690–432 BCE)
Senegal Valley	Walalde	(800 to 550 BCE)
Central African Republic	Gbabiri	Between 893-788 BCE and 906-675 BCE
	Oboui	*c.* 2200–1965 BCE Forge (2343–2058 BCE to 2135-1921 BCE)
North Togo	Dekpassanwara	Depot prior to Iron Age (800–400 BCE) Depot from Iron Age (1300–1600 CE) Intermediary depot (400 BCE to 100)
Burkina Faso	Toro-Sira-Tomo 1	501–386 calBCE (1-Sigma) or 761–212 calBCE (2 Sigma)
	Bena (in Bwamu)	Between 700 and 300 BCE

Source: Augustin F. C. Holl.

state of the metal and makes it possible, on a technological level, to separate the direct process from the indirect process and determine whether the temperature reached is lower or higher than the melting point of iron.

The direct process, which is the origin of metallurgy, is a solid phase reduction process that occurs at high temperatures of 1,200 ºC to over 1,400 ºC. Under the effect of heat and carbon, the metal separates from its ore gangue to form slag and a mixture of iron and impurities which, following a heat-induced refining process, produces a useable product.[8] It is, in short, a solid reduction phase that does not require the metal to be melted to liquid form. On the basis of these considerations, the problem with the autonomy of African smelting focuses on the possibility that African metallurgists had to attain the high temperatures required for iron production. Bearing this in mind, some authors think that pyrotechnical experience gained in the practice of copper smelting is a compulsory step prior to understanding the more complex practice of iron smelting; an assertion that is certainly contentious. As a matter of fact, in the case of the Niger, where we have a fairly rich database, it is inappropriate to argue that a long apprenticeship is required to progress from copper smelting to more complex iron smelting processes. Access to high temperatures is part of the rationale of copper production, as experimental research affirms. According to D. Killick et al. (1988), slag produced during copper smelting at Afunfun indicate temperature levels between 1350 °C and 1450 °C. In this respect, the chronological proximity between iron and copper production is not an unreasonable argument for the knowledge of redox methods used in iron working.

Fossil coal and the chronology of the Iron Age in Africa

The possible use of fossil coal in the Niger at the Afunfun 175 metallurgical station was suggested by D. Killick et al. (1988, pp. 390-391) to explain the unusual nature of furnace 8 (1710 ± 50 BCE / 2450-1750 BCE) in comparison with other structures at Afunfun 175. In this respect Grébénart was clearly mistaken in associating burnt-out tree stumps with furnace use. That's why Killick (1988) suggested that charcoal obtained from furnace 8 dated back to the episode when the trees burnt down and not when the furnace was actually

8 Conversion of magnetite (Fe_3O_4) into wüstite (FeO) happens at a temperature of 650 ºC in the curves of the cauldron. Iron oxide reduction with carbon leads to the formation of iron loop and a CO oxide, depending on the reaction; FeO + C => CO + Fe.

in operation. This controversy, which relates to one case only, is no reason to reject all the other dates obtained in the Niger. In fact, when it comes to the distribution of metallurgical sites in the Niger, the Afunfun site is not on its own. There are several locations with similar dates as we have already pointed out. Consequently, if we stick to the recurrence of facts, the basis for a statistical approach to archaeological construction, any generalization, so as not to be abusive, should accept a date of the second millennium as the beginning of metallurgy in this region (Person, 2002).

This is why the debate raised by D. Killick (1988) on the possible use of fossil coal at Afunfun, even if it reflects a crucial epistemological doubt, is not enough to justify the rejection of all Carbon-14 dating (S. K. McIntosh, 1994, p. 173) on the pretext that results were obtained in an arid zone. Jean-François Saliège, one of the top Carbon-14 dating professionals in Africa, took every precaution to analyse and compare the series made available to him following excavations at Oboui. His conclusion is clear:

> The coherence of Carbon-14 dates and their increase in number clearly responds to the key question that has tormented archaeologists basing their chronology on coal: is the latter heterogeneous? Metallurgy requires a large amount of fuel and obviously neighbouring forests provided the bulk of the charcoal. If charcoal makers were spurred by opportunism to use the residue of a fire as raw material, this source can only be negligible. When it comes to the sites that have been investigated, we would have identified that via the rise in datings (Saliège, 2007, p. 135).

The dates shown from the Oboui site (Table 2) indicate that Killick's argument relating to fossil coal is unjustified.

Table 2. *Dates from the Oboui site, St 6*

Structures	N° labo	BP age	1σ (68.3%) BCE	2σ (95.2%) BCE
St. 6a (furnace)	Pa. 2084	3675 ± 30	2133-1983	2140-1958
St. 6b (furnace)	Pa. 2095	3665 ± 30	2130-1978	2136-1955
St. 6c (furnace)	Pa. 2130	3635 ± 35	2109-1944	2132-1900
St. 6f (pit)	Pa. 2196	3790 ± 35	2286-2145	2343-2058
St. 6j (pit)	Pa. 2202	3695 ± 40	2140-2028	2200-1965
St. 6d (pit)	Pa. 2223	3645 ± 35	2116-1953	2135-1921
St. 6h (furnace)	Pa. 2203	3690 ± 40	2139-2026	2198-1959

Source: Augustin F. C. Holl.

As can be seen from this data, despite the weight of evidence, some researchers find it hard to shed old assumptions; it is a kind of validity via assumption that washes away the proof, as if by magic (Killick et al., 1988; Childs and Killick, 1993; Killick, 2001, 2004, 2015; Mitchell, 2005, Clist, 2012). Fundamentally, nothing has changed when it comes to a certain perception of Africa in the world.

The current available corpus is contrary to all the variants of the Carthaginian hypothesis set out in a publication by Miller and Van Der Merwe (1994, pp. 8-9) suggesting two potential transmissions: the Gulf of Syrte (present-day Libya) via Gao to the Niger or Morocco to Timbuktu. These theories are not based on any archaeological evidence. In this respect they are no different from those of Mauny (1952), who noted that during the Punic world there were no iron ore reduction workshops; finished objects were found in tombs dating back to the sixth century BCE. The reality is that when it comes to the period concerned 'not a single furnace or metallurgical installation was found in Carthaginian sites' (Holl, 1985, p. 143).

African metallurgy is therefore becoming better known and researched. Its autonomy can no longer be challenged, and one must accept that it was invented, perhaps in several locations, and that numerous technical processes were successfully used, notably with regard to the architecture and operation of technical facilities aimed at iron ore reduction, refining and forging (Figures 1 and 2). Natural induction is definitely one of the most spectacular innovations;[9] but iron production in a furnace made from banana tree trunks is another twist that must have made the experimenters' heads spin.[10]

As a result of the above, it is now accepted that African metallurgists independently arrived at an understanding of redox processes. This adventure did not go entirely smoothly. Holl (2009, p. 431), having reflected long and hard on the process of innovation and inventions, suggested that we interpret some technical installations – such as those documented in the Niger – as being the result of genuine experimentation prior to the development of optimized facilities.

9 E. Huysecom and Agustoni B Inagina's *l'Ultime maison du fer* is a gripping film that perfectly illustrates this technical mastery.

10 Celis (1991) presented a furnace built from banana tree trunks. This deserves to be noted because it can be considered a heresy by experimenters, myself included. This testimony means that a whole swathe of our convictions, even more than we dare admit, are squashed under the weight of the evidence. He reminds us in a most pertinent way that the African pyrotechnical industry is far more complex and refined than it seems.



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Figure 1. *Reduction furnace of the Toungare workshop in Burkina Faso.*



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Figure 2. *Views of the refining furnace of the Toungare workshop in Burkina Faso; to the right, a stone anvil, and between the anvil and the furnace there is an area for spreading waste materials from hot loop-shaping activities.*

Cultural context and issues surrounding invention and innovation

Research into the emergence of an innovation and the archaeological visibility of the latter (whether abrupt or gradual) leads to two theories. Thus, cases where a new technique takes hold in a context that gradually adopts and perfects it, where appropriate, are seen as indicators of a progressive evolution that may eventually account for an invention. On the other hand, the sudden appearance of a technique that has already been well established is often perceived as having been borrowed from elsewhere. This version of 'technical' evolutionism seems insufficient to explain the emergence of metallurgy in Africa.[11]

Indeed, despite the difficulties inherent in the interpretation of sites, there is convincing evidence of the existence of a cultural atmosphere conducive to innovation. In the Termit region, the first metal vestiges are associated with a lithic industry that Quechon (1995, p. 309) called the Termit 'Tenerian'. This industry, which developed between 3300 and 1500 BCE, was marked by the predominance of lithic discs, bifacial cores, foliate pieces, scrapers, planers, saws, and so on. Pottery was of the Sudano-Sahelian type, at least at the beginning, because 'towards the end of the period (2000-1500 BCE), new shapes and decorative techniques appeared (bowls with curved edges highlighted with a rotating print, or thickened rims and partial geometric decor) that gradually imposed themselves until they characterized the posterior episode.'

The most interesting aspect of this culture is the growth of craft centres and the trading of lithic and even ceramic objects, which tended to structure the entire economy and have a profound impact on the culture. In this context, it is no surprise that a technical innovation proven to be efficient (the story of an earthenware pot versus an iron pot, in sum) can prevail and then spread (Holl, 2009). Observations tend to converge in this direction and point to the first metal objects appearing in a Neolithic context.

We are now trying to understand how and why, as the question of the autonomy of the iron-making centre can no longer be challenged in a credible way. Holl (2009, p. 429) discusses these two concepts and notes 'The advent of a new technology may create a new and unsuspected social demand, satisfy a pre-existing one, or even

11 Theories relating to the invention and innovation of African metallurgy have been discussed from very different perspectives by Holl (2009) and Killick (2015). This is a key debate because we need to understand how they managed to work. Independence being a given, what are the visible archaeological findings that back invention and innovation? This is an exercise that is now indispensable.

collapse if the new offer is not supported by sustained demand. In other words, any novelty has to be meaningful for any society'. It is a new research sequence that will require a shift from tautological thinking to understand past African societies' dynamics in their own endogenous terms.

Iron in the long term: origins of under-development

Despite the focus of debates on the origins of metallurgy, it would be a historical error not to consider it in the very long term, because the fate of the continent was partly tied to iron. Neither the Atlantic Slave Trade, nor colonization, would have flourished if Africa had not missed out on the steel revolution. In fact, as far as we know, Africa did not practice large-scale[12] iron production until modern times. Based on current knowledge, direct reduction was used, albeit with considerable variability in architectural options[13] and sometimes unexpected results.[14]

The introduction of the iron bar, which can be seen as a harbinger of the end of African iron and steel autonomy, is therefore a significant turning point. This evolution, even if played out outside the continent, was of considerable significance because it led to the transfer of strategic moments in the technical chain of direct reduction, which would gradually place artisans, and soon the entire production apparatus, in a state of chronic technological dependence.[15]

With the arrival of iron bars, the African iron industry encountered, for the first time, a fundamental break in the technical iron production chain – indirect reduction.[16]

12 Input by Professor Pierre de Maret, under the playful heading of 'Savoir fer' in Bocoum, 2002, undoubtedly opens up a hitherto unsuspected field of research. This is nothing less than the voluntary production of cast iron and its conversion into steel by Luba blacksmiths.

13 Celis's (1991) *African Iron Foundries* demonstrates the extent of African mastery of iron ore reduction techniques. Whether using natural or artificial induction, African metallurgists developed highly sophisticated systems that are surprisingly ingenious. Who would have thought of a furnace constructed from banana tree trunks?

14 Maret's above-mentioned contribution (2002) demonstrates that the voluntary production of steel was widely proven among the Luba. Consequently, given the embryonic state of research on the continent, especially in the field of metallurgy, the discovery of processes that are still unknown or not yet identified on the continent is a possibility that must be taken into account.

15 The globalization of the economy and the discovery of America have made Europe the most dynamic economic and technological centre in the world. This development was made possible in part by the affirmation of modern States on this continent and the economic and social management of technical innovations that would lay the foundations of sustainable and hegemonic development. Benoit et al. (1998) demonstrated just how much advances in steelmaking have contributed to the rebirth of Europe.

16 In our opinion, Samori Touré is one of the few African leaders to have clearly identified the reasons for the dependence of African armies in the field of iron production, steel processing and advanced firearms. By focusing on iron production in his empire, making workshops more specialized in the production of a variety of entrants and by initiating a real industrial spying network (Bocoum, 2000) he proved that he totally understood the grounds for harm; but it was already too late.

This, together with continuous flow blast furnaces, and the possibility of melting iron to liquid form, and hence the potential of numerous other applications, allowed European ironworking to gain the upper hand over the African ironworking industry, inexorably invading a space that had up until that point been totally autonomous. Direct reduction, which was only practiced on a large scale by Africans, was therefore looked down upon, triggering a sudden process of technological dependence with an ever-tightening grip.

In the history of the steel industry, the advent of indirect reduction is a significant milestone in the sense that all technological systems that did not adopt it found themselves in a technological cul de sac and, despite the ingenuity and performance sometimes achieved, it was impossible to implement processes capable of competing with the successful advances brought about by indirect reduction.

With the establishment of the Atlantic Slave trade, economies were shattered. Thus, as slave trade items, particularly the iron bar, penetrated the continent, production zones dwindled with the exception of some isolated areas. Those involved in the slave trade became the vectors of a veritable economy of violence, necessary for the acquisition of consumer items produced by the slave economy to the detriment of local producers. This trend would continue during the colonial period and still largely does today. We are therefore, perhaps, at the origins of underdevelopment, with the corollary of the supremacy of consumers over producers, and all the consequences that entails. It is therefore essential to continue research on metallurgy from a global and long-term perspective.

On balance

In the archaeological study of technical facts and cultural traits, the quest for chronological coherence based on archaeological evidence is an inevitable exercise. Conclusions can now be drawn and hypotheses opened. The autonomy of African ironworking is obvious in the light of available data. None of the transit routes (North Africa or Meroe) can be considered, as they are significantly more recent than those found in Africa, in the west, centre and Great Lakes region. Sometimes a millennium separates these sites from those originally proposed as the initiators of metallurgy in sub-Saharan Africa. North Africa, and the Punic world in general, can no longer be considered as an initiating centre for sub-Saharan Africa, as the periphery is much older than the supposed centre. Similarly, given that Meroe could not have had any influence on the development of ironworking in West Africa, the most

credible theory is the existence of an autonomous source of metallurgical invention in the Niger and/or the Central African Republic, which may also be the result of a convergence phenomenon.

Based on current knowledge, Niger presents the most coherent architecture in terms of pyrotechnic culture, but the dates obtained at Oboui (Central African Republic) show that the question is still open and further developments are possible. There is a very close chronological proximity between iron and copper, which means that the 'commonly' accepted technical connection between copper and iron must be relativized. Both processes could have been discovered at relatively similar times. As for Oboui, we have very ancient iron without any presence of copper.

Apart from the chronological question, which is of limited interest, the study of the economic, social and political consequences of metallurgy constitutes a vast field of investigation, given the archaeological visibility of Iron Age societies. The period of contact which gave rise to the slave trade, and later on to colonization, coincides with a significant turning point in the history of the iron and steel industry. In fact, following China's lead, Europe adopted indirect reduction with blast furnaces operating in continuous flow, enabling iron to be smelted and paving the way for multiple applications.

By missing out on this innovation, Africa lost its technical initiative and suffered the 'iron bar' that played an important role in the slave trade economy. Given that one of the main consequences of the triumph of the iron bar was the victory of the consumer over the producer, is it legitimate to ask whether contemporary Africa has transcended this development handicap? If the answer is no, then we may have a part of the equation to solve in order to promote the emergence of the continent.

The general history of African metallurgy, which spans more than 4,000 years, is still largely to be written. Indeed, its turbulent chronology aside, it is essential to understanding our societies, revisiting the history of our mindsets and capitalizing on lessons that will be useful in developing and implementing a renewed perspective of the continent's progress.

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CHAPTER 18

THE EMERGENCE OF COMPLEX SOCIETIES AND URBANIZATION IN AFRICA

Graham Connah

Introduction

Any discussion of the topic of 'social complexity' has the problem of definitions, due to numerous attempts in the past that are now of doubtful value. Words such as 'civilization', 'city', 'urban', 'complexity', 'state', 'kingdom', and 'empire' have historical associations that often create confusion. Over many years an extensive anthropological and sociological literature has developed on these topics, usually theoretical and sometimes esoteric. Material evidence accessed by archaeologists, and documentation or oral traditions investigated by historians have been given less attention. A simpler, more direct approach is surely justified.

A major difficulty has been the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Eurocentric idea of 'civilization': a notion of 'us' and 'them', of a world consisting of human societies in which some were 'advanced' and others were not. In many ways this was a product of rapidly accelerating science and technology in Europe, so that the achievements of ancient societies such as those of Assyria, China, or Greece were admired, but those of Africa were ignored. It was widely thought that nothing had happened in the later African past, and that the settlements in the continent consisted of only villages. Even Pharaonic Egypt was long regarded as a secondary development resulting from Mesopotamian and related influence, and its African origins overlooked. This situation resulted mainly from lack of knowledge; until the middle of the twentieth century there was little or no research on the last few millennia in Africa.

However, things have now changed. The rapidly increasing amount of information about Africa's later past, in spite of some yawning gaps, enables us to address some basic questions about African social complexity. First, it should be noted that the twelfth edition of the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (2011) gives a primary definition of the word 'complex' as 'consisting of many different and connected parts'. In this sense numerous African societies were complex, irrespective of their size. Yet size does matter: it is the number of people in particular locations that gives rise to larger settlements and to areas of integrated political control, call them what one will. Human groups that exceed a certain size need to organize if they are to function successfully. It is human nature that some individuals will lead or control and that others will follow and do what they are told. Groups so formed will tend to occupy areas with more plentiful resources, be they food or other materials, even if such occupation is only seasonal, as with many hunter-gatherers and pastoral peoples. In the case of agriculturalists, there will be a greater need for sedentary life because of the need to plant, tend, protect and harvest crops, even though settlements might still be abandoned during part of the year or for a number of years in the case of climatic variability. In favourable circumstances some human groups will become larger and larger, as individuals are attracted by the socio-economic advantages of belonging to them, as well as by the mutual protection that they offer. Thus, although other factors also contribute, such as geography and environment, subsistence economy, technology, ideology, and external trade, the emergence of complex societies is primarily a product of changes in social organization and fluctuating population pressures. A review of the evidence for social changes in the areas of Africa is shown in Figure 1. A chronological table is provided in Figure 2.

Pharaonic Egypt

The first example of social complexity in Africa was Pharaonic Egypt, from the third millennium BCE onwards. A fertile but narrow floodplain, with a relatively dense population augmented by people retreating from a desiccating Sahara, it was the location of intergroup conflict from which emerged a single polity controlled by an absolute ruler with both secular and sacred power. Its fortunes varied over the centuries but it survived for some 3,000 years, with remarkable achievements in writing, building technology, art, trade, warfare and other fields. The basic support for these developments was an extraordinarily

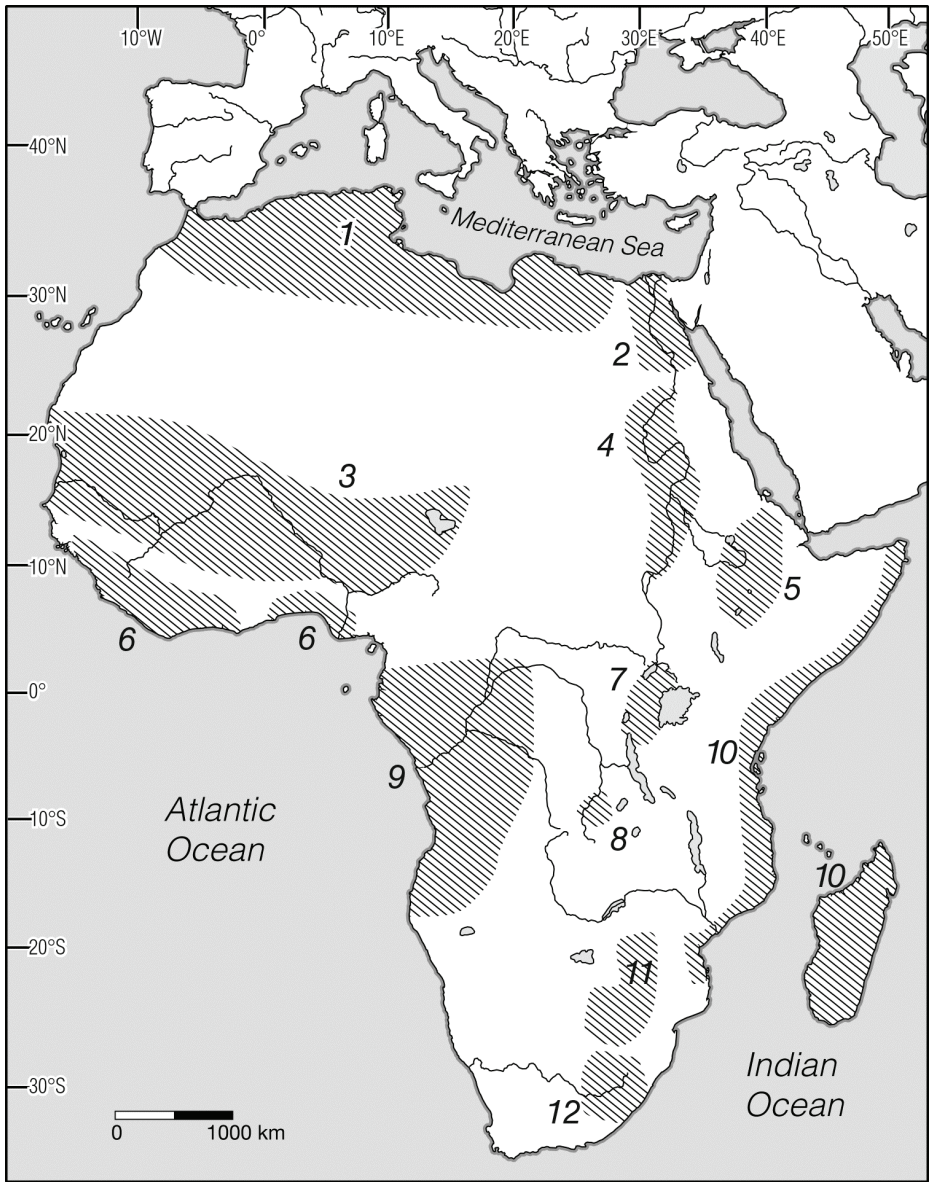


Figure 1. *Location of the areas discussed in the text. (1) North Africa (2) Lower Nile (3) West African savanna (4) Nubia (5) Ethiopian Highlands (6) West African rainforest (7) Interlacustrine Region (8) Upemba Depression (9) The Far West of Central Africa (10) East African coast and islands (11) Great Zimbabwe and related sites (12) Southern African sites.*

successful agriculture; it has been claimed that 'Cereal agriculture thrived in Egypt as nowhere else in the ancient world' (Bard, 2015, p. 53). Indeed, Egypt became a major supplier of grain to Rome. An important difference between our knowledge of social complexity and the growth of large settlements in Egypt, compared to that in most other parts of Africa, is that the dry climate preserved such a large range of informative evidence. Furthermore, during periods of political stability, Egyptian influence extended far up the Middle Nile, including the construction of forts at the Second Cataract, and contributed to socio-economic developments in Nubia to its south, although these were essentially indigenous in origin.

North Africa

Next was North Africa, an area wedged between Saharan desolation and Mediterranean abundance. Again, it was highly productive agriculture that underpinned developing social complexity and the appearance of large settlements. Substantial quantities of grain were grown in more favoured areas and olives in drier ones. Water management was highly developed and even the oases of the Fazzan in the Libyan Sahara, surrounded by desert, were able to support settlement growth and a developing polity, as at the Garamantian capital of Old Jarma. This was done by digging numerous *foggara*, underground tunnels that tapped hidden aquifers (Mattingly and Sterry, 2013). In addition, North Africa absorbed cultural influences from peoples to its north and east via the Mediterranean Sea. Immigrants from the Levant founded Carthage, a major centre dating from the beginning of the first millennium BCE and were followed in North Africa as a whole by Greek, Roman, Vandal and Arab settlers, who together with indigenous people created both complex societies and numerous large settlements. During the late first millennium BCE and the early first millennium CE, North Africa became one of the most economically successful and sophisticated parts of the Roman Empire. It was essentially part of the Mediterranean world and contact with the Sahara and to its south appears to have been limited, although there are indications of early relay trade. However, during the late first millennium CE, Arab merchants and their camels developed extensive trans-Saharan trade routes, leading to the adoption of aspects of North African culture south of the desert, including mercantile centres and the Islamic religion.

Nubia

Another example of early social complexity was in Nubia along the Middle Nile, in what is now southern Egypt and Sudan (Edwards, 2004). The large settlement and polity of Kerma had its origins before 3000 BCE, at much the same time as the emergence of Pharaonic Egypt, but was essentially a Sudanic development, in spite of Egyptian influences. It was succeeded by Napata, further up the Nile, where the Nubian pharaohs of Egypt came from in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, ruling as the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty. Next came Meroë, even further south, the centre of an extensive area of control, including both cultivation in the river valley and pastoralism on adjacent seasonal rangelands. Among other achievements, the people of Meroë developed their own writing system, although it is still not fully understood and inscriptions can only be read in part. The Meroitic polity seems to have declined in the fourth century CE and was followed by the 'X-Group', otherwise known as the 'Ballana Culture', and still later by the Christian kingdoms of Nubia, until Islamization of the area in about the fourteenth century CE. Subsequently, numerous sheikhdoms replaced central government but eventually a series of loose confederations appeared, the longest-lasting of which was the Funj Sultanate of Sennar, which survived from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth century CE. Thus, the Middle Nile had a long history of social complexity, which included large settlements and areas controlled by them – Qasr Ibrim, for instance, being occupied from perhaps as early as the second millennium BCE until the nineteenth century CE.

Ethiopian Highlands

Social complexity also emerged in the north of the Ethiopian Highlands at Aksum and related sites, perhaps originating from developments beginning in the third millennium BCE in the Gash Group of the Eritrean-Sudanese lowlands and coming into contact with the Ona Culture, as at Sembel in Eritrea, by early in the first millennium BCE. The Aksumite period continued until the late first millennium CE, when the Christian kingdom of Ethiopia emerged (Phillipson, 2012). In spite of influences from South Arabia during the first millennium BCE, Aksum, the capital of a polity of the same name, developed a distinctive literate culture based on successful cereal cultivation and numerous large and small settlements. Its technology was highly sophisticated, including unique architecture, skilled quarrying and carving of stone as seen

in its famous stelae, advanced metallurgy, the manufacture of glass, even the issue of its own coinage. Through the port of Adulis, it benefitted from the major trade route along the Red Sea connecting the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean worlds. Aksum's economic and political power declined with the growth of Islamic control of the Red Sea route in the later first millennium CE. However, the role of external trade for Aksum needs to be seen in the context of an extensive regional trading network deep in the interior of north-east Africa, which was able to tap resources of gold, ivory and other exotic commodities that were sought by international traders.

West African savannah

Developments in the West African savannah, originating in the second millennium BCE in the Dhar Tichitt-Walata area, in south-eastern Mauritania, also led to the growth of social complexity. By the late first millennium BCE, settlements in the Inland Niger Delta of Mali were increasing in number, size, and density, peaking late in the first millennium CE, after which climatic deterioration in the area became a constraint. Best known is the settlement of Jenné-jeno and related sites, supported by falling-flood cultivation of the river alluvium (including indigenous rice), fishing, and pastoralism on seasonal rangelands (McIntosh, 2005). This and other settlements also developed extensive internal trading networks within the savannah, into which North African trans-Saharan trade was integrated from late in the first millennium CE. A major factor in the growth of such internal trade was the east–west ecological zonation of West Africa, which stimulated and, indeed, necessitated the interchange of commodities between different environments. The trans-Saharan trade was able to take advantage of this situation, as it exchanged manufactured products, salt, copper and other goods for gold, ivory, slaves and kola. The socio-economic impact of this long-distance trade on West African society was fundamental, leading to the growth of large settlements such as Koumbi Saleh, Timbuktu, Kano, Birnin Gazargamo and other places, which were significantly situated in the southern margins of the Sahara or in the adjacent savannah, where they could benefit from the trans-Saharan trade. In addition, substantial polities developed, of which the old states of Ghana and Mali and those of Songhai, Borno and Hausaland are among the best known. Trans-Saharan contact also led to the wide adoption of Islam in the West African savannah, with its associated lifestyle, literacy and mercantile activities.

West African forest

The origins of social complexity in the West African forest are still uncertain but both large settlements and identifiable polities were becoming evident by late in the first millennium CE. With greater rainfall than the savannah to its north, and sustained by rotational bush-fallow cultivation of a range of plant foods, in which yams and oil-palms were major components, population increased in spite of animal protein being limited because of trypanosomiasis spread by tsetse flies. Indeed, it seems probable that the West African forest and its margins have long been one of the most densely populated parts of Africa, as they remain. Significant settlement and polity development occurred at both Ife and Benin City, both in southern Nigeria, as well as at other locations. Ife and Benin were stratified hierarchies characterized by sophisticated technologies, including building and representative art, particularly in the lost-wax casting of copper alloys. Ife was most important during the early second millennium CE, Benin slightly later, but considerable metallurgical skills of unknown origin were already evident at Igbo-Ukwu, in eastern Nigeria, by late in the first millennium CE. Like many other forest settlements, both Ife and Benin were surrounded by defensive earthworks, in the latter case part of a very extensive network that indicates extreme competition for farmland. For Benin it also suggests a process of synoecism, 'the union of several towns or villages into or under one capital city' (*Oxford English Dictionary,* 1933) by which a group of small settlements had coalesced into a much larger one (Connah, 1975). Although many forest communities had trading contacts with the savannah and even beyond the Sahara, their development of social complexity appears to have been mainly indigenous.

East African coast

In contrast to the Atlantic coast of West Africa, which was only reached by European ships in the fifteenth century CE, the East African coast had contact with the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and perhaps South Asia as early as the first century BCE. From Somalia in the north to Mozambique in the south, a narrow coastal strip became part of a trading interaction network that included the East African interior, the coastal islands, and the Indian Ocean (Kusimba, 1999). Although underpinned by cultivation, livestock and fishing, the most important part of the subsistence economy for the Swahili people of the coast was trade. Numerous trading settlements developed from the late first millennium CE to the middle of the second millennium, when the

Portuguese arrived, varying from small to large, many of the later structures built of stone. The best-known and more important included Gedi and Shanga in Kenya and Kilwa in Tanzania, with elite houses and some other buildings of stone, but many of the inhabitants lived in houses of mud and thatch. A complex trade developed, consisting of African goods such as ivory and gold for export, goods imported for trade with the interior, such as cloth and beads, prestige goods imported for use in the coastal towns, such as Islamic and Chinese ceramics, and goods produced in those towns for trade with the interior, such as cotton cloth and marine shells. The external trade brought cultural changes, with Islam adopted from the late first millennium CE along with literacy and other influences. The larger settlements appear to have constituted separate polities, some even striking their own coins, but the origins of Swahili social complexity were indigenous.

Zambezia

Zambezia includes the Zimbabwe Plateau between the Zambezi and Limpopo River valleys, with parts of South Africa and Botswana (Pikirayi, 2001). The area is free of the tsetse fly, or has less than the surrounding lowlands, and extensive grassland makes it suitable for cattle pastoralism. In addition, cereal crops are cultivated on the better soils, and gold and other metals have been an important resource. Social complexity emerged in this region beginning in the early second millennium CE. A succession of large settlements developed, between the thirteenth and nineteenth century, beginning with Mapungubwe, south of the Limpopo, followed by Great Zimbabwe, Khami and Danangombe. Each had a related polity consisting of numerous smaller settlements and was in contact with the East African coast, to which it supplied ivory, gold and other commodities. In exchange, cloth, beads and other goods augmented the wealth and power of local rulers. Easily worked granite for drystone construction led to impressive enclosures around the mud and thatch houses of elite occupants. The stone walls appear to have been status symbols for the rulers, in terms of the resources and labour expended on their construction, but they were merely the centre of substantial settlements of lesser people. The population of Great Zimbabwe might have been as high as 18,000, making it the largest settlement in Southern Africa during the first half of the second millennium CE. Significantly, trade declined in the fifteenth century, at the same time as the decline of Kilwa on the coast, perhaps because of falling demand as gold from the New World became available. Nevertheless, there was also an extensive trading network within the African interior in which Great Zimbabwe participated.

Central Africa

Understanding the emergence of social complexity in Central Africa is problematic; this is a huge area of rainforest and savannah but only small parts have been investigated archaeologically (Connah, 2016, Chapter 10). Best known is the Upemba Depression, in the south-east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with occupation from the fifth century CE to the beginning of the nineteenth, supported by cultivation, pastoralism and fishing. Burials at Sanga and other sites indicate the development of social stratification, political organization and functional specialization, the latter shown by skilful technology in iron, copper and pottery. Distinctive copper *croisettes* (little crosses) were originally ingots but subsequently became currency. These socio-political developments led, by the eighteenth century, to a polity controlled by the Luba. A second area investigated by archaeology is the Interlacustrine Region, between Lake Victoria and the Western Rift Valley lakes, particularly the part in Uganda. Researchers have sought the origins of several polities, such as Buganda and Bunyoro, where oral tradition suggests development by the middle of the second millennium CE. There is evidence that Ntusi, a large settlement in southern Uganda from the eleventh to the fifteenth century, had practised both cultivation and pastoralism, and extensive later earthworks at Bigo and other locations in the same area were probably for protecting livestock, particularly cattle. Salt production and iron smelting contributed to trade with surrounding regions but there was little contact with the East African coast, suggesting that the growth of social complexity in this region was largely indigenous. Less known is the Far West of Central Africa, particularly concerning the Kingdom of Kongo, but ironwork from burials on the island of Corisco, in Equatorial Guinea, suggests changes in social organization already in progress by early in the first millennium CE.

Southern Africa

Investigating social complexity in Southern Africa has advantages (Mitchell, 2002). First, it developed within the last five centuries, so that documentary and oral sources provide information about its progress that is often lacking in other parts of the continent. Second, the rarity of trees on the Highveld, where most developments occurred, resulted in the use of drystone construction in many settlements, facilitating archaeological study. Cattle pastoralism was important

in this area, although sorghum and pearl millet were grown, as well as maize from America after the seventeenth century. By the early nineteenth century some settlements had become so large that a visitor estimated the population of Kaditshwene as possibly 20,000 people, at a time when Cape Town, the biggest colonial settlement, held fewer than 19,000. Archaeological investigation has traced the origins of such development to the fourteenth century CE, but it was beginning in the seventeenth century that many stone-walled settlements were built, accommodating both people and cattle. By the early eighteenth century the settlement of Molokwane had an area of 4–5 sq. km. Thus, some sites on the Highveld represented major settlements, but hierarchical polities, such as those of the Zulus, only emerged during the nineteenth century. Technological skills, in mining, smelting and manufacture, resulted in functional specialization, but population pressures caused social instability, exacerbated by the introduction of maize, with a greater yield than sorghum or millet but vulnerable to droughts. Access to commodities from external trade and to the means of paying for them, as well as the increasing pressure of colonial settlement, contributed to inter-ethnic conflict, leading to violent disruption during the *Mfecane* ('the crushing'). The South African evidence shows how socio-political complexity can develop but also how it can fail.

Conclusion

The evidence for emerging social complexity in Africa suggests that it was basically changes in social organization that resulted in unusually large settlements (often called 'cities' or 'towns') and also led to regions of institutionalized control (often called 'states', but better described by the more neutral term 'polities'). Many factors contributed to such changes – including geographic location, environmental context, climatic fluctuation, subsistence economy, technological capacity, pre-existing social system, population pressures in a continent that exported slaves for over two millennia, ideology that could justify the actions of the elite, and external trade to enhance the latter's status – but complex societies and urbanization were primarily a result of the way that people came together and either chose or were obliged to organize themselves.

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CHAPTER 19

THE GROWTH OF SOCIO-POLITICAL COMPLEXITY IN THE NORTHERN HORN OF AFRICA

Matthew C. Curtis and Peter R. Schmidt

Introduction

Over a 1,500 year period, from the early first millennium BCE to the middle of the first millennium CE, the northern Horn of Africa was the setting for a complex pattern of urban, semi-urban and rural communities that expanded and contracted over time and from which one of Africa's most expansive ancient states emerged. Archaeological indicators of socio-political complexity are evident during the first millennium BCE in population density, variation in settlement types, integration of rural and proto-urban communities, intensive agriculture combined with pastoralism, ceremonial centres with monumental architecture, writing, metallurgy, prestige items, and the expansion of interregional interaction with north-eastern Africa and the southern Red Sea. This was followed by the appearance of a state polity, the rise and development of the Kingdom of Aksum (Figure 1).

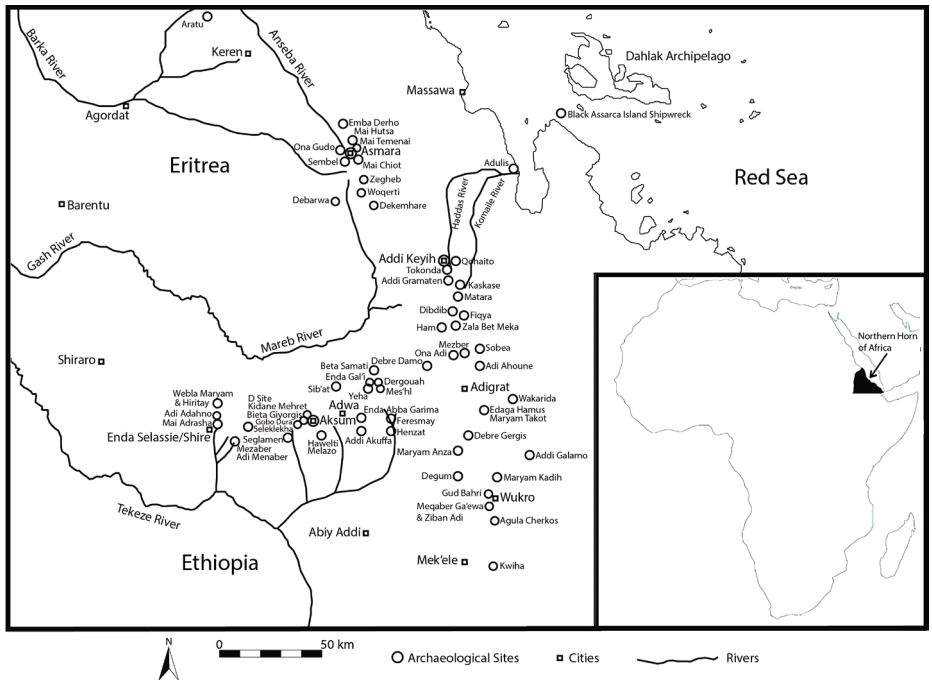


Figure 1. *Map of sites in the northern Horn, within Ethiopia and Eritrea.*

Here we provide an overview of the development of complex societies in the northern Horn of Africa, encompassing highland Tigray, Ethiopia and much of south-central Eritrea, spanning the period from *c.* 1000 BCE to *c.* CE 700. Our initial foci are key features of the earliest agropastoral village communities and monumental ceremonial centres where complex, varied forms of social organization arose during the first millennium BCE. This is followed by an outline of the origins and development of the Aksumite state polity during the early first millennium CE and its expansion into the wider Horn of Africa and southern Red Sea region. Particular attention is paid to archaeological site areas that have been the focus of systematic excavation and/or intensive archaeological survey efforts in Tigray, Ethiopia and Eritrea. When appropriate, we discuss epigraphic texts and palaeoenvironmental information.

Much of the northern Horn of Africa is comprised of highland plateaux and mountains ranging in elevation from 1,500 m to more than 4,500 m above sea level. The topography is characterized by flat-topped hills, mountain peaks, fertile steep-sided gorges and valleys, and extensive alluvial plains. These

highlands are bound by the Tekeze River Gorge to the south, the Rift Valley to the east, the Sudanese and Eritrean western lowlands to the west, and the Red Sea to the north-east. The northern Horn's position at the nexus of three major world regions – Eastern Africa, the Nile Valley, and South-West Asia – linked by major river valley systems and the Red Sea, has facilitated dynamic patterns of population movement and communication since ancient times. A diversity of physiographic zones stratified by elevation in the northern Horn provides an abundance of ecotones and an extensive range of climates, topographies, vegetation and soils separated by short horizontal distances. This landscape provides extensive areas for pasturage and highland-lowland transhumance critical for cattle and goat/sheep pastoralism. The northern Horn is also unique for climatic conditions suitable for cultivation of both African tropical and western Asian cereals and legumes. These geographic and environmental factors, combined with important socio-political, economic and ideological developments brought on by intensification of intercultural exchange, are key elements for understanding the mode and tempo of the origins and development of early complex societies in the northern Horn of Africa.

The early to middle first millennium BCE

The early-to-middle first millennium BCE (*c.* 900 BCE–300 BCE), often referred to as the 'Pre-Aksumite'[1] Period, witnessed the growth of proto-urban settlements and specialized ceremonial centres. Although archaeological research for the period is limited, diversity in site size and function suggest a complex settlement system across much of the northern Horn's highland region. During this time, proto-urban configurations appear at places such as the Asmara Plateau of central Eritrea, Matara in the Akele Guzay region of southern Eritrea, Mezber, Ona Adi, and Sobea in the Gulo-Makeda region of north-eastern Tigray, Bieta Giyorgis, Kidane Mehret, and Seglamen near Aksum, and Mai Adrasha in the Shire Plateau of north-western Tigray. Simultaneously, ceremonial/religio-political sites like Kaskase in Akele Guzai, Hawelti-Melazo near Aksum, Yeha in north-central Tigray, and Meqaber Ga'ewa and Addi Galamo in eastern Tigray developed. In addition to such

1 We follow Phillipson (2009) and avoid the use of 'Pre-Aksumite' as it is a term that is non-specific and refers to a period that came later, providing little value as a descriptor. Instead, we use first millennium BCE to refer to the early complex societies of the northern Horn traditionally labeled 'Pre-Aksumite.' See D'Andrea et al., 2023, for an argument for the continued use of the term 'Pre-Aksumite'.

proto-urban and ceremonial centres, dispersed villages, hamlets and rural homesteads developed in several highland regions, including the Asmara Plateau, Aksum, the Yeha area and Gulo-Makeda. These sedentary highland communities practised agropastoral subsistence economies, raising domesticated cattle (*Bos taurus/Bos indicus* or hybrids), sheep (*Ovis aries*), goats (*Capra hircus*) and donkeys (*Equus asinus africanus*), keeping chickens (*Gallus gallus domesticus*) and dogs (*Canis familiaris*), and cultivating the African cultivar te'f (*Eragrostis tef*) alongside South-West Asian domesticated cereal crops and legumes, such as hulled barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), emmer wheat (*Triticum dicoccum*), linseed/flax (*Linum usitatissimum*) and lentil (*Lens culinaris*) (Beldados et al., 2023; Boardman 1999, 2000; D'Andrea, 2008; D'Andrea et al., 2008b; D'Andrea et al., 2011; D'Andrea et al., 2023; Harrower et al., 2010; Meresa et al., 2024; Woldekiros and D'Andrea, 2017, 2022). While the first millennium BCE saw the incorporation of both South-West Asian C_3 plants and African C_4 plants into a complex (multispecies) plant husbandry and livestock keeping system, recent research at Mezber in Gulo Makeda suggests that components of this mixed strategy emerged as early as the mid-second millennium BCE in the northern Horn (D'Andrea et al., 2023; Ruiz-Giralt and Beldados, 2024; Ruiz-Giralt et al., 2023) and were more varied than previously known. Mezber may be representative of the subsistence traditions of highland communities across the northern Horn with its macrobotanical assemblage dominated by South-West Asian C_3 crops including emmer wheat, barley and linseed (flax), while microbotanical samples of phytoliths and starch grains from excavated grinding stones show the presence of plants belonging to the Chloridoideae and Panicoideae taxa, indicative of African domesticates such as t'ef, finger millet, sorghum, and various wild grasses, as well as collected geophyte plants (perennial plants with underground storage systems such as bulbs, corms, tubers, and rhizomes), suggesting a varied and complex subsistence system stretching back much earlier than previously recognized in the Northern Horn of Africa (Beldados et al., 2023; D'Andrea et al. 2023; Ruiz-Giralt and Beldados, 2024).

Regional surveys and excavations in a variety of physiographic settings on the Asmara Plateau in Eritrea (Curtis and Schmidt, 2008; Schmidt and Curtis, 2001, 2008; Schmidt et al., 2008b), and the Gulo Makeda (Harrower et al., 2010; Harrower and D'Andrea, 2014), Yeha (Harrower et al., 2020, 2023; Michels, 2005), and Negus/Haselo River Valley (Sernicola 2014, 2017; Sernicola and Phillipson, 2011) areas of Tigray suggest low population densities in the highlands prior to the first millennium BCE followed by a relatively rapid and dramatic demographic transformation after 900 BCE, resulting from the establishment of agropastoral

economies that had begun to form in the second half of the previous millennium. Excavations in Eritrea and Tigray have revealed a number of signatures of economies focused on intensive agropastoralism, including: (1) villages of sustained and dense occupation situated in upland areas above productive shallow stream valleys with fertile soils (Figure 2); (2) dense faunal and archaeobotanical assemblages of domesticated cattle and goat/sheep; (3) diverse archaeobotanical assemblages of cereals and pulses as well as weedy plants associated with areas of cultivation; (4) low frequencies of wild plant or animal remains in archaeobotanical and faunal assemblages; (5) high frequencies of grinding stones, particularly milling and handstones; (6) stone and occasional clay cattle figurines (particularly the bulls' heads figurines of the Asmara Plateau); (7) chipped stone lithic industries containing high frequencies of scraper and perforator forms, likely indicating intensive hide-working, accompanied by low frequencies of projectile points used in hunting; and (8) a diverse range of ceramic wares, including large storage jars, some of which were utilized for the production and storage of beer.

Interpretation of ceramic sequences and construction of ceramic typologies for the first millennium BCE northern Horn are ongoing, but extant research identifies several discernible regional ceramic traditions in the greater Asmara area and Hamasien region of Eritrea (Curtis, 2009; Mehari, 2008; Schmidt et al., 2008b; Tringali, 1965, 1981), Gulo Makeda and Eastern Tigray (D'Andrea et al., 2008a; D'Andrea et al., 2023; Harrower and D'Andrea, 2014), Central Tigray and south-central Eritrea, including the Aksum and Yeha areas (Fattovich, 1980, 2009, 2010; Michels, 2005; Phillips, 2000; Sernicola, 2008), and at Adulis on the Red Sea coast of Eritrea (Zazzaro and Manzo, 2012; Zazzaro et al., 2014). The combination of paste, surface, and decorative treatments in the first millennium BCE ceramics distinguish regional traditions and phases, yet there are a number of commonalties indicating a macro-cultural ceramic tradition in the northern highlands that may mark regional cultural integration throughout the period.

The study of regional lithic sequences is still in its infancy, but it is clear that chipped and ground stone lithic tool traditions emerged autochthonously. Although local geology seems to determine frequencies of raw material, there are some regional continuities that help define first millennium BCE lithic traditions. Unifacial chipped tool types, including a range of scraper forms, small backed blades, perforators/drills, and geometric microliths, particularly crescents and triangles characterize the assemblages, with obsidian, chert, siltstone, quartz, and basalt the most common raw materials (Curtis, 2009; Teka and Okubatsion, 2008; D'Andrea et al., 2023; L. Phillipson, 2000, 2009a, 2009b, 2011).

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Figure 2. *Walls of 1st millennium BCE buildings at the Sembel site on the Asmara Plateau, Eritrea.*

First millennium BCE communities in central and eastern Tigray utilized a diverse array of lithic raw materials, particularly obsidian, chert, siltstone and basalt for chipped stone tools, while those on the Asmara Plateau area made overwhelming use of locally available quartz. Very high frequencies of scrapers from excavations at the site of Mezber in Eastern Tigray (D'Andrea et al., 2023) and at several sites on the Asmara Plateau (Curtis 2009; Schmidt et al., 2008) suggest intensification and specialization of hide working activity during the first millennium BCE. Ground stone artefacts from Pre-Aksumite contexts at Seglamen (L. Phillipson, 2012) and Kidane Mehret D site in the Aksum area (L. Phillipson 2001, 2012), including grindstones (milling stones), topstones, handstones and other forms made from basalt, vascular basalt, sandstone, quartzite, and granitic rock, suggest evidence for processing of husked grains. Grindstones (milling stones) from excavations of domestic contexts at the first millennium BCE ancient Ona Culture sites of Mai Hutsa, Ona Gudo and Sembel, on the Asmara Plateau of Eritrea, are characterized by sub-rectangular, sub-ovate and long ovate forms – with flat, plano-convex and concavo-convex profiles – and handstones made predominantly from andesite,

sandstone and chlorite schist. These excavated assemblages and grindstones, collected in systematic site surface collections during regional surveys in the greater Asmara area (Curtis and Schmidt, 2008; Schmidt et al., 2008) indicate intensive processing of grains, and are associated with botanical evidence of linseed/flax for oil. Excavations at Mezber in the Gulo Makeda region of north-eastern Tigray provide further evidence, including microscopic residue of starch grains, for the intensive use of grindstones to process wheat, barley, t'ef and finger millet grains, from the earliest phases of first millennium BCE settlement (D'Andrea et al., 2018; D'Andrea et al., 2023; Nixon-Darcus and D'Andrea, 2017).

Continuities across the highlands of the northern Horn also exist in settlement configuration and in subsistence strategies. Intensive pedestrian surveys, and landscape and settlement analyses including hydrological modeling, spatial cluster analysis, rank-size, least-cost path, and other statistical approaches employed by regional archaeological projects (and re-analysis of previous survey work), have provided new insights into regional settlement patterns during the first millennium BCE (Curtis and Schmidt, 2008; Harrower and D'Andrea, 2014; Harrower et al., 2020, Harrower et al., 2023; Michels, 2005; Sernicola, 2008, 2017; Sernicola and Phillipson, 2011). Access to water and preserving lower-lying swales and shallow valley bottoms for agricultural use appear to have been significant in the location of villages and small towns on ridges above fertile soil areas in both Tigray and Eritrea, except for settlement locations in the Yeha area (Harrower et al., 2020). Large-scale irrigation structures are absent, and reliance on rain-fed cultivation of cereals was paramount. The absence of defensive perimeter walls or other evidence of ancient fortification, and generally non-nucleated settlement patterns, as well as a lack of monumental architecture within site areas, all suggest the growth of many communities along non-hierarchical patterns with a commitment to preserving common space (Curtis, 2009; Harrower and D'Andrea, 2014; Schmidt, 2009). Settlement pattern data for the Yeha and Gulo-Makeda areas of Tigray indicate substantial population growth and establishment of hamlets, villages and towns, characterized by clusters of smaller sites around large settlements. While the growth of a limited number of influential settlements such as Yeha, Beta Samati, Adi Ahoune and Sobea does seem indicative of site size hierarchies (Harrower et al., 2023), overall settlement patterning analysis suggests locally aggregated political organization during the first millennium BCE, with little evidence for site size hierarchies as an indicator of political change over time between the first millennium BCE and the first millennium CE. Such observations tentatively

indicate the maintenance of an egalitarian social order within evolving political complexity in some of the settlement centres of the northern Horn of Africa during much of the first millennium BCE.

On the Asmara Plateau, large settlements such as Sembel, Sembel Kushet and Mai Hutsa (all over 9 ha in area) may have been significant residential centres and the loci of large community ritual activities, as demonstrated by denser and more varied domestic architectural remains, and by the concentration of bulls' head ceremonial figurines and ashy deposits at Sembel Kushet, indicative of the repeated production of public *Meskel*-like ritual bonfires (Curtis and Schmidt, 2008; Schmidt, 2009; Schmidt et al., 2008b; Schmidt and Naty, 2008). While there is little evidence that such sites functioned as administrative centres, Sembel Kushet stands out as a central place in ritual life, possibly overseen by politico-religious authorities analogous to chiefship. Adding to the idea that some social differentiation may be apparent at the end of the Ancient Ona culture on the Asmara Plateau is the late fifth- to early fourth-century BCE burial at Mai Temenai (Libseqal, 2005). But little other evidence of socio-political hierarchy or centralization of power by elites, other than episodic expressions of ritual authority, is manifest during this period in the greater Asmara region.

Archaeological surveys of 90 sq. km of the Asmara Plateau (Curtis, 2009; Curtis and Schmidt, 2008) documented 279 sites with first millennium BCE material culture. These sites included a wide range of settlement and multiple-use sites, including small towns, large villages, small villages, hamlets, isolated individual households, lithic extraction and tool production areas, stone circles, mine areas, and multiple-use activity areas including stock enclosures, agricultural threshing and rest areas, ash dumps, and possible communal ritual areas. Ten settlement clusters are apparent on the Asmara Plateau, with a variety of configurations. Small towns figure prominently in several clusters. In other areas of the Plateau, populations are aggregated as virtually contiguous communities with small intermediate areas. In still others, we see a scattering of households and hamlets with wide spacing between villages. Large fertile and well-watered low-lying areas of the plateau landscape were devoid of permanent settlement and seemingly dedicated to agricultural production.

In the northern portion of the Asmara Plateau, the presence of gold workings seems to have stimulated some nucleation of settlement (Curtis and Schmidt, 2008). Of the fifteen small-town settlements, only six sites were over 7 ha in size. While there is little evidence that the largest villages/towns on the Asmara Plateau functioned as central political places, regional archaeological surveys elsewhere in the northern Horn, such as the Aksum/Adwa/Yeha corridor and

the Gulo Makeda area, provide evidence for both site hierarchies and more dispersed patterns of settlement during the first millennium BCE (see Harrower and D'Andrea, 2014; Harrower et al., 2020; Harrower et al., 2023; Michels, 2005; Sernicola, 2014, 2017). Archaeological surveys in the Feresmay Valley of central Tigray and in the area stretching from the Hawzien Plain to the eastern escarpment of the Tigrayan highlands (e.g. Berhe, 2011; Benoist et al., 2020; Dugast and Gajda, 2014; Hagos, 2014, 2017; Zerue and Beldados, 2017) indicate these areas too were major foci of first millennium BCE settlement.

Punctuating these settlement configurations of homesteads, hamlets, villages and small towns across the highlands of the northern Horn were occasional ceremonial centres, such as Yeha, Kaskase, Hawelti, Meqaber Ga'ewa and Addi Galamo, containing distinctive and elaborate monumental architecture, complex tombs, dedicatory inscriptions, and ceremonial objects including copper alloy openwork badges or monograms, votive altars, incense burners, and stone and ceramic sculptures with presumed South Arabian affinities and important symbolic representations commonly depicted in South Arabia, including ibex friezes and disc/crescent moon images (Bernard et al., 1991; Fattovich, 1990; Wolf and Nowotnick, 2010). Perhaps the most spectacular of such sites is the Yeha Temple complex (Anfray, 1972, 1997; Fattovich, 1972, 2009; Finneran, 2007; Gerlach, 2012; Phillipson, 1998; Robin and de Maigret, 1998). A rectangular structure measuring 18.5 x 15 m and more than 11 m in height, the building is constructed of ashlar masonry – large rectangular sandstone blocks fitted without mortar (Figure 3). The outer faces and corners of the structure's walls are finely dressed. The walls sit on a seven-stepped podium base. A carved frieze of ibexes, now incorporated into a more recent adjacent building, was likely part of the ancient temple. Denticulate plaques and South Arabian inscriptions found at the site may have also once decorated the walls. The adjacent monumental Grat Beal Gebri structure at Yeha, which likely served as an elite residence and/or administrative centre (Anfray, 1972; Gerlach, 2012), possesses a number of large monolithic pillars of massive square-sectioned form and, together with the central temple structure, form the oldest example of monumental stone architecture in sub-Saharan Africa outside of the southern Nile Valley.

Monumental architectural forms are found elsewhere in the northern Horn at sites such as Kaskase in Eritrea (Curtis and Habtemichael, 2008; Habtemichael, 2004; Dainelli and Marinelli, 1912; Littmann et al., 1913; Tringali, 1978-1979); Hawelti near Aksum (Leclant, 1959; de Contenson, 1961a, 1962, 1963; Pirenne, 1970; Schneider, 1961, 1973), and the temple site

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Figure 3. *A temple building at Yeha, Tigray, Ethiopia.*

of Meqaber Ga'ewa in south-eastern Tigray (Berhe, 2009; Wolf and Nowotnick, 2010). A large single-roomed temple with portico and tripartite sanctuary, subsidiary rooms, and courtyard, Meqaber Ga'ewa was constructed in limestone masonry set with earth mortar and situated on a flat podium erected on a low mound with a broad flight of steps. The temple held a libation altar with carved 'false windows', an offering tablet, a spout in the form of a bull's head, and a denticulated frieze with four inscribed stones. Next to this was a seated female statue similar to forms found at other ceremonial sites in Tigray, including Addi Galamo (Caquot and Drewes, 1955; Doresse, 1957) and Hawelti (de Contenson, 1963). Inscriptions of ancient South Arabian (Ethio-Sabaic) script on the altar dedicate it to the moon god *LMQ* (*Almaqah*) and state that it was commissioned by a king WR'N, son of RD'M, in honour of his inauguration as master of the temple at Yeha (Gajda et al., 2009; Wolf and Nowotnick, 2010).

The appearance of ceremonial and monumental architecture, inscriptions, and artefacts suggestive of elite identities at sites like Yeha and Meqaber Ga'ewa corresponds with a period of intensive socio-political development in the

southern Red Sea area, including expanded political and commercial activity and the development of early state societies in South Arabia. The expansion in cultural exchange across the southern Red Sea in the first millennium BCE is striking, and may be related to genetic evidence for substantial gene flow between Western Asian and African populations in the Horn of Africa about 3,000 years ago (Gallego Llorente et al., 2015; Pagani et al., 2012; Pickrell et al., 2014). Archaeologists working in the northern Horn have long defined first millennium BCE communities with such ceremonial centres as 'Ethio-Sabaean' (Anfray, 1968; de Contenson, 1981; Fattovich, 1990; Gerlach, 2012; Japp et al., 2011; Wolf and Nowotnick, 2010). Inscriptions in ancient South Arabian script contain the names of rulers, references to lineage or clan groups, and references to a number of deities in South Arabia, such as the moon god *LMQ* (*Almaqah*).

Most archaeologists working in the northern Horn agree that, while important, such symbols of South Arabian derivation are documented in a relatively small range of elite and ceremonial contexts in Tigray and Eritrea. The presumed sources of South Arabian-inspired artefact types come not from a single source area, but from various locales in the southern Arabian Peninsula, including Saba, Hadramaut, Aden, Ma'in and Qataban (Fattovich,1977, 1990, 2000; Robin and de Maigret, 1998). This diversity suggests that the incorporation of South Arabian elements of material culture by peoples of the northern Horn arose from engagements with various polities in the southern Red Sea area and their diverse repertoire of cultural elements. Ancient South Arabian titles such as *malik* (*MLK*), meaning king, and *mukkarib* (*MKRB*), often translated as unifier, federator or confederator (Beeston, 1972; Breton, 1999; Robin, 1996), or as an honorific (Drewes, 2001), appear on inscriptions at Kaskase in Eritrea, Seglamen and Yeha in Central Tigray, and Addi Galamo, Addi Kaweh and Meqaber Ga'ewa in Eastern Tigray. A growing scholarly consensus posits that indigenous elites of the northern Horn actively appropriated South Arabian iconography, monumental religious architectural forms, and potent titles to enhance prestige and legitimize claims of authority (Curtis, 2004, 2008; Fattovich, 2010; Manzo, 2009; D. W. Phillipson, 2011).

A critical debate about the formation of early complex societies in the northern Horn during the first millennium BCE concerns epigraphic evidence for a polity named *D'MT* (*Da'amat*, vocalization unknown) believed to have been centred in Tigray (Fattovich, 1990, 2010, 2012). Commonly interpreted as a nascent kingdom or state (see Anfray, 1968; de Contenson, 1981; Finneran, 2007; Fattovich, 2010, 2012; Japp et al., 2011; Phillipson, 2009, 2012 for a more cautious assessment), *D'MT* is mentioned several times in inscriptions written in

ancient South Arabian (Sabaic) script on inscribed slabs and incense burners. The inscriptions refer to *D'MT* in relation to political authorities, *MLK* (*malik*) and *MKRB* (*mukarrib*), identifying individual personal names such as *LMN*, *RBH* and *RD'M* (Bernard et al., 1991-2000; Drewes and Schneider, 1967; Schneider, 1961, 1965, 1978), while other inscriptions refer to 'east and west' and 'red and brown' divisions within the polity of *D'MT*, interpreted by some to indicate an ethnic, cultural or political bifurcation (Drewes, 1962; Fattovich, 2012; Gajda and Gebre Selassie, 2009; Schneider, 1973). In addition to the personages *LMN, RBH* and *RD'M* of *D'MT*, five other local leaders' names appear in inscriptions at the site of Seglamen, south of Aksum, at Yeha in Central Tigray, at Meqaber Ga'ewa temple, and at the ceremonial centre of Kaskase in south-central Eritrea. Particularly important may have been an individual king (*MLK* or *malik*) named *WRN HYWT,* who appears on inscriptions at three of these sites and who likely lived prior to the rulers of *D'MT* (Bernard et al., 1991-2000).

As yet, however, the relative paucity of both extant inscriptions and the detail of their content referring to the polity of *D'MT* and/or to individual *malik* and *mukarrib* leaders – as well as the absence of external references to *D'MT* (no texts mentioning *D'MT* have been found outside of Ethiopia or Eritrea) – severely limits understanding of how *D'MT* figured into the development of socio-political complexity in the northern Horn. The steadily increasing scope of archaeological and epigraphic research in northern Ethiopia bodes well for future insights.

The rise of Aksum and the first millennium CE

Beginning in the fourth century BCE, changes in frequencies of material culture attributes, as well as spatial characteristics of ceremonial sites and domestic settlements, suggest a reconfiguration of central elements of complex society in the highlands of the northern Horn. These changes usher in a period of cultural transformation referred to as the Proto-Aksumite period (*c.* 360 BCE to 80 BCE) preceding the Kingdom of Aksum (*c.* 80 BCE to 825 CE). Our understanding of this Proto-Aksumite period is limited almost entirely to eight sites located on the top of Bieta Giyorgis Hill at Aksum, most prominent of which are Ona Nagast and Ona Enda Aboi Zewge (Bard et al., 1997, 2014; Fattovich and Bard, 1997, 2001; Fattovich et al., 2000b; L. Phillipson and Sulas, 2005). A chronological sequence employing radiocarbon dates, ceramic seriation, analysis of numismatics, foreign imported items, and architecture has

been constructed for Bieta Giyorgis (Bard et al., 2014). The archaeology at Bieta Giyorgis, as well as surveys and limited excavation elsewhere around Aksum, the Seglamen and Negus/Haselo River Valley south of Aksum, the Gulo-Makeda region, and the Asmara Plateau, all suggest that there are important continuities as well as major disjunctions in material culture, settlement, economy and written language between earlier first millennium BCE communities and those after the fourth century BCE in the northern Horn.

The fourth century BCE witnessed a cessation in epigraphic South Arabian (Sabaic) text production across the northern Horn. Archaeological surveys around Aksum and Gulo Makeda suggest continuity of settlement at a number of sites between the early and later first millennium BCE, but this continuous occupation contrasts with the Asmara Plateau in Eritrea, where extensive site abandonment occurred around 300 BCE (Curtis, 2009; Schmidt and Curtis, 2001). Contemporaneous evidence for site abandonment also is found at the agropastoral village at Kidane Mehret D site, on the northern periphery of Aksum (Phillipson, 2000; Phillips, 2004), where there is an occupational hiatus for nearly a thousand years between the fourth century BCE and the mid-first millennium CE. The ceremonial centre of Yeha (Fattovich, 2009, 2010) was also abandoned after the fourth century BCE, although later re-occupied. An increase in number and aggregation of settlement occurs around Aksum during the fourth century BCE with the appearance on the top of Bieta Giyorgis Hill of a monumental residential complex and an elite cemetery, suggesting increasing hierarchical configuration. Bieta Giyorgis' many households and a monumental elite building complex contain semi-subterranean rooms, stepped walls, carefully laid floors and a podium. The adjacent Ona Enda Aboi Zewge cemetery contains pit graves, rock-cut tombs, and stelae several metres in height (Fattovich and Bard, 2001). These Proto-Aksumite communities were vital precursors to the rise of the Aksumite state and provide evidence for the endogenous development of the kingdom in the last century BCE and the first two centuries of the new millennium.

Aksum's position in a fertile agrarian landscape along an ancient trade route provided a link from the northern highlands to the southern Red Sea and larger Indian Ocean World, the Great Rift Valley of Eastern Africa and the Nile Basin, a web of contacts central to the development of Aksum as the capital of the Aksumite kingdom. Archaeological and textual evidence indicate that by the first century CE a centralized regional polity with defined social stratification had emerged at Aksum. By the early first century, the core of Aksum was concentrated in the valley between Bieta Giyorgis Hill and adjacent May Qoho Hill. Here

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Figure 4. *Stelae Park area with standing and fallen stelae at Aksum, Tigray, Ethiopia.*

burials, platforms and monolithic stone stelae mark the beginning of Aksum's initial development as the centre of a growing state polity (Figure 4). By the late third century, the landscape between Bieta Giyorgis and May Qoho would see the construction of a massive terrace feature, referred to today as the 'Stelae Park', with subterranean tombs marked by monumental monolithic stelae, including several over twenty metres in length and carved from single blocks of locally quarried syenite rock (Phillipson, 1997, 1998, 2000).

More than 100 standing and fallen stelae are found at the Stelae Park and hundreds more are located in several areas at Aksum (Figure 4), including those along the west side of the May Hejja stream, in the May Aqno and May Cheqqa areas, and in the Gudit Stelae Field, an ancient cemetery on the south-western edge of Aksum containing approximately 600 stelae (Littmann et al., 1913; Munro-Hay, 1989; Phillipson, 2000). The most monumental stelae were the grave markers of royal tombs that lie beneath, many dating to the third and early fourth century CE (Munro-Hay, 1989; Phillipson, 2000, 2012). Some stelae were carved as representations of multi-storied buildings, with low-relief depictions of window frames and apertures, horizontal wooden beams and false doors, and likely had inlaid metal plaques. Two of the standing stelae at Aksum each weigh 160-170 tons and measure about 24 m in length (Phillipson, 2000). The largest stela at Aksum (fallen) weighs about 520 tons and measures 33 m in length.

An integral component for the development of the Aksumite economy and demographic foundation was the agropastoral food-producing traditions of the northern Horn. As Aksum grew, new plant domesticates were incorporated into the subsistence economy. Whereas communities in the first millennium BCE relied heavily on barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), linseed/flax (*Linum usitatissimum*), lentils (*Lens culinaris*) and, to a lesser extent, emmer wheat (*Triticum dicoccum*), communities of the first millennium CE around Aksum became increasingly reliant upon the African domesticates t'ef (*Eragrostis tef*), noog (*Guizotia abyssinica*), finger millet (*Eleusine coracana*) and sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*). In addition, chickpeas (*Cicer arietinum*), fava beans (*Vicia faba*), grass peas (*Lathyrus sativus*), oats *(Avena sp.*), grapes (*Vitis vinifera*) and gourds (*Lagenaria* sp.) entered the diet at this time; free-threshing wheats began to supplant emmer wheat (Bard et al., 2000; Boardman, 1999, 2000; Curtis, 2013; D'Andrea et al., 1999; Lyons and D'Andrea, 2003; Ruiz-Giralt and Beldados, 2024), resulting in a broadening of the diet that increasingly incorporated more African grains, pulses, oil and fibre plants. Zooarchaeological research of Aksumite contexts is limited, but, as in earlier times, cattle and goat/sheep remained important during the first millennium CE, with increasing reliance upon cattle for meat, dairy and traction (Cain, 1999, 2000; Chaix, 2013; Woldekiros and D'Andrea, 2022).

Over the last twenty-five years interdisciplinary research involving geoarchaeology, phytolith, palynological, pedological, geomorphological, and soil micromorphological techniques have changed understandings of human-environmental interactions and the development of complex societies in the northern Horn (Bard et al., 2000; Ciampalini et al., 2008; DiBlasi, 1997; Ferrari et al., 2015; French et al., 2009; Gebru et al., 2009; Sulas et al., 2009; Terwilliger et al., 2013). Studies of phytoliths and macrobotanicals (charred wood, seeds, etc.) in buried soils around Aksum demonstrate that a savannah or open grassland vegetation pattern existed before, during, and following the Kingdom of Aksum; there is little evidence for substantial woodland and its subsequent clearance during the Aksumite period (Sulas et al., 2009; Sulas, 2014). Stratigraphic soil sequences from the slopes and floodplain just north of Aksum show that during the first four centuries CE the vegetation environment was stable, with higher moisture levels than today (French et al., 2009; Sulas, 2014).

In addition, large-scale irrigation systems were not used in the northern Horn during the first millennium BCE and first millennium CE. Instead, local populations around Aksum/Yeha and Gulo Makeda in Tigray, and, perhaps, centres like Qohaito in Eritrea, made use of water conservation systems that relied upon dry farming in low-lying areas and employed small-scale irrigation

through rainfall floodwater. Among the other methods used were cisterns and terracing that conserved soil and mitigated drought risk (Brunner, 2005; Harrower et al., 2020; Harrower and D'Andrea, 2014; French et al., 2009; Sulas et al., 2009). Study of ancient plow marks in fields in and around Aksum suggests that soil erosion was low and terracing efficient during the Aksumite period (Ciampalini et al., 2008). Aksumite farmers relied upon seasonal rainfall and water and soil conservation methods, utilizing localized water management and sustainable food production over the long term.

Complex irrigation controlled by the centralized state does not seem to have been a development at Aksum and elsewhere in the kingdom. This points to management of water on farmland at the individual farm/household level, within a society where hierarchical forms of organization, such as monumental building projects, occurred simultaneously (see Sulas et al., 2009). This perspective has important implications for the presence of both heterarchical and hierarchical forms of organization within the state, challenging archaeologists to question hierarchical trajectories towards state development and whether intensive irrigation was a prerequisite for initial state development in the northern Horn. Environmental research around Aksum also raises questions about whether human-induced environmental degradation was linked to the ultimate decline and/or collapse of the kingdom as has long been proposed (Butzer, 1981; Machado et al., 1998).

The rise of the Kingdom of Aksum at the very end of the first millennium BCE and first few centuries CE saw a dramatic increase in the number of settlement sites and associated population growth immediately surrounding the capital of Aksum (Sernicola, 2017). Settlement pattern analysis of Aksumite sites in the Yeha and Gulo Makeda areas suggests a decrease in spatial clustering from the previous millennium, with Aksumite populations dispersing and filling spaces between the largest settlement areas with smaller hamlets and villages, creating a more uniform spatial distribution of sites (Harrower et al., 2023). At Bieta Giyorgis and the centre of Aksum, the number of sites increased while the average site size decreased, a situation that may have been the result of rural-to-urban migration. It is estimated that during the first four centuries CE, the urban centre of Aksum covered 80 to 100 ha. By the sixth century, the urban core of Aksum was about 180 ha, with additional related satellite settlements and rural hinterland communities extending at least 10 km in radius and linked by a network of paved and unpaved roads (Fattovich et al., 2000; Fattovich, 2010; Michels, 2005; Phillipson, 2000; Sernicola, 2017; Sernicola and Phillipson, 2011).

At its height, perhaps as many as 50,000 people may have inhabited Aksum's urban centre, with thousands more living in the immediate hinterland. Intriguing qualities of Aksum and other large settlements, such as Matara and Qohaito in Eritrea, are the paucity of fortifications and defensive walls surrounding the urban centres. This suggests that these settlements did not suffer military incursions. Rather than walls, the boundaries of Aksum's city core seem to have been marked by monumental stone throne bases and royal inscriptions. Royal inscriptions found at various locations and engraved on long stone slabs record the exploits of various Aksumite kings. These are written in Ge'ez and sometimes in trilingual expressions that include epigraphic South Arabian script and Ancient Greek, providing detail of royal titles, decrees, religious references, and accounts of military campaigns against distant polities. Intended for public viewing, at least two trilingual examples attributed to the fourth-century Aksumite King Ezana were free-standing monuments marking the principal entrances to the city (Bernard et al., 1991-2000; Litmann et al., 1913; Phillipson 2012; Uhlig, 2001).

By the third century CE, Aksum's ancient urban configuration was characterized by a variety of loosely clustered buildings and monuments, a community including a range of socioeconomic statuses and specialized urban features. Large Aksumite buildings were often set on a high stepped foundation or plinth, capped with slabs of slate and possessing recessed walls. Some, especially elite, buildings had two or three stories, occasionally with basement storage areas. Elite structures had a square plan with recessed walls and massive corner projections or towers with dressed cornerstones; each had an entrance accessed by broad steps set in an open courtyard, surrounded by a range of subsidiary square and rectangular-shaped rooms (Buxton and Matthews, 1974; Littmann, 1913; Phillipson, 1997, 2000). Domestic buildings of lower-status Aksumite neighborhoods were rectilinear in plan, built of undressed mud-mortared fieldstone walls, with rubble filled cores, and were connected by narrow alleyways. Interspersed throughout the city were open-air activity areas, where pottery and stone tool production were carried out.

Other specialist craft production included woodwork, ivory figurines, plaques, cylindrical boxes, glass, and a diverse range of metalwork in iron, copper alloy, silver and gold (Phillips, 2014; Phillipson, 2000, 2012). Particularly important metalwork activity included the minting of coinage; the Aksumite state issued its own gold, silver and copper coins from the late third century CE to the middle of the seventh century CE, when coin production ceased, subsequent to the devaluation of Roman and Byzantine coinage (Hahn, 2000; Munro-Hay, 1991;

Munro-Hay and Juel-Jensen, 1995). Inscriptions on Aksumite coins in Greek and Ge'ez script, found at dozens of sites, record the names of about twenty kings of Aksum. Examples of Aksumite coins have been found at archaeological sites as far away as southern Arabia, Jordan, Egypt and India. Gold and silver coins with legends written in Greek are mostly found at sites outside of the northern Horn of Africa, suggesting that these were utilized in external circulation and trade, while copper coins, with legends written in Ge'ez, were intended for more localized circulation (Munro-Hay, 1991).

During the fourth century CE (around 340 CE), Christianity was adopted by Aksum's elites, including the Aksumite King Ezana, with conversions of the larger Aksumite population occurring slowly over the next two hundred years and through a long process of church and monastery building (Finneran, 2002; Phillipson 2009, 2012). Several stone inscriptions provide local evidence for the royal adoption of Christianity (Schneider, 1976; Uhlig, 2001) and after 340 CE, Aksumite coins began to bear the symbol of the Christian cross above the royal portrait of the monarch, replacing the crescent and disc symbol used by pre-Christian kings. By the late fifth century CE, cross symbols on domestic pottery begin to appear regularly in the archaeological record, particularly in and around Aksum, indicating the increasing propagation of the faith. The consolidation of Christianity brought substantial changes in the ideological structures of the Aksumite polity, eliminating epigraphic references to *Mahrem*, a central pre-Christian Aksumite deity, and others including *Astar*, *Beher* and *Meder*.

The burial grounds and stelae fields of the pre-Christian elite were replaced with churches and monastic communities (Munro-Hay, 1991; Phillipson, 2009, 2012). By the sixth century CE, Christianity was firmly established at the principal population centres of the kingdom, and the liturgy of the Church was in place during the reigns of Kings Kaleb and Gabra Masqal (*c.* 500-550 CE) (Sellassie, 1972). The adoption of Christianity was part of a wider monotheistic trend of the fourth century CE in the southern Red Sea region, including the Himyar Kingdom of South Arabia and elsewhere (Beeston, 1984; Bowersock, 1997; Gajda, 2009; Robin, 2009; Phillipson, 2009, 2012). The presence of Christians in Aksum's foreign trading communities and the role Christianity played in developing and maintaining strategic alliances with the Byzantine Empire and other polities in the early Christian World were vital to the early adoption of the Christian faith in the northern Horn.

Excavations carried out between 2011 and 2016 at the large (20 ha) ancient settlement site of Beta Samati near Yeha in central Tigray (Bausi, 2020; Harrower et al., 2019) have revealed the earliest Christian Basilica in

the northern Horn of Africa. This basilica has a rectangular, tripartite Syriac indented plan similar to other Aksumite Christian architecture (Harrower et al., 2019, p. 10). The basilica was constructed in the mid-fourth century CE, likely after the Aksumite King Ezana established Christianity as Aksum's state religion. The associated material culture suggests a mixing of Christian and non-Christian ritual activities and trade items, indicating that the basilica may have functioned as both a sacred and secular Aksumite centre as well as hosting syncretic religious processes.

The Aksumite state extended well beyond Aksum's urban centre. Its capital and larger dominion were known widely in the ancient eastern Mediterranean and Red Sea regions. Texts from the Arabian Peninsula, diplomatic correspondence of the Byzantine Empire, and written accounts from the wider Mediterranean and Red Sea worlds, such as Pliny's *Natural History,* Claudius Ptolemy's *Geography,* the anonymous *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, and the *Christian Topography* of Cosmas Indicopleustes make reference to Aksum (Kobishchanov, 1979; Phillipson, 2012). Within the first few centuries of Aksumite state expansion, contact with peoples as distant as Syria, Persia and India were established (Munro-Hay, 1996; Phillips, 2014). With Aksum as its capital and primary metropolis (Hagos, 2010), the state extended its reach from northern Eritrea to the margins of central Ethiopia, and from the southern Arabian Peninsula to the Sudanese Nile borderlands. Many Aksumite settlements were positioned along an axis stretching from Aksum to the Gulf of Zula, following a route linking the Aksumite capital in the highlands to the port city of Adulis and its adjacent harbour on the Red Sea.

Adulis appears to have been settled as early as the second millennium BCE (Fattovich, 2012; Manzo 2010). It is not clear whether Adulis retained autonomy in relation to Aksum, but it was certainly the state's chief coastal entrepôt or 'emporium' by the first century CE (Anfray, 1974; Casson, 1989). Recent archaeological excavation and surveys suggest that Adulis was a settlement centre from the second to the early seventh century CE and experienced intensive building of large Aksumite-style buildings between the third and sixth century CE (Peacock and Blue, 2007; Zazzaro et al., 2014). In the sixth and early seventh centuries a large Christian church with a baptistry constructed on an Aksumite-style platform, and a smaller church featuring a domed roof supported by a ring of columns, were built at Adulis. These buildings reflect Adulis' connection to Christian traditions of the highlands of the northern Horn, as well as Byzantine influence (Castiglia et al., 2021; Castiglia, 2022). Two of the largest Aksumite-era settlements, Matara and Qohaito, were situated in

the south-central Eritrean highlands along the route from Aksum to Adulis. This route has long been a focus of interest (e.g. Bent, 1893; Harrower and D'Andrea, 2014; Munro-Hay, 1982, 1991), as it would have been a key route connecting Aksum's heartland to the wider world of the Red Sea and beyond.

Matara, the most substantially excavated Aksumite urban centre outside of Aksum (Anfray, 1967, 1974, 2012; Anfray and Annequin, 1965; Curtis and Habtemichael, 2008), was 20 ha in extent and roughly divided into western and eastern sections with elite residential structures, churches (including a three-aisled basilica), commoner and intermediate-level domestic building areas, and stone and earthen tombs. Qohaito, the first stopping point on a two-to-four day journey by foot from Adulis, and accessed by two valleys connecting the highlands with the Red Sea, is an urban landscape with hundreds of sites and site clusters containing houses, cisterns, roads, pillared buildings and podia, churches and tombs (Littmann et al., 1913; Wenig, 2006; Wenig and Curtis, 2008). Both Qohaito and Matara were linked to urban hinterlands, producing extensive areas of ancient settlement and great population density (Curtis and Habtemichael, 2008; Curtis and Libsekal, 1999; Wenig and Curtis, 2008).

Conclusion

There are diverse and rich sources for exploring the archaeology and the environmental and cultural histories of the northern Horn of Africa: deep and varied archaeological records, a vibrant historical record including ancient inscriptions, ecclesiastical sources, oral traditions, a landscape well suited for pedestrian survey and potential for dynamic landscape archaeology, and an accessible and varied paleoenvironmental and geological record. These attributes make the region ideal for interdisciplinary analyses of the rise of complex societies in the northern Horn.

What emerges very clearly from investigations over the last century or more is that developmental trajectories are not uniform across the northern Horn. The Asmara Plateau, for example, experienced the growth of demographically complex settlement systems in the first millennium BCE that are distinctly heterarchical. This observation also prevails for north-eastern Tigray during the early to mid-first millennium BCE. It was not until the latter part of the millennium, when some communities were influenced by culture contact with southern Arabia, when pronounced signs of socio-political hierarchy began to appear. Even then, such culture contact was short-lived and does not

explain why hierarchical forms of governance arose at Aksum during the first millennium CE. These tentative affinities and differences across the region point to the need to widely expand multiscalar and interdisciplinary research into the origins of socio-political complexity across the northern Horn.

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CHAPTER 20

EAST AFRICA AND THE INDIAN OCEAN NETWORKS (1st-15th CENTURY)

Philippe Beaujard

Introduction

Navigation in the Indian Ocean is undoubtedly as ancient as it is in the Mediterranean, and East Africa was connected to oceanic networks – albeit in a limited way – even before the Christian era. The East African coast developed in four major phases. At the beginning of the Christian era and until about 600, this region formed the periphery of an Afro-Eurasian system (Beaujard, 2012a, 2012b; Boivin et al., 2013); it became a semi-periphery[1] during a second phase of development (600–1000), which saw the emergence of a Swahili culture with the first city-states in a sphere of interaction stretching over 3,000 km from north to south, and from 20 to 250 km from east to west. In a third phase (tenth to fourteenth century), the Swahili city-states *sensu stricto* and the coast played an active role in the Afro-Eurasian world system. After a decline in the fourteenth century, the fourth phase (fifteenth to sixteenth century) was marked by certain restructuring of networks and the arrival of the Portuguese.

1 Structurally intermediate region between the cores – dominant regions – and the peripheries.

Long-distance trade before the Christian era

From the second millennium BCE, African plants arrived in India (Fuller, 2003), and it has been suggested that contacts with India and Egypt were made in the first millennium BCE. Furthermore, Austronesians introduced plantain-type banana trees (AAB genome) along the East African coast (Blench, 2010), along with taro and the yam *Dioscorea alata*, while farmers speaking Bantu languages only arrived on this coast in the first century CE. In addition, the East African Highlands were home to a great diversity of triploid banana trees (AAA), whose genetics place their origin between Java and New Guinea (Perrier et al., 2011). This is in accord with Hornell's linking of the design of the canoes of Lake Victoria to Java and Madura (Hornell, 1934).

There were also movements from Africa towards the islands. At the beginning of the second millennium BCE, populations probably originating from the East African coast reached northern Madagascar (Gommery et al., 2011; Dewar et al., 2013).

The emergence of a pre-Swahili coastal culture

Written around 40 CE, the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* revealed the establishment of a pre-Swahili culture on the East African coast, characterized by small villages of peasant metal workers and the spread of a type of pottery called Kwale, found from Somalia to southern Mozambique (Sinclair, 1991), and in the Comoros Archipelago (Chami, 2009, p. 125). This pottery is known in the Great Lakes region dating back to the middle of the first millennium BCE. The spread of new technologies (agriculture, metalworking) was inseparable from an overall development in trade and the increase in demand for iron.

The Horn of Africa saw the arrival of cassia and cinnamon, which Pliny (first century CE) linked to long-distance trade, probably conducted by Austronesian peoples. In Somalia, the *Periplus* mentions the ports of Pano and then Opone, where turtle shells and 'slaves of the best kind' were acquired, 'who are taken to Egypt in increasing numbers', slaves and turtles coming from the African coast further south. Opone corresponds to the archaeological site of Ras Hafun, which has yielded Egyptian, Indian and Partho-Sasanian pottery. The *Periplus* mentions the Pyralae Islands (Lamu Archipelago), Menuthias Island (Zanzibar or Pemba) and finally a trading emporium called Rhapta, perhaps located at the mouth of the Rufiji River. 'Each market-town is ruled by its own chief' (Casson, 1989, p. 59).



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Figure 1. *East Africa and Madagascar (1st to 6th century)*



Figure 2. *East Africa and Madagascar (7th to 10th century)*

Rhapta is described as a tributary of a king of Yemen:

> The people of Muza send out [to it] merchant craft that they staff mostly with Arab skippers and agents who, through continual intercourse and intermarriage, are familiar with the area and its language (Casson, 1989, p. 61).

The name Rhapta, according to the text of the *Periplus*, was derived from the small 'sewn boats' found there (cf. the Arabic *rabta*, 'to tie'). Ivory, rhinoceros horn and tortoiseshell were exported. Imports included glass objects, as well as iron tools and weapons. Ships from the Roman world therefore frequented this coast, even if archaeology has not yet found any proof of this. Roman knowledge may have extended to the ocean islands (cf. Pliny VI, p. 152).

Ptolemy's *Geography* (second century CE) demonstrated a better knowledge of the East African coast, which could reflect an increased 'Roman' presence. Here, Menuthias Island is placed to the south-east of Cape Delgado: it would therefore be Madagascar. For Ptolemy, the Indian Ocean was a closed sea, but the *Periplus* indicated that beyond Rhapta 'the unexplored ocean curves westward'. Parthian, Sasanian, Ptolemaic, Roman, Aksumite and Byzantine coins have been discovered on the African coast, but never in a clear stratigraphic context; their number and location (particularly in Zimbabwe) do however seem to make sense.

New coastal sites appeared between 300 and 600 CE, particularly in the Zanzibar region, where the site of Unguja Ukuu has provided artefacts dating from the fifth to the seventh century, imported from India, Western Asia and the Roman world. The decline of the Roman Empire from the third century CE onwards, and that of Aksum in the sixth century, left the field open to Arab and Persian merchants. The arrival of Chinese stoneware in Unguja Ukuu is evidence of the relations maintained with China by the Persian Sassanid Empire (the date of this stoneware is still to be confirmed). Other pre-Islamic sites have been discovered in the Lamu Archipelago and on the Tanzanian coast (Map 1). Innovations in the 'proto-languages of the northeast coast', then proto-Sabaki (between 350 and 650), revealed the influence of the ocean networks, borrowing from Arabic, Persian and Hindi (Nurse and Hinnebusch, 1993).

The dawn of the Swahili culture (7th–10th century)

Climate disturbances, famines and epidemics affected the world system in the fifth and sixth centuries, but in the seventh century an improved climate led to a boom in trade, which accompanied the formation and interconnection of the

Tang and Islamic Empires. A Swahili culture,[2] influenced by Islam, emerged on the East African coast, where the remains of the first mosques date back to the eighth century (Horton, 2001). The Lamu Archipelago, and particularly Pemba and Zanzibar, then acted as an interface between the ocean networks and the continent's interior (Map 2). East Africa's trading groups were initially linked to Oman and the Persian Gulf, but Indians were also present (Hawkes and Wynne-Jones, 2015). Many sites – still without a defined social hierarchy – bear witness to contact with overseas territories, such as: Shanga, Manda and Pate (Lamu Archipelago), Mtwapa (Kenyan coast), Unguja Ukuu (Zanzibar), Ras Mkumbuu and Tumbe (Pemba), Mpiji, Kaole, Masuguru and Kilwa (Tanzanian coast and hinterland), Juani Island (Mafia), Chibuene and Punta Dundo (Mozambique).

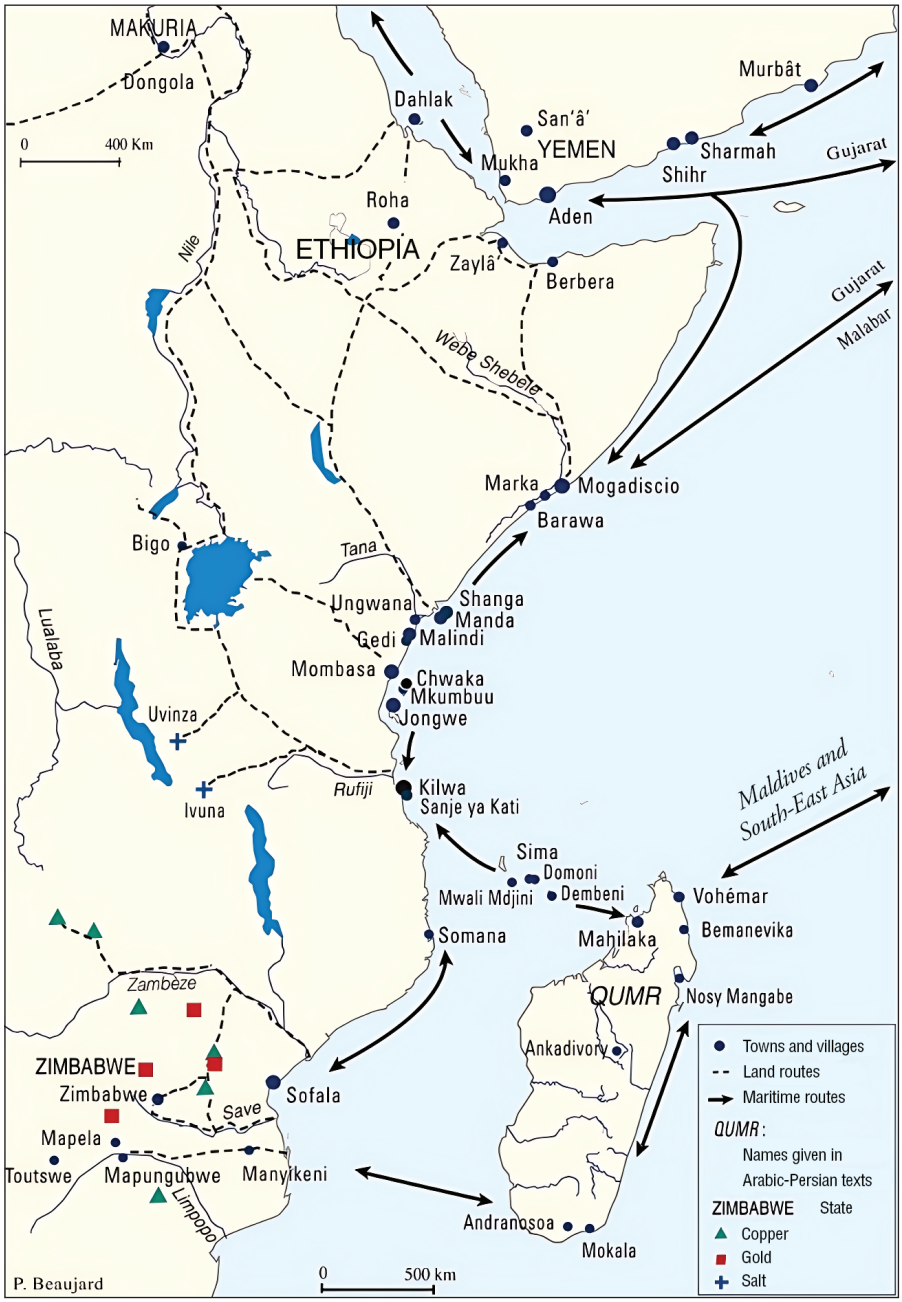
The Arab geographer Mas'udi (tenth century) mentions the Omanis' voyages to Qanbalu (Ras Mkumbuu, Pemba), which 'had a mixed population of Muslims and Zanj [East African] isolators. [The] Muslims speak the language of the Zanj; they seized this island by taking captive the Zanj who occupied it' (Mas'udi. 1965 [1962], p. 93 [para. 244] and p. 84 [para. 215]). Mas'udi refers to ivory exports. A slave trade was also flourishing, at least until 868, the date of the 'Zanj Rebellion' in Iraq. Islamic networks transported these slaves as far as China. Free Africans were present in Siraf, Oman and undoubtedly Sharma (Hadhramaut, tenth century). Exports also included ambergris, wood, iron and gold.

Pottery known as Tana, found along the Kenyan coast in Mozambique, and in the Comoros and southern Madagascar, reveals the extent of the African trade network, as well as the spread of pottery decorated with graphite.

The importance of Mozambique at this time seems to be linked to the mining of metal resources (copper and gold) and to ivory exports. A large number of beads were imported from the Persian Gulf through the Chibuene site, beads that have been found as far away as Botswana (Wood, 2011).

Mas'udi wrote: 'The sea of Zanj ends with the land of Sofala and Waqwaq, which produces gold' (Mas'udi. 1965 [1962], tome II, p. 322). The Arabic-Persian word *Waqwaq* means the islands of South-East Asia, Madagascar and the coast of Sofala and proves recognition of Austronesian networks. Indeed, the Austronesian peoples reached the Comoros and Madagascar around the seventh or eighth century. Al-Jahiz (ninth century) refers to 'naval attacks organized by the sovereign of az-Zabaj [Sriwijaya]'. According to al-Sirafî in the publication *The Book of the Wonders of India*, in 945, the 'people of Waqwaq' (who probably came from Sumatra, initially to procure slaves) attacked Qanbalu, but in vain.

2 Swahili: from the Arabic *sawâhil* (plural), 'coasts'; the singular, *sahel*, means 'warehouse, trading post'.



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Figure 3. *East Africa and Madagascar (10th to 14th century)*

The disintegration of the Tang and Islamic Empires in the ninth and tenth centuries led to an overall decline in the world system and a restructuring of the networks which, in the Indian Ocean, thrived under Fatimid Egypt and the Red Sea. The Islamic port of Debal (Sindh) and Gujarat took on new importance in the networks of the western Indian Ocean. East African traditions attached to the Wadebuli ('people of Debal') suggest Debal's earlier involvement in the slave trade. Demand for gold, ivory and copal sustained activity of the Zanj coast and an expansion towards the Comoros and Madagascar in the ninth and tenth centuries. The Swahili and Comorian languages split around the ninth century (Nurse and Hinnebusch, 1993, p. 494). In the Comoros a mixed Bantu and Austronesian culture flourished, known as Dembeni, from the name of a Mayotte site (eighth to twelfth century) (Allibert and Argant, 1989; Wright, 1984). This culture used ceramics from the Persian Gulf and Chinese pottery. East African towns were transformed by the use of carved coral for buildings, using a technique that came from the Red Sea and spread to the Comoros and Northern Madagascar. Tiny silver coins were unearthed at Shanga, which seem to be consistent with coins later issued in Pemba, Zanzibar, Mafia and Kilwa. The influence of Fatimid Egypt, and particularly Sindh, has been suggested for these coins, which also featured local characteristics (Wynne-Jones and Fleisher, 2012).

The East African coast developed boats (*mtepe*, from the Arabic *mtafieh*, from *tâf*, 'the action of floating') that belonged to the western Oceanic tradition of 'sewn boats', but also displayed Indonesian traits (Hornell, 1934; Poumailloux, 1999). Both archaeology and ancient texts reveal the existence of contacts between Madagascar, the Comoros and the Muslim world in the ninth and tenth centuries, with Bantu migrants settling on the western coast of Madagascar. Chlorite schist and quartz from Madagascar were exported to Mayotte and the African coast. The site of Mahilaka (north-western Madagascar) contained ceramics from the Gulf and Chinese pottery from its earliest levels (Radimilahy, 1998).

The rise and fall of the Swahili culture (10th–14th century)

Following a decline in the ninth and tenth centuries, the Afro-Eurasian world system experienced new growth from the end of the tenth century, aided by a global rise in temperatures. The thirteenth century marked a time of crisis and restructuring, but the economy of the world system went on to peak in the early fourteenth century. The Swahili culture developed fully during this period, particularly from

the thirteenth century (Fleisher, 2015). Characteristic of the Swahili world (at least in the north), 'stone towns' inhabited by patricians developed, in opposition and complementary to the 'rural settlements' in plant materials (Map 3). The spread of Islam, strictly coastal, clearly coincided in time and space with the growth of towns and trade, an expansion that partly reflects the Shirazi myth (Pouwels, 1987). The Shirazi ('people of Shiraz') were in fact Swahili, but a Persian influence was particularly noticeable under the Buyids (tenth to eleventh century). Comprising different branches, Islam was adopted and adapted, the diversity and fluidity of religious affiliations overlapping political strategies. Known as *waungwana*, the 'patrician groups' of the Swahili city-states on the northern coast, which contrasted with the highly hierarchical Shirazi royal system, were perhaps influenced by the Qarmatians of Bahrain and the Ibadis of Oman.[3]

Although the Persian Gulf's relations with the East African coast remained important, the Red Sea was pre-eminent in the trade of the western Indian Ocean. A Yemeni dynasty took power in Kilwa in the thirteenth century, developing trade and strengthening Sunni Islam. 'Black on yellow' Yemeni ceramics appeared on the East African coast, in the Comoros and in Madagascar from 1250. Al-Biruni (*c.* 1030) and Idrisi (twelfth century) indicate that Indians were present on the African coasts, where they promoted the transfer of technology in the production of beads and the textile industry.[4] Indian pottery and coins have been excavated. In the thirteenth century, the Chinese Zhao Rugua wrote that every year the ports of Gujarat and Arabia sent ships to Zanzibar, carrying cotton, copper and porcelain. Alongside the Gujaratis, South Indians (Malabar and Coromandel) probably contributed to the distribution of beads, textiles and cowrie shells and carried some of the Chinese ceramics that have been found, especially from the thirteenth century, where their increase is noted on the East African coast and in Madagascar (Mahilaka).

Active in the Indian Ocean during the Southern Song and Yuan periods, the Chinese perhaps frequented the African coast and even Madagascar, probably from Java. Chinese chronicles cite various African products which reached China in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, including ivory, aromatic gums, yellow sandalwood from Zanzibar (perhaps Madagascar?), and tortoiseshell, along with slaves.[5]

3 Horton, M., 2001, p. 463; Allen, J. de V., 1993, p. 203. In fact, the *waungwana* system was perhaps developed later, between the fifteenth and nineteenth century, from Pate and Lamu (Pouwels, R., 1987, pp. 10-21, 35-37).

4 Horton, M., 1996, p. 418.

5 Hirth, F. and Rockhill, W.W., 1911, pp. 128, 193 *et seq.*, 225, 232.

Islamization strengthened from the thirteenth century (Islam also spread in South Asia and South-East Asia at the same time). The Swahili elites monopolized contact with foreign countries. Especially from the thirteenth century, control of the gold trade on the Sofala coast gave Kilwa a unique negotiating power with foreign traders. In the early fourteenth century, its Sultan minted coins using a trimetallic system influenced by the Muslim world. Kilwa's expansion was linked to the emergence of states in the Limpopo River region (Mapungubwe) and Zimbabwe (Great Zimbabwe), connected to gold mining and ivory exports. Various types of beads were successively imported from the Persian Gulf, then from the Coramandel coast (and perhaps South-East Asia) and Gujarat.[6] The Lamu Archipelago also remained an important centre for trade, as did Pemba, Zanzibar, Tumbatu, Mafia, Sanje ya Kati (near Kilwa) and, along the coast, the towns of Gedi, Ungwana, Kaole, Mombasa and Mogadishu.

The co-development of Swahili cities with the centres of the world system – they benefited from the (limited) transfer of techniques and, to a certain extent, their increasing allegiance to the Muslim world – was accompanied by the exploitation of Africa's interior and the islands (Comoros, Madagascar), which primarily supplied raw materials and labour and received goods partially made on the coast, the Swahilis restricting the distribution of goods imported from overseas.[7] Textiles played a vital role in building the customer networks that allowed trade between Swahili cities and the hinterland, with textiles imported or produced locally at Mogadishu and Kilwa. Furthermore, the Swahilis did not attempt to spread Islam to Africa's interior but preferred to retain a 'monopoly' over it.

A slave trade was maintained along the entire coast and then from the islands of the Comoros and Madagascar; slaves were shipped to the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, India and as far as China. In the early twelfth century, most of the aristocracy of Canton had Black slaves; in 1225, Zhao Rugua reported African men-at-arms on board Chinese junks, and, in 1355, Ibn Battuta noted the use of Black servants as watchmen in Chinese towns (Ibn Battuta. 1982a, 1982b). He also mentioned the presence of 'Abyssinian' men-at-arms (originally from the Horn of Africa?) on board Indian ships and on Chinese junks leaving Calicut.

The Swahilis themselves travelled around the Indian Ocean, initially to the islands. African and Arab merchants settled in the Comoros and Madagascar, where new Austronesian migrants arrived and contributed to the growth of the

6 Wood, M. 2011.

7 Beaujard, P. 2013. 'Systèmes-mondes anciens. Processus de domination, de co-évolution et de résistance. L'exemple de la côte est-africaine avant le XVII^{e} siècle', *Actuel Marx*, 53, pp. 40-62.



Figure 4. *East Africa and Madagascar (15th to early 16th century)*

city of Vohemar in the north-east of the island and the formation of kingdoms that developed intensive rice-growing practices. Madagascar was known as *Qumr* by Arabic and Persian geographers (Allibert, 2001, pp.13-33). Even the extreme south of Madagascar seems to have been connected to the East African networks, as shown by the discovery of Islamic and Chinese ceramics. Significant iron working was present in Mayotte, and Idrisi tells of the export of iron from Africa to India (Cf. Kusimba, 1999).[8] He also mentions the journeys by the Comorians and Malagasy to the Sofala coast to purchase gold and slaves.[9] According to Ibn al-Mujawir (*c.* 1240), long before his time, the Malagasy had ventured to Aden, but in the thirteenth century such voyages had ceased.

In the years from 1320 to 1330, the world system experienced a sudden decline, exacerbated by a cooling climate, before the plague epidemics from China swept through the Old World from 1346 onwards. The East African coast was also affected; Kilwa seems to have become depopulated in this period. The Great Mosque, which collapsed during the fourteenth century, was only rebuilt a century later, and the Sultan's Palace, Husuni Kubwa, was abandoned before it was completely finished. In Madagascar, the city of Mahilaka and the south (Androy) experienced a decline in population.

East Africa's revival in the fifteenth century

The world system was in recession for six or seven decades before experiencing a revival in the late fourteenth century, noticeably in East Africa (Map 4). The influence of the Hadramis, supporters of an orthodox Sunni Islam, fostered social change in Swahili towns. On the coast and the islands, the two key elements on which the patricians' power was based (long-distance trade and Islam) were visually associated in the stone architecture, which used carved coral and imported bowls and plates (mainly from China) inserted into the walls of mosques and tombs. On the Kenyan coast, pillared tombs represented the synthesis of traditions from the northern Swahili coast with Egyptian influences.

While Islamic pottery still came from the Red Sea and Yemen, a resumption of contacts with the Persian Gulf was noticeable. In addition, China's influence increased. Chinese ships belonging to large fleets setting sail on the Indian Ocean, from 1403 onwards, stopped at Mogadishu, Barawa and Malindi in

8 This export of iron is queried by Killick (2009, p. 296).

9 Idrisi, 1984, 8th section, p. 67, 9th section, p.79; Vire, F., 1984, pp. 26, 34.

1417 and 1422, in response to the sending of a diplomatic mission from Malindi to China in 1415, famous in memory for the giraffe presented to the Emperor as a gift. Chinese porcelain (blue and white) was now widely present in Swahili towns and the Comoros and Madagascar.

In the second half of the fifteenth century, gold mining continued in the successor states to the Great Zimbabwe. On the ocean networks, the rise of the Gujaratis is noted, with the Portuguese encountering their ships in the major ports along the coast, where they brought cotton textiles, beads and ceramics. At this time, India monopolized a large share of the exported gold. Slaves from East Africa, but also the Comoros and Madagascar, were transported to Arabia, India and East Asia. A small number of Swahili ships and merchants also crossed the ocean. The Portuguese apothecary Tome Pires thus reports the presence of 'people from Kilwa, Malindi, Mogadishu and Mombasa' in Malacca in 1515. Among the masters of navigation of the 'Sea of India' in the late fifteenth century, the Arab pilot Ibn Majid refers to the Zanj.

The advent of a new world system

The development of capitalism in Europe, with competition between the Iberians and the Venetians, led to a critical expansion in the late fifteenth century. In 1498, Columbus reached America. In Africa, seeking to turn the trade in spices, fabrics and gold to their advantage, and dreaming of liberating Jerusalem, the Portuguese rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1498 and seized Sofala on the Swahili coast in 1503, followed by Kilwa and Mombasa in 1505. The sudden entrance of the Portuguese into the Indian Ocean disrupted trade networks for a short time. In East Africa, it did not contribute to a weakening of the Swahili city-states, but rather led to a reconfiguration of networks.

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CHAPTER 21

THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL COMPLEXITY IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

Peter Robertshaw

Introduction

Our understanding of the emergence of social complexity in the Great Lakes region has changed considerably since 1984 as a result of new scholarship: archaeological and paleoenvironmental research has generated much new data, while historians have not only collected new data but also brought new interpretive approaches to the archives of existing oral traditions. Nevertheless, much of Ogot's seminal chapter in Volume 4 of the *General History of Africa* (Ogot, 1984) has stood the test of time remarkably well. In particular, Ogot's insistence on acknowledging the complexities of the multi-ethnic composition of the region, his rejection of simplistic correlations between ethnicity and occupation (as in the colonialist stereotypes of Hamitic pastoralists and Bantu agriculturalists), and his critical evaluation of historical sources, are as important now as they were forty years ago. While his argument that 'several small states were established in the interlacustrine region by Bantu-speaking agriculturalists before the pastoralists became politically important' (p. 521) remains valid, it is his interpretation of the traditions concerning the Bachwezi ('Bacwezi' in much of the literature) that has been challenged by subsequent research. Archaeologists and historians are now generally skeptical of the notion that the Bachwezi were the rulers of a 'loosely organized empire' (p. 504) in the fourteenth century that

covered much of modern-day southern and western Uganda and extended into adjacent areas of Tanzania, Rwanda, and even western Kenya. However, before exploring alternative interpretations of the Bachwezi, it behooves us to present a synthesis of the results of the archaeological and allied research that has been undertaken, primarily in Uganda, since Ogot's chapter was written.

The archaeology of the Great Lakes region

500 BCE-800 CE

Often referred to by the outmoded term 'Early Iron Age', this period is characterized archaeologically by the presence of distinctive pottery known as the Urewe tradition, correlated with the first Bantu-speaking, iron-working agriculturalists in the region. While small numbers of Urewe pot sherds have been found in many parts of the region, settlements of this tradition have been recorded mostly in Rwanda and in areas adjacent to Lake Victoria. Research in Buhaya, Tanzania, has uncovered evidence of substantial iron production that may have led to deforestation (Schmidt, 1997). However, palynological data show that much of southern, central and western Uganda outside of the western Rift Valley was clothed in forest and probably sparsely populated (e.g. Robertshaw and Taylor, 2000). Urewe societies appear to have been small-scale communities, with direct archaeological evidence for the cultivation of cereals and legumes. An Urewe human burial from Rwanda, dated to about 400 CE, exhibits pathological indications of both violence and childhood malnutrition, while the associated grave goods include a cowrie shell, the earliest evidence of long-distance (Indian Ocean) exchange in the Great Lakes region (Giblin et al., 2010).

800-1300 CE

Archaeology and paleoenvironmental data, as well as historical and linguistic evidence, indicate that this was a period of profound changes across the Great Lakes region that included the emergence of varied forms of social complexity during what was a period of drier climate, with sometimes major droughts, notably in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Robertshaw and Taylor, 2000). The turn of the millennium witnessed a demographic dispersal of people into the savannahs of southern Uganda and adjacent areas, as well as into the forested regions of western Uganda where forest clearance, presumably for agriculture, got underway. Historical linguistics indicate the development and proliferation

of new terms associated with cattle pastoralism in the new Rutaran offshoot of the West Nyanza branch of Great Lakes Bantu. However, one should not view this as evidence of the emergence of specialized pastoralists (Bahima or others), let alone a pastoral aristocracy, because the archaeological evidence from the site of Ntusi indicates an integrated livestock and cereal subsistence economy in the first centuries of the second millennium (Reid, 1996).

At about the beginning of the second millennium, roulette-decorated ceramics replace Urewe pottery across the Great Lakes region away from Lake Victoria (Robertshaw and Taylor, 2000, p. 14). While this ceramic shift correlates with the demographic dispersal mentioned above, there is no archaeological evidence for immigration from outside the Great Lakes. The discovery of occasional vessels with both roulette decoration and the distinctive dimple bases characteristic of Urewe pots points to local developments in ceramic manufacture. Moreover, misguided attempts to correlate different rouletted ceramics with ethno-racial categories should be dismissed as outmoded colonialist tropes.

Settlement of southern Uganda's savannahs and clearance of forest for agriculture, evident from the archaeological and palynological records, went hand in hand with an emergence of socio-political complexity. The excavations at Ntusi, together with the results of an archaeological survey of the surrounding region, reveal that a chiefdom, as defined by the existence of a two-tier social hierarchy, was centred on Ntusi during this period (Reid, 1996). Ntusi has also provided evidence for the working of ivory, albeit on a small scale, while a few glass beads and cowrie shells have been discovered both at Ntusi and a couple of other western Uganda sites, including Munsa, where glass beads and a copper bracelet of unknown origin occurred in burials. Although these finds indicate connections to international trade, their rarity suggests that any such trading links were tenuous. However, they do perhaps point towards a growth in regional trading networks. Other items that likely circulated in this trade were barkcloth and salt. The expansion of cattle keeping across western Uganda may have spurred the development of salt production at Lake Katwe and at Kibiro on the shore of Lake Albert; archaeological excavations at Kibiro indicate an origin for the industry in about the thirteenth century (Connah, 1996). Historical sources make it clear that in subsequent centuries salt from Kibiro was an important commodity in regional trade in Bunyoro and beyond.

Analogous changes were afoot too along the shores of Lake Victoria and on its islands, with the development of new terms associated with banana cultivation that Ashley and Reid view as part of 'a wider Great Lakes trajectory towards economic specialization and niche activity'. Archaeological sites around

the Lake were generally small and ephemeral, indicative of an apparent absence of social and political hierarchies among 'specialist maritime communities engaged in a range of activities' (Ashley and Reid, 2008, pp. 118-9).

These changes were accompanied by significant changes in the pottery found on the fringes of Lake Victoria. From the ninth century onwards, the fine craftsmanship that characterized classic Urewe pottery gave way to simpler decoration, fewer vessel types, and considerable local ceramic variation. The famous ceramic Luzira 'heads' (see below) also date to this period. One new and distinctive ceramic ware, known as Entebbe ware, is found on many sites of the early to middle second millennium, all within 8 km of the shores of Lake Victoria. One characteristic of Entebbe ware is the production of much larger serving bowls, perhaps used for beer, than were found in the Urewe tradition, suggesting a shift towards larger public gatherings involving feasts. A few glass beads found in association with Entebbe ware at the site of Malanga Lweru on Bugala, the largest island in the Ssese archipelago of Lake Victoria, mirrors the tenuous international trading connections posited for the regions further to the west.

1300-1700 CE

Climatically the first half of this period was characterized by a return to wetter conditions and slightly cooler temperatures that correlate with the Little Ice Age of higher latitudes (Lejju et al., 2005). The archaeology of this period in the Great Lakes region is best known from excavations at some of Uganda's famous earthworks sites, notably Bigo bya Mugenyi (hereafter 'Bigo') and Munsa. There exist about fifteen of these sites, characterized primarily by ditches (trenches) up to four metres deep and about a metre wide at the bottom, sloping outwards to several metres wide at the top. The sites generally possess one or more of these ditches that often extend for several hundred metres in a curved line that sometimes equates to a semi-circle. Many of the ditches are crossed by earthen causeways, while a couple of sites, notably Bigo, also contain artificial mounds apparently associated with the ditches. Earthworks have been found in various locations: some are on or close to the southern banks of rivers; some surround, at least to some extent, a hill, though the hill itself may not be a particularly prominent feature of the local terrain; others are located on what is basically flat ground. Radiocarbon dates are available for the three largest sites, as defined by the extent of the ditch systems. Bigo may be the earliest of these three; one of its ditches seems to have been dug roughly between the late thirteenth and mid-fifteenth century. Two of the major ditches at Munsa,

a site that was occupied, at least sporadically, for several centuries before the construction of its earthworks, were dug during the fifteenth and/or sixteenth century. Settlement at Kibengo, and presumably the associated earthworks, has been similarly dated to sometime during the period from about the early fifteenth to the mid-seventeenth century (Robertshaw, 2001).

The function of the earthworks is far from clear. In the colonial period they were generally envisaged as having been defensive forts, an idea that perhaps reflects prevailing circumstances when this idea was expressed, rather than historical reality, given that the earthworks are often sited and constructed in places and ways that do not make much sense militarily. What is clear is that these sites were not major population centres; much of the area enclosed by the outermost ditch at each major site is virtually devoid of settlement debris; such debris is mostly confined to the relatively small central areas of each site. It seems probable that the earthworks had several overlapping functions: outermost ditches may have protected crops from elephants, while inner ones may have kept rulers safe, whether from internal or external foes, if one is to give credence to the story of the death of Kateboha, a 'chieftain' whose name is associated with many of the earthworks north of the Katonga River. According to the story, Kateboha lived at the centre of a set of earthworks with his family and servants; access to Kateboha's home was possible only by crossing a ditch spanned by a bridge of tree trunks, which was dismantled each evening (Lanning, 1959, p. 187). Beyond defensive functions, earthworks were centres for the redistribution of trade goods, including prestige items; they demonstrated the organizational prowess of the rulers; and they possessed symbolic content, signifying the power both of what lay within the earthworks and of the people who undertook activities there, presumably on behalf of the wider community (Robertshaw, 2001). Who were these people who organized the digging of the ditches and controlled the activities at the centre of each site? In Munsa's case these activities included the digging of massive grain storage pits, burials, and iron smelting, though the one excavated furnace at the centre of Munsa appears to date prior to the construction of the earthworks. While estimates of the amount of labour needed to dig the ditches vary, all agree that it was considerable, in the thousands of person-hours at each site, and that this labour force had to be organized and fed. Although there is no need or evidence to indicate that the labour involved in these projects was coerced, the magnitude of the work suggests a complex political organization, though not necessarily of a sort that meets the definition of a state. We also do not know whether each of the three major earthworks was under the control of a different polity, or

whether all were united in a single polity, or indeed part of some other political system. Fanciful notions that the earthworks were built and occupied by Hamitic invaders from Ethiopia, Egyptians, or even the builders of Great Zimbabwe have been dismissed as nonsense by academicians. More persistent and *prima facie* of more merit has been the hypothesis that the earthworks, particularly at Bigo, are the settlements of the Bachwezi dynasty from the time of their reputed empire. Since an empire should surely leave archaeological traces of its existence, it was but a short step to link this empire to the impressive earthworks at Bigo and, by extension, to a 'Bigo culture' found across a wide swath of western Uganda often designated as 'Kitara'. However, while the archaeological dating of the earthworks correlates reasonably well with the results of historical conjectures on the dating of the Bachwezi dynasty, Bachwezi personae are identified in traditions with places, notably Mubende Hill, that did not possess earthworks, whereas the earthworks sites are often identified with personae, notably Kateboha (mentioned above), who do not appear in the traditions of the Bachwezi. Thus, if the Bachwezi controlled an empire, its capital or capitals cannot be identified with the earthworks (Robertshaw, 2002).

The use of Munsa for either occupation or major ceremonial activities seems to have ceased by about 1700 at the latest, while Bigo may have been abandoned much earlier. The abandonment of Munsa appears to have followed a period of prolonged drought conditions from the late sixteenth to the late eighteenth century, after which there is evidence of forest expansion. By this time, a pattern had been established over much of modern western Uganda of dispersed settlements under the authority of the Bito ruling dynasty who, from their peripatetic capitals, mediated relations between a pastoral nobility and an agricultural peasantry (Lejju et al., 2005).

The integration of history, anthropology and archaeology

The archaeological data presented above can be integrated with new anthropological perspectives on extant oral traditions and clan histories from the Great Lakes region to present – albeit only in outline (given space constraints) – an updated history of the emergence of socio-political complexity based on the premise that inequality may have been a byproduct of the continuous process of harnessing creative power in performative acts for the common good. The early history of clanship in Buganda, roughly around the

early second millennium BCE, reveals 'how the domains of public healing and politics were intimately entwined in practical ways' (Kodesh, 2008, p. 200). The basis for this in early history was the existence of shrines, located on each clan's primary estate, where ancestors were remembered and individuals sought help with their personal problems such as infertility and poverty. Gatherings at these sites of relatively egalitarian clan members 'drew upon the idea that the public recognition of common spiritual entities generated the conditions for collective prosperity', while the 'dispersed shrines constituted ritual networks that shaped the framework within which communities sought their collective health' (ibid., p. 204). Analysis of the clan histories also indicates that gatherings at shrines brought together not only people but also knowledge, assembling people with varied skills and knowledge into communities who could thus improve its economic and spiritual well-being (ibid., p. 208). Thus, these shrines, tied to ancestral spirits, served as centres, not only in Buganda but also more broadly across the Great Lakes region, whereby local leaders could assemble the wealth-in-people that marks many successful African polities. However, these shrines and the spirits they served were territorially based, for they were situated on the lands of the ancestors, and the leaders of these communities drew their authority from claiming their primacy on the land and, therefore, a direct link to the ancestral spirits. Thus, opportunities for the expansion of a political power that had been founded upon these territorial communities were very limited since it was tied to specific clan lands (Schoenbrun, 2006, pp. 1424, 1426).

A new era began to be ushered in when territorial spirits were transformed into portable spirits, a shift that may perhaps be linked with the rise, perhaps about the fourteenth or fifteenth century, of the Bachwezi, who were capable of caring for the health of people over much larger regions by embracing spirit-possession. As Schoenbrun (2006, p. 1430) remarked, 'the era of ancient state-building had opened with public healing central to its unfolding.' The Bachwezi then were not so much the members of a dynasty exercising instrumental (political) power over a vast region, but rather a loose network of spirit-mediums (and spirits) who employed creative power to develop expansive polities that were not necessarily tied to specific territories. Of course, this process of state formation was far from straightforward; while spirits and their mediums were themselves powerful, they had to cope with changing climatic and economic contexts, exemplified respectively by drought and, in the Buganda case, a new system of intensive banana farming (Schoenbrun, 1998, pp. 80-81). Later still, possibly following a period of drought and famine, the arrival of new dynasties of rulers, those of the Bito and Hinda, decoupled creative power from

instrumental power, at least to the extent that the two types of power could be wielded by different sets of people. However, the new leadership, despite a strong base of instrumental power, sought also to co-opt those with access to creative power by bringing them within the royal orbit, both literally and figuratively (Schoenbrun, 2006; Robertshaw, 2010).

Two archaeological discoveries illustrate the history described above. First, the ceramic assemblage found close to the shores of Lake Victoria that includes the famed Luzira 'Head' has been interpreted as paraphernalia of spirit-mediums patronized by territorially based spirits among whom pythons were prominent. These ceramic figures were decommissioned and buried, probably around the twelfth century, as the transition to larger political entities tied together by portable spirits took hold (Schoenbrun, 2016). Second, Mubende Hill has a complex history that begins archaeologically with small numbers of Urewe sherds that might be assumed to date to the first millennium BCE (or earlier) but could have been introduced as heirloom artefacts in later times. The main occupation at Mubende Hill, as revealed by archaeology, occurred in the late thirteenth century when the settlement was an agricultural village with numerous pits. Oral traditions identify Mubende Hill firmly with the Bachwezi; moreover, when the British arrived here at the end of the nineteenth century there was an active shrine on the hill to one of the Bacwezi personae, Ndahura. Thus, it seems plausible to argue that Mubende Hill was the home of a territorial spirit, either in Urewe times or in the thirteenth century or both, that was co-opted by the Bachwezi as part of an expanding political-religious network. Bachwezi spirit-mediums may have established the thirteenth-century settlement to annex the Mubende Hill shrine, or they may have arrived later, but without establishing a permanent settlement prior to perhaps the late nineteenth century. When Mpuga Rukidi, the first ruler of the Bito dynasty of Bunyoro, arrived from the north in the sixteenth century, he and his successors were no longer spirit-mediums but they nevertheless harnessed the creative power extant at Mubende Hill by incorporating this locale into coronation rituals (see Robertshaw, 2010).

While the process of the rise of institutionalized inequality and eventually of state formation in the Great Lakes region was, therefore, intimately bound up with public healing and the transformation of territorially based ancestral cults into portable spirits, other factors, albeit intimately entwined with religion, may have served to augment inequality. These other factors probably included feasting, as probably occurred at Ntusi, and the import of prestige items such as the glass beads and cowries found at both Ntusi and Munsa in the

early centuries of the second millennium. Where the earthworks fit into this reconstructed history is moot, particularly given the absence of a clear historical connection to the Bachwezi. However, the earthworks may represent the last gasp of pre-Bachwezi territorial polities that were swept away with the arrival of the Bito dynasty.

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SECTION IV

ANCIENT AND MODERN HISTORY OF AFRICA: AN UPDATE

INTRODUCTION

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Introduction

Chronological boundaries are fluid and difficult to set. Generally porous and always subject to debate, they are nonetheless necessary for the structuring of historical time. The end of the 'Initial History' and the beginning of the 'Ancient' and 'Modern History' of Africa overlap significantly. The first millennium BCE can be considered as the transition from the former to the latter. This being said, writing an accurate update of the ancient and modern history of Africa in the space allocated for this section is an almost impossible mission. The scholarly output on the last 3,000 years of Africa's history, combining the result of archaeological and historical research, is immense. Nonetheless, the assigned task was carried out based on a stringent sampling and tight selection of contributions. The authors explore a handful of themes: territorial dynamics as reflected in the construction of large-scale political formations; religious systems, native African ones, non-African ones and their interactions; the different facets of enslavement and resistance; and finally, the operation of an international economy and exchanges through merchant diasporas.

The contributions

Territorial dynamics are dealt with in two contributions. In the first, Mamadi Dembele explores the implications of site densities in the inland Niger delta. As generally used by archaeologists, settlements numbers and size are demographic proxies; an increase in the number of sites from one period to another is read as population growth. There are some limitations to this equation but it is a useful assumption. Relying on that rationale, the author points to a significant increase in the population of the inland Niger delta on the eve of the formation of West Africa's early states. In the second, M. Esoavelomandroso looks at the construction of the Malagasy states starting from the middle of the second millennium CE.

The history of enslavement and resistance is addressed through four contributions. Isabel Castro Henrique analyses the forms and modalities of enslavement in south-central Africa in the eighteenth and nineteenth century; Ismaila Ciss deals with resistance to enslavement in Senegambia; Idrissou Allioum explores a similar theme in northern Cameroon and looks more precisely at the diverse strategies involved, ranging from confrontation and collaboration to rebellion; and, finally, Rafindralambo Lolona analyses the different resistance tactics and strategies devised by enslaved Malagasy to escape from their captors. Merchant diasporas are one of the recurrent particularities of ancient trade systems. Idrissa Ba examines the long-term history of Jewish trade diasporas in North and West Africa, while Philippe Beaujard describes Asian diasporas in East Africa and Indian Ocean islands. Ludovic Gandelot looks at the formation and expansion of Gujarati merchants' families in the western part of the Indian Ocean, and Chikouma Cisse analyses settlement strategies and identity constructs as they apply to the West African Jula merchants' diasporas. New topics are addressed in the last two contributions. Luis Felipe de Alencastro examines African foodways and culinary heritage and Jonathon Glassman explores the immigrant issue.

It goes without saying that such an update is severely limited. However, archaeological research conducted in different parts of the continent can be relied on to complement the contributors' presentations. The process of the formation of ancient African states has been shown to operate in cycles (Ibn Khaldun, 2005) that include the initial formation of a political core, consolidation and expansion through alliances and conquest, the rise to regional domination, stasis, collapse and fragmentation; and then the cycle starts again. The remaining part of this introduction thus focuses on the evolutionary cycling

of major political formations that emerged during the last 3,000 years in Africa. This does not mean that other social formations, like hunter-gatherers, herders and pastoralists, as well as self-sustaining mixed farming communities, did not follow evolutionary pathways of their own (Vansina, 1990). In fact, most of these communities were increasingly encapsulated in chiefdoms, kingdoms and empire territories.

The history of ancient African political formations

The pristine development of state formation took place in North-east Africa from the late fourth millennium BCE. A later phase of complex political formation started in the first millennium BCE in West Africa, and much later in East and Southern Africa (Holl, 2015). In his book *African Dominion: A New History of Empire in Early and Medieval West Africa*, Michael Gomez (2018, pp. 20-21) suggests that Gao was West Africa's starting point for the emergence of complex social formations. 'Re-examination of the textual evidence therefore requires a different starting point for early West African polity, with al-Ya'cubi's account a compelling reason to begin with Gao in the northern cap of the Middle Niger Flood plain'. In fact, the emergence of social complexity started much earlier, around 1000 BCE at both ends of West Africa: in the Dhar Tichitt-Walata in Mauritania in the west and the Eghazzer basin in Niger in the east.

At the end of the second millennium BCE, after the mid-Holocene arid phase (Durand and Paris, 1986), the distribution of Late Stone Age populations was altered with higher concentrations in some favoured areas. This was the case for the Eghazzer Basin and the Dhar Tichitt-Walata where pastoral nomads and agro-pastoralists carved out their cultural landscapes. There are a few elements indicative of institutionalized social differentiation, like the clustering of megalithic burials and their grave contents in the Eghazzer Basin.

The ancient African sociopolitical landscape witnessed profound changes during the first millennium BCE with the development of a four-tier settlement system in the Dhar Tichitt – Walata region of the southwestern Sahara in Mauritania (Holl, 2015), the emergence of pastoral elites in the Eghazzer basin in Niger and East Africa, and the formation of the Toutswe chiefdoms along the Kalahari margins in South Africa. Urbanization took off in West, East and Southern Africa, leading to the formation of more or less powerful and extensive kingdoms.

During the first half of the first millennium CE, mixed-farming communities dotted most of Africa's landscapes. Major river drainages like the Senegal, Volta, Niger, Logone, Shari, Limpopo, and so on, were densely settled. The Sahel, with its shifting boundaries between the Sahara and the Sudanian savannah, was settled by scattered populations of pastoral-nomadic groups, as can be seen in the Eghazzer basin in Niger, the lower Azawagh and Tilemsi valleys in Mali. Some of the settlements were selected for bulkier and longer-lasting occupations. The urbanization of some portions of West and East African landscapes has its roots in the second half of the first millennium BCE and the first half of the first millennium CE. The process was shaped by the intensification of interregional exchanges in raw materials, manufactured goods, foodstuffs and other products. Copper and iron may have been traded in semi-finished form as metal blooms and/or fully manufactured products, weapons, items of personal adornment, tools and other items. Foodstuffs included salt, grain, smoked meat and fish. Products from the savannah and the forest such as kola nuts, wild animal skins, pepper, dried leaves and tree bark, were traded for cloth or other craft items from the Sudano-Sahelian and coastal East African towns.

The role of the Nile and Niger rivers as main thoroughfares for people, goods, and ideas all across Africa is not surprising. Niani, Jenne-Jeno, Dia, and Gao were all connected to the river traffic. The development of international long-distance trade by land and sea amplified the economic and political role of some of these places. They became thriving markets and trade emporia. Gao and Jenne-Jeno, for example, were located at the intersection of two transportation systems: one linked to trans-Saharan trade involving dromedary caravans. The other, under the control of 'river-people' consisted of dug-out flotillas. People and goods moving one way or the other, were moved from one transportation system to the other. Other towns, like Kumbi Saleh, Awdaghost, Azelik and Marandet developed in unlikely and surprising areas. Azelik and Marandet were located in areas with rich copper deposits and both settlements were important centres for the processing of copper ore and the production of copper artefacts. The location of Kumbi-Saleh, far from major rivers in an area that appears to have no salient characteristics, has always puzzled researchers. Some, relying on this thin negative evidence, even suggest that Kumbi Saleh was a very unlikely place for the capital city of the Ghana kingdom. Awdaghost, the trade entrepot of the kingdom on the other hand, was located in an area with easily accessible water resources, from both seasonal river courses and a relatively high-water table (Holl, 2006, 2015).

Early states of ancient Africa

The names of such states as Ghana, Tekrur, Mali, Songhai, Kanem-Bornu, Mapungubwe, Great Zimbabwe, Asante, Mossi, Ife and Benin, evoke a past of splendour and might, only to be followed by later devolution. The names of several towns – Awdaghost, Gao, Jenne, Kumbi-Saleh, Tadmekka, Takkeda, Timbuktu, Birni-Ghazzargamo, Kukawa, Manda, Great Zimbabwe and others have sparked the imagination for centuries. They are associated with a Golden Age of African civilizations, a time when wealthy traders, great scholars and powerful rulers were praised for their wealth, knowledge, faith and generousity.

During the pioneer phase of archaeological research, much energy was devoted to the identification of royal and imperial towns mentioned in the Arabic historical sources (Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981; Mauny, 1961). Several hypotheses were formulated to explain the origins of early states in Africa. Non-explicit as they were, these pioneer investigations on Senegambian megaliths, Great Zimbabwe, Swahili city-states and Sahelo-Saharan towns, were nonetheless the earliest archaeological forays into the topic of early states in West Africa. Their explanatory model was a simple one during the heyday of diffusionism.

The first group of hypotheses, popular at the peak of the colonial period (Holl, 1985, 1990, 2000), was the 'Hamitic origins' theory. The concept of Divine Kingship, claimed to be a core 'Hamitic feature', was considered to have emerged in the Middle East. It spread from there through successive migration waves. African ancient kingdoms and empires – Ghana, Mali, the city-states of Songhai, Kanem-Bornu and Swahili, Great Zimbabwe and others – were accordingly assumed to have been founded by immigrants from the Near East (i.e. by Jews, Yemenites, Persians and/or Arabs). The Ghana ruling dynasty was claimed to have been founded by a group of Jews, the Bani Israel. That generation of diffusionist hypotheses has been discarded.

A second group of hypotheses was crafted almost simultaneously, sharing many features with the previous one. The focus, however, was trade as the 'prime-mover', and in this case trans-Saharan trade (Mauny, 1961; Munson, 1971) combined with urbanism and a universalist religion. Sub-Saharan states were thought to have emerged to secure peace and bureaucratic stability for the sake of commercial transactions between North Africa and the *Bilad es Sudan* (Land of the Blacks). Munson (1971) offered the most elaborate formulation of the 'trade' model, applied to the origin of the Ghana state. Relying on a series of similarities between the Dhar Tichitt prehistoric cultural remains and

those of present-day Mande-speaking communities, he considered present-day Soninke to be the most likely descendants of the Dhar Tichitt Late Stone Age (LSA) tradition. For him, the Libyco-Berbers, who invaded the Dhar Tichitt and destroyed its culture, expanded south, controlled rich fields of gold and reservoir of slaves, and organized the trans-Saharan trade to their profit. These trading activities may have created the necessary conditions for the beginning of the process of state formation in Ghana. Although better grounded empirically, this version of Ghana's state origins oversimplifies the processes involved in the shift to statehood, paying insufficient attention to the diversity and complex nature of the transactions implied in trans-Saharan trade. What can be called the standard model for classical Sudanese state formation consisted of four variables: 'the nomadic intruder, the divine king, long-distance trade, and Islam'.

In that era, archaeologists were looking for evidence of foreign contact and influence. After a few decades of research, and the steady improvement of excavation and dating techniques, the picture became much more complex. In the late 1970s the pendulum swung to the opposite end of the spectrum – local dynamism was emphasized to the exclusion of anything foreign (R.J. McIntosh, 1998, 2005; S.K. McIntosh, 1995, 1999). Some of the documented cases are even claimed to be 'unique' in world history, deserving a label of their own. Many generations of states, presumably with different evolutionary trajectories, are represented in the African archaeological record. It is this complex picture of the multi-directional evolution of early African states that is outlined in the following pages.

Initial conditions: *c.* 4000–2000 BP

Situated between 16°/18° 10' N and 6°/9° E, the In Gall – Tegidda-n-Tesemt region (here termed the Eghazzer Basin) is located between the Aïr mountain range in the east, the Tigidit cliff in the south and the Azawagh valley in the west. It is watered by numerous seasonal streams, the Eghazzer being the most important (Grebenart, 1983). The Eghazzer Basin record provides a spectrum of archaeological data, ranging in date from *c.* 4500 BP to 2000 BP. Some sites reveal technological innovation and the use of metal items, livestock herding strategies, habitation sites, megalithic burials and cemeteries. Surveys have recorded several hundred archaeological sites.

The Late Holocene occupation sequence of the Eghazzer Basin can be divided into two major periods. Period I (*c.* 4500 to 2500 BP), characterized by

the presence of pastoral-nomadic societies, has two main variants – one focused on cattle husbandry, and the other on sheep and goats. Social differentiation and territorial strategies signalled by stone tumuli cemeteries generated and sustained the development of craft specialization geared toward the production of highly valued goods in copper. Period II follows and lasted from *c.* 2600 BP to 2000-1500 BP, and is characterized by the adoption of iron metallurgy, with a shift of settlement to the south, with bulkier (probably for longer occupations) dwelling units with storage facilities. This period coincided with the decline of the previous pastoral-nomadic lifestyle, ending with the arrival of new settlers (Early Tuareg) from the north with dromedaries.

If considered from the perspective of pastoral-nomadic social dynamics, it can be argued that the Eghazzer Basin may have been part of the territorial range of five tribal confederacies during the Late Holocene. Each tribal confederacy may have comprised multiple segments (clans, extended families and domestic units) led by an unstable mobile pastoral elite (Holl, 2013). Depending on circumstances, fission/dispersal or fusion/aggregation, conflicts and competition, as well as cooperation and solidarity, may have triggered the concentration and/or dispersal of Late Holocene pastoral-nomads. In such a context, metal producers provided their fellow tribesmen and women with emblems of prestige and power.

The Dhar Tichitt-Walata is located in the south-western Sahara, in Mauritania, and was inhabited by agro-pastoral communities from *c.* 4000 to 2300 BP. The four-tiered settlement system that developed during this one and half millennium attests to the emergence of an early pristine complex social system, probably made up of competing simple chiefdoms. The whole system collapsed during a particularly arid climatic episode in the second half of the first millennium BCE (Holl, 1985, 2015). The Dhar Tichitt – Walata settlement system developed throughout three major successive sequences of unequal length: the Early Settlement sequence (*c.* 4000-3000 BP), the Middle Settlement Sequence (*c.* 3000-2600 BP) and the Late Settlement Sequence (*c.* 2600-2300 BP). The four-tiered settlement hierarchy includes one regional centre (Rank 1 site) at Dakhlet el Atrous, divided into a main village and a satellite site, covering 92.75 ha and located at the centre of the study area. Hundreds of burials in small stone tumuli are distributed on the periphery, as well as fenced fields and possible livestock corrals. There are four district centres, or large villages, ranging in size from 4 to 18 ha. There are also 12 small villages, consisting of 20 to 50 compounds, differentially distributed among the recorded territorial sub-units or districts. Finally, there are 72 hamlets with less than

20 compounds spread throughout the study area with frequency per district varying between 2 and 19.

The settlement hierarchy outlined above indicates a clear trend toward political integration and the buildup of a socio-political system prior to its collapse. The political landscape may have consisted of competing small chiefdoms with shifting patterns of alliance and warfare, with the possibility of one regional centre rising to dominance, imposing and extracting tribute from the others.

The first generation of states (*c.* 300 BCE–CE 1000)

The West African climate was particularly dry and unpredictable during the second half of the first millennium BCE. The agro-pastoral chiefdoms from the Dhar Tichitt-Walata collapsed, the population of the Eghazzer Basin dropped sharply and the emerging pastoral elites disappeared. The region's occupation was confined to a string of settlements of unclear status located along the Tigidit cliff. The marshlands from the Middle Senegal valley, the Inland Niger Delta and part of the Chadian flood plain, previously inhospitable, now attracted new settlers (Bocoum, 2000; Bocoum and McIntosh, 2002; Holl, 1996a, 2002, 2006). Food-producers' settlements (ranging from small farmsteads to seasonal camps, hamlets, and small as well as large villages) dotted the landscape of West Africa (Connah, 1981, 1996, 2001), from the rainforest in the south to the Saharan margins in the north. Iron production was already widespread, as well as many other craft specializations. The processes operating on the clustering of human settlements at the junction of the BCE/CE eras are still poorly understood, however, though the last centuries of the first millennium BCE appear to have witnessed extensive settlement relocation and population redistribution.

The general trend was that of settlements established along water-courses in a southward shift. West African socio-political formations, for the major part of the first millennium CE, likely encompassed autonomous self-sustaining villages, walled settlements, commercial towns inhabited by important trade diaspora, chiefdoms and centralized states, as was the case for Ghana and Tekrur (Ba, 2002; Bocoum, 2000, 2006; Bocoum and McIntosh, 2002; S.K. McIntosh and Bocoum, 2000).

Cities, towns and their hinterland

Most of the known major West African early cities and towns were excavated during the last four decades (Holl, 2006). This is the case for Kumbi-Saleh, the capital of Ghana Kingdom, Gao, Jenne-Jeno, Tadmekka [Es-Suk], Takkeda [Azelik], Niani, the capital of Mali Empire, Awdaghost, Sincu Bara and Cubalel in the middle Senegal valley, as well as Benin farther south in the rainforest.

The general picture is that of parallel development of urban societies in different parts of the sub-continent along major river courses like the Niger and Senegal. Local exchange networks existed as early as the third to second millennium BCE (Connah, 1981), but became more active during the second half of the first millennium CE, as shown by spectacular finds at Igbo Ukwu dated to the tenth century. The Niger River system, allowing for an efficient transfer of bulky goods as well as providing subsistence resources, was the key element in the thriving and dynamic social and political systems that paved the way for the emergence of centralized states. Dia was founded in 800 BCE, and Jenne-Jeno was settled in the third century BCE. Most of the major towns and cities (Kumbi-Saleh, Tegdaoust, Niani, Gao, Es-Suk) seem to have been founded between 300 and 600 CE and were more or less involved in long-distance trans-Saharan trade. The dual patterning of some of the cities layout, with a distinct commercial and cosmopolitan area at some distance from a more traditional local town, has been documented at Kumbi-Saleh, Awdagost, Niani and Gao.

Urban life was an integral part of West African cultures in the middle of the first millennium CE. Mortuary data, from Senegalese [*m'banar*] and Malian earthen tumuli as well as Senegambiam megaliths, point to the existence of social ranking (Holl and Bocoum, 2017), and once a number of key features of social ranking are part of the cultural context, the size and shape of actual polities can shift swiftly back and forth. Jenne-Jeno, investigated from the mid-seventies to the 1990s, is a good example of what can be learned from a town complex. The excavators emphasized that:

> Jenne-Jeno stands as one of the most compelling cases known for the indigenous emergence of large scale, complex society in sub-Saharan Africa. And yet it presents certain anomalies that do not fit well with some currently popular ideas about the structure and functioning of such societies. Archaeology, as a broadly comparative discipline, cannot really claim to have explained how and why complexity arises until its explanations accommodate the Jenne-Jeno's of world prehistory as smoothly and persuasively as they do the Formative and Preclassic periods of the world's 'great' civilizations (McIntosh, 1995, p. 197).

Three sets of facts are relied upon to support the above diagnostic: first, the agglomeration pattern of settlement appears to have unusual characteristics during Late Phase III and Early Phase IV. In other words, town sizes grew very fast and an earthen-rampart was built. Second, there is a persistent lack of evidence for hierarchical forms of leadership or of chiefly elites. Finally, there is the fact 'that no political/administrative hierarchy existed at Jenne-Jeno' (McIntosh, 1995, p. 397). The discussion of the archaeological record from Jenne-Jeno deserves to be tied more systematically to that of the surrounding lands, and even more broadly to the social evolution of the Mande World. It is indeed a very important and well investigated site, and was an integral part of the dynamic build up of new cultural groups that characterized West Africa during the first half of the first millennium CE. Surveys, test-excavations and art history (Togola, 1996) provide compelling evidence of social and political evolution in the 'land around' Jenne-Jeno. Burial mounds located on the edge of the Niger floodplain, which date from the eighth to the twelfth century CE and were excavated during the first half of the twentieth century, contain deceased buried in vaulted chambers with a large amount of 'exotic' goods. Among the recorded grave goods were items of personal adornment, such as carnelian beads, some metal items in alloyed copper as well as iron and, in one case, the skeleton of a horse. These burials were tombs of high-ranked individuals and those studied are generally located away from ordinary settlements. Consequently, the original localities of those buried are unknown. However, it is not wild speculation to suggest that their original settlements were probably located somewhere within the Niger River drainage.

A specific kind of three-legged bowl has been unearthed across a wide area, from the burial mound of El Oualadji, south of Timbuktu in the north to Niani and Kangaba in the south, Sanga, Kani Bonzon and Tou in the east, Kumbi-Saleh in the west, and Djenne, Tiebala and Mopti in the centre. These vessels were generally used in mortuary contexts and date mostly to the tenth to fifteenth century. The earliest specimens, dating from the sixth century, have been recorded at Niani. It is suggested that the legged bowl manufacturing tradition originated from Niani, in the heartland of the Manding in the south. It spread northward through trade, or migrations of specialized craft groups, or more likely a combination of both. Regional surveys conducted in the Méma region, as well as selected test excavations (Togola, 1996), present a range of archaeological evidence that is dealt with below. Further west, along the Saloum and the Gambia River drainages, there are intricate series of overlapping regional phenomena, represented by different classes of megalithic and earth mound burials.

The absence of rank-related evidence from the Jenne-Jeno archaeological records may have many explanations, the small size of the tested units for a 40-ha site possibly being among them. Jar burials were excavated in one of the site's probes (JF 1), but it is not known if they were part of a patterned cemetery. The mortuary record is probably the most status-sensitive component in the archaeological landscape. Taking into account the lack of mortuary data, and considered in relation to the tenth to twelfth century CE 'Prince-epitaphed' tombstone from Es-Suk (Tadmekka) in the north (Morais-Farias, 2004), and the eighth to twelfth century high-ranked individuals in earthen-tumuli burials in the southwest of the inland Niger delta, the Jenne-Jeno record may be read from two main perspectives. First, the town-complex can be considered as a 'politically a dwarf locality', without prestigious office-holders. In this case, the lack of direct evidence of rank and chief paraphernalia is not surprising. Second, it can be viewed as a 'booming' economically driven settlement, with a broad range of subsistence activities and craft specialists, all involved in regional and long-distance trade networks at the junction of complementary transportation systems. Third, it may have combined different facets of the above-mentioned political and economic functions, in which case, it is the excavated sample that is inadequate.

The first territorial states: Tekrur and Ghana

Ghana and Tekrur are contemporaneous territorial states. Both emerged in the westernmost part of the sub-continent during the first millennium CE. From the onset and phenomenal expansion of the *Dar al Islam* – the Land of Islam – (700 to 1000), West Africa was steadily and differentially integrated into the Arab-Muslim world system. Large autonomous villages and towns controlling a more or less extensive hinterland developed regional exchange networks. Agricultural products, livestock, raw materials and many other goods were transferred from one part of the sub-continent to another (Shaw, 1972). The earliest mention of Ghana is found as a place name in the *Surat al-ard* [Picture of the Earth] written by Al-Khuwarizmi in the first half of the ninth century CE (813-847). Clearer and more elaborate descriptions are found during later periods by authors like Al-Yaqubi (890) and Al-Bakri (1048). The structure and organization of both states have already been discussed at length in Arabic historical sources and historical scholarship (Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981).

The kingdom of Tekrur

Tekrur is less prominent in Arabic historical sources but well represented in the work of Al-Bakri (in Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981, pp. 77-78). The core of the Tekrur kingdom stretches along the Senegal River, from the middle valley to the Atlantic Ocean. The annual flood and the natural depression along the Senegal River valley provide prime land for agriculture and grazing for livestock. Numerous sites, including Ogo, Sincu Bara, Tulel Fobo, Silla, Cubalel, Rao, Sare Tioffi, Siwre, Jallowali and Dagana have been tested (Bocoum, 2000). Iron metallurgy was a particularly intensive craft with thousands of smelting furnaces found along the right bank of the Senegal River and at some specific sites, as is the case for Juube-Jabe in Morphile Island a few kilometres north of Cubalel where hundreds of furnaces dating from the sixth to the fourteenth century have been documented. Oral traditions portray the rise to kingship and the later demise of the Jaa-Ogo dynasty of iron-masters in a cultural context dominated by mixed farming communities, with an important component of pastoral nomadism (Ba, 2002; Bocoum, 2006; Bocoum and McIntosh, 2002; McIntosh et al., 2016).

The kingdom of Ghana

The territorial extent of the Ghana kingdom is not well known, but its southern boundaries seem to have coincided with the Senegal River in the south-west and the Niger River in the south-east. The northern boundary would have been situated between the latitudes of 21° and 22° N. The territory appears to have been of an irregular oblong shape measuring approximately 200,000 to 300,000 square kilometres with its core in the Awkar, which was also the name of the country according to Al-Bakri (in Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981, p. 79). The state socio-political organization was articulated around a monarch, called the *Manga*, who was at the same time the chief priest of the Snake Cult. His residence, probably built with *pise,* was located in a royal town at some distance from the commercial and cosmopolitan city, excavated by S. Berthier (1997).

Districts were administered by officials called *tunka*. At the climax of the Ghana state, between 900 and 1100 CE, the bulk of its wealth came from the trans-Saharan trade. Gold, slaves and pelts were exchanged for salt, dates, books and luxury items from the Mediterranean world. The society was ranked and consisted of four main groups with the monarch, his kin and noble lineages forming the apex of the social pyramid. District officials and those in the service

of the state came second. The third tier comprised free-born individuals, traders, farmers, herders and crafts people, and slaves belonged to the fourth and bottom social group. This social hierarchy is confirmed by Al-Bakri's description of the Royal court ceremonies, the construction of an earthen tumulus to bury the deceased *manga*, as well as the material excavated from a large cemetery south-west of Kumbi-Saleh (Mauny, 1961). The excavation of the Kumbi-Saleh cemetery revealed large multi-roomed colonnaded tombs, which included a central burial chamber containing the remains of high-ranked individuals with the members of their entourage buried in smaller secondary rooms. Although it is thought that all the deceased, including the central personage, were buried at the same time, no evidence is presented to support this suggestion. The monumental colonnaded tombs can be argued to have been a family property, in which case, each family member would have expected to be buried there at his/her death.

Archaeological research undertaken within the boundaries of the Ghana kingdom was aided by Arabic historical sources, with Awdaghost and Kumbi-Saleh the main targets of systematic work. The urban layout, with house complexes built of mud-brick and stone walls, appeared at the same time in both towns, between 600 and 900 CE (Holl, 2006). Kumbi-Saleh, the capital of the kingdom, was divided into two distinct towns. The ruler's town, which restricted access to foreigners, included the monarch's residence, a sacred tree grove and a shrine. Court officials and habitations of high-ranked lineages were located in the eastern part of the town. The central part with large stone buildings was inhabited by wealthy merchants, traders and craft specialists. Slaves and livestock were located in the west. The excavation of the Friday Mosque area shows this space to have been settled continuously from the ninth to the fifteenth century CE (Berthier, 1997, p. 30).

The Awdaghost excavation was larger and the occupation sequence longer, stretching from the sixth/seventh to the seventeenth century. The site measures 12 ha in surface extent, and the eastern portion of the main tell was the focus of a long-term archaeological project. The street grid and household complexes were exposed in relatively large excavation units and their change through time has been documented. Household complexes consist of walled units with varying numbers of rooms and courtyards, some with two-storey buildings. The eastern portion consists of large house complexes probably inhabited by wealthy or high-ranked individuals. This area yielded the bulk of luxury items and imported goods. A craft specialists' quarter was excavated in the south-west on the town's outskirts. Houses were generally smaller in size and associated

with evidence of pottery production and metal working (both copper and iron). The Friday Mosque was located in the west, with the north-western perimeter used as a cemetery. Thriving urban life and a general cosmopolitan atmosphere appear to have been some of the key characteristics of Ghana kingdom cities.

A regional project conducted in what may have been one of the key provinces of the state provides a different and complementary view of the dynamics of the Ghanaian kingdom. The Méma was located next to the central part of the Ghana kingdom (500-600–1200 CE), in present-day south-eastern Mauritania and western Mali. The region is a vast ancient floodplain located approximately 100 km north-west of the Inland Niger Delta, and south-west of the Lakes region (Togola, 1996). According to Ibn Battuta (in Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981, pp. 279-84), there was a trade route in the region in the middle of the fourteenth century CE, the area then part of the Mali Empire.

The Méma was visited in the 1950s and 1960s, and a few sites were tested by Mauny, Monod and Szumowski (Togola, 1996, pp. 96-97). Controlled excavations were carried out at some selected localities, at Sites B–E, south of the Boulel Ridge, where evidence for intensive iron production was uncovered. The tested mounds are dated to 545-970 and 1025-1225 CE, a chronological range that fits with the 'life-span' of the Ghana Empire. The documented pattern of intensification of iron production was linked to the imperative to sustain the booming demand among the growing population for weapons, tools and elements of personal adornment. This intensification exacted a heavy toll on hard wood and, as such, generated extensive deforestation and precipitated an ecological crisis. Kolima mound top deposits were tested and dated to CE 545-650 and CE 1280-1310 (Togola, 1996, p. 97).

Depending on political circumstances, the Méma was incorporated into the Ghana kingdom's core area and/or tributary zone at an early or later stage. However, the demise of the Ghana kingdom at the end of the twelfth century was marked by a sharp decrease in the number of settlements in the Méma. During its height, the Ghana kingdom (Holl, 1985, 2006) had seized the opportunity offered by its strong involvement in long-distance trade and connection with the Arabo-Muslim world to achieve extensive regional domination. During this period, the Méma was the site of craft specialization and the intensification of iron production. The subsequent excavations at Awdaghost found copper-production workshops clustered in special craft neighbourhoods.

Ghanaian society was stratified, with a hereditary king at its top. However, the development of social ranking ultimately resulted in an evolutionary paradox. It can be suggested that in its initial phase, the state system may have been financed

by taxation on different productions, but in order to secure a relatively stable income base, different activity groups were crystallized into rigid occupation groups, ranked according to their contributions to the state's income. The new system later superseded the older social organization, and 'fossilized' into a 'caste-like' social system. It has been argued that the extensive systems, with endogamous occupational specialist groups found almost universally in West Africa from the Sahara to the southern Sudan belt, are a socio-political artefact of early interaction between the Mande and the Arabo-Muslim worlds (Tamari, 1995). In contrast to Tekrur kings, who embraced Islam in the tenth to eleventh century, Ghana's rulers maintained a distance from the new religion. Aside from the appeal of looting, this may explain why Ghana towns (Tegdaoust and Kumbi-Saleh) were raided and sacked by an Almoravid expedition in the middle of the eleventh century CE. However, the kingdom did not collapse and the towns were not abandoned as was generally thought. Instead, its prosperity and wealth gradually dwindled and major trade routes shifted east to the Niger bend (Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981).

A Garamantian kingdom emerged in the Libyan Sahara with a series of fortified oases sites like Aghram Nadharif in the first half of the first millennium CE (Liverani, 2005). Its caravans connected the Egypt and the Near-East to emerging cities from West Africa (Magnavita et al., 2002)

The Mapungubwe State

In the southern part of the continent, the Toutswe chiefdom in the Kalahari fringe of eastern Botswana and the Mapungubwe state in the Shashe-Limpopo valley are the earliest ranked societies to have emerged at the very end of the first millennium CE (Pikirayi, 2001). They later developed into a full-fledged state for approximately 200 years, from 1100 to 1280 CE. Excavations at Bambandyanalo, Mapungubwe and Schroda indicate a connection to the international trade network of the Indian Ocean. In exchange, they provided products from the gold mines, animal skins and hides, as well as elephant tusks. Cattle husbandry was a central element in the Mapungubwe state political economy. It served as a repository of wealth with success measured by the size of the herds any potential leader could marshal. Settlements consisted of enclosures organized around cattle byres. The central site that may have been the capital of the new emerging polity shifted from Schroda to Bambandyanalo (K2), and then Mapungubwe.

Bambandyanalo, a mound site with huge rubbish middens, was an important village, part of a larger settlement system comprising Pont Drift, Mmamgwa,

Schroda and Mapungubwe. Its inhabitants were predominantly cattle herders and elephant hunters, living in sun-dried clay houses with beaten earth floors. It was abandoned during the second half of the eleventh century for a new central site at Mapungubwe Hill. This new settlement complex, including a hill site for the rulers and elite members overlooking a lower site of sun-dried clay-and wattle houses for the commoners, emerged at the end of the eleventh century CE. Mapungubwe state (*c.* 1100–1280) participated actively in the international long-distance trade and controlled a relatively extensive territory along the Shashe-Limpopo valleys. The settlement hierarchy, with Mapungubwe as the largest and central site, was divided into five distinct levels: 1) the dominant political centre, 2) hilltop towns inhabited by elite members, 3) large villages, 4) hamlets, and 5) farmsteads (Pikirayi, 2001). The state economy predominantly centred around cattle husbandry, long-distance exchange with the Indian Ocean coastal towns and the flow of tribute extracted from dependent polities. The causes of the decline of the Mapungubwe state are still poorly investigated (Pikirayi, 2001, p. 116). Its population started to decline in the second half of the twelfth century. A combination of factors including droughts, soil depletion, shifts in international trade routes and, very likely, over-taxation, put an end to the existence of the first Zambezi state at the end of the thirteenth century. Regional primacy shifted hundreds of kilometres north-northeast to the Zimbabwe plateau, first in the Mateke hills where small villages and homesteads were already settled at the very beginning of the second millennium CE, between 1000 and 1200.

The second generation and the Imperial tradition

From 700 to 1200 CE, societies from the Niger headwaters, inland Niger delta and the Niger Bend, along the periphery of the Ghana kingdom, were characteristically autonomous and independent peer polities adjusting to the regional balance of power and wealth. Such was the case for Niani, Jenne-Jeno, Gao, Es-Suk (Tadmekka), Azelik (Takkedda) and probably many other settlements (Holl, 2006). Large earthen tumuli (containing the burial of a single individual with luxuries, copper items and carnelian beads) were tested as early as the 1920s. They resembled Al-Bakri's description of the *Manga* burial and were probably tombs of rulers or high-ranked individuals. At Es-Suk (Tadmekka), a few princes' burials with epitaphed tombstones dated to the tenth-eleventh century were recorded (Morais-Farias, 2004). These tombstones were made of marble imported from Andalusia in Ummayad Spain. The cradle

of the Mali kingdom, situated at the Niger River head-water, was probably one of these interacting peer polities. Malian epics are replete with conflicts and wars between competing princes.

The collapse of Ghana freed the Fullani-Tekrur, Soninke, Sussu and other Mande as well as Sereer rival groups from their commitments to a central government. A new developmental cycle started at the beginning of the thirteenth century, which led to the rise of Mali. This cycle is embodied in a Mande epic which recounts the memorable rivalry between Sunjata Keita, the founding hero, and Sumaoro Kante, king of Sussu, chief blacksmith and expert in witchcraft. Sunjata represents one of the competing peer polities, the Manding from the south. Sumaoro represents another, the Sussu, a breakaway province of the fragmented Ghana kingdom, from the north. The Manding won the war, conquering and absorbing the Sussu, and started an expansion process that culminated in the fourteenth century with the conquest of the Sine-Saloum and the Gambia up to the Atlantic coast. At its climax, the Mali Empire was characterized by religious fervour, widespread learning and the development of the bard or griot (*Jeli*) class, sponsored by rulers, noble lineages and families. Kankan Musa, probably one of the most famous among Mali rulers, after the founding hero Sundjata Keita, made a memorable pilgrimage to Mecca in the fourteenth century, where he distributed so much gold at Cairo, that the precious metal was devalued for many years.

Several factors influenced the dynamics of West African states in the thirteenth century. The weakening of the Ghana kingdom resulted in fragmentation, and the significant decrease in rainfall affected the life of peasants and herders, and disrupted several communities. The consequence of such hardships was generally the intensification of raiding and warfare, and a shift in trade routes. Trade routes reached almost all major West African towns during the thirteenth century, allowing Muslim scholars to spread their teachings and merchants to explore new opportunities. Merchant diasporas were a common characteristic of all the major towns, at Kumbi-Saleh, Awdaghost and Awlil in the west, Gao, Tadmekka and the Tilemsi in the north-east, Djenne, Toladie and Dia in the Inland Niger Delta in the centre, and finally, at Niani in the south.

Archaeological research has investigated different parts of the ancient Mali Empire and the Niger River drainage basin (R.J. McIntosh, 1998, 2005; S.K. McIntosh, 1995). It revealed that one of the competing peer polities, Niani, rose to primacy in the thirteenth century and, through warfare, alliances and diplomacy, built an empire that lasted for approximately two centuries, from *c.* 1200 to 1400. The empire's boundaries probably shifted with changes in the

balance of power between the central core and distant conquered and tributary peripheries. As a result, Mali was stretched from the Adrar-n-Ifogha and the Tilemsi Valley on the Saharan fringe in the north-east to the humid rainforest of the Niger River headwaters in present-day Guinea-Conakry in the south, and from the Bandiagara cliff in the east to the Gambia River and the Atlantic Ocean in the west. The Niger River was the empire's lifeline and a refuge during droughts and crop failures.

Territorial expansion through conquest and incorporation is the crucial and defining process in the formation of empires (Alcock et al., 2002). For them to last, however, 'expansion must be accompanied by processes of consolidation, through which conquered territories are incorporated into the empire's political, economic, and ideological domain' (Sinopoli 1994, p. 162). The processes of horizontal and vertical social differentiation already at work in Tekrur and Ghana with specialized occupational groups, metal workers, potters, nobles, free-born, etc. was amplified and expanded during the peak of the Mali Empire. Some of the groups, mostly crafts people (*Nyamakalaw*) and griots, were locked into endogamous units (Tamari, 1995). The griots, through their creative interpretations of rulers' genealogies, expanded and set the stage for an elite ideology. Indeed, Mali emperors relied on both Islam and the art of griots to strengthen their legitimacy.

Empires like Mali (*c.* 1200-1400), Songhai (ca. 1400-1600) and Kanem-Bornu (*c.* 1550-1800) were almost in a permanent state of war, engaged in endless cycles of predatory expansion (Reyna 1990). They achieved the status of extensive multi-ethnic empires that comprised at least three nested kinds of territorial/administrative units. The centre, which extended more or less around the capital city in the heartland of the ruling dynasties, was under the tight control of central institutions, and was characterized by a lesser degree of cultural heterogeneity. The centre was surrounded by an extensive ring of conquered groups and allied polities in the tributary zone (Reyna 1990). Some of the conquered territories were ruled by junior members of ruling dynasties, others by kings' appointees and others again by allied high-ranked dependents. The third ring was the predatory zone (*Dar al gharb,* i.e. land of war), with constantly shifting boundaries. Raiding, plundering and military expeditions geared to the accumulation of booty were launched from the core area by central authorities and district rulers. District elites revolted several times.

From the middle of the first millennium onwards, extensive inter-regional exchange networks developed all over West Africa. Thousands of carnelian beads, probably transported along the Niger River, were found at Igbo Ukwu within the tomb of a high-ranking individual dated to the ninth/tenth century CE

(Holl, 1996; Shaw, 1972). Evidence for carnelian bead production and the exploitation of chalcedony outcrops situated in the Adrar-n-Ifogha have been recorded in the Tilemsi Valley in Mali (Gaussen and Gaussen, 1988). Both formed part of the thriving economic life of the Mali Empire. However, despite precise historical information (Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981), the recorded archaeological data are still assigned to an obscure Neolithic period, on the sole criterion of 'the absence of metal artefacts'. It is clear from the Arabic historical source (the anonymous '*Kitab al-Istibsar fi aja'ib al-amsar* dated to July-August 1191) that metals were not used in the manufacture of carnelian beads (Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981, pp. 138-151), which were extensively traded in different West African polities where they were highly valued luxuries.

> From the land Wargalan to Ghadames is about twenty days through desert country with little water. In this desert there is a mine of stone resembling agate (*aqiq*). Occasionally you may find in one stone various colors such as red, yellow or white. This stone is the most precious thing in the land of the Sudan – Ghana and other places – and in their opinion is like the ruby and even more beautiful. Sometimes, though very rarely, a large stone is found. When such a stone is brought to the people of Ghana they value it extravagantly and pay a high price for it. It resembles ruby in that iron makes no impression on it at all. It is worked and pierced by another stone called *ti-n-tuwas* as ruby is worked, and it is pierced with emery stone. The deposit of this stone is not visible until a camel is slaughtered and the place is sprinkled with its blood, whereupon this stone appears and may be picked up. In this desert also there is a mine of good white alum (*shabb*), the like of which is not found in any country and from there it is exported to all countries (*Kitab al-Istibsar,* Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981, p. 151).

Intensive copper production occurred at Azelik (Takkedda), and ingots were exported to Mali, Ghana and Bornu (Ibn Battuta in Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981, p. 302). The commercial networks alluded to were an integral component of West African political economies, instrumental in the rise and fall of regional elites.

The Mali Empire collapsed and a new Songhai Empire emerged, with its capital city at Gao, on the northeastern edge of the empire. A new dynasty of Songhai speakers, that of Sonny Ali Ber, broke away from Mali, rose to regional primacy, and started a new phase of expansion, this time northwestward, to the Tegazza salt mines. A new cycle started with the dominant commercial entrepots shifting to the east. Hawsa polities, as well as Berber ones from the Tegidda-n-Tesemt area in modern Niger (Bernus and Cressier 1999, Bernus and Gouletquer, 1976), were actively involved in long-distance trade networks as well as peer polity interaction, as evidenced by Mameluk Egypt gold coins found at Azelik (Bernus and Cressier, 1999). Songhai and the emerging Bornu

Empire, with Hawsa and Berber polities in between, were involved in a long-term competition for zonal primacy. Following Morrocco/Songhai's struggle for the control of Saharan saltworks (Teghazza and Taoudenni), Songhai troops were crushed at Tondibi in 1591 by a Morroccan military expedition led by Djouder Pacha. Combined with the shrinking Arabo-Muslim world manifested by the loss of the Iberian Peninsula, re-conquered by co-allied European troops, and the increasing prosperity of Mamluk Egypt, zonal leadership shifted further east in the form of the Kanem-Bornu Empire (Holl, 2000).

The Great Zimbabwe State

The Great Zimbabwe state emerged at the very end of the thirteenth century on the plateau of the same name with settlements distributed between 500 and 1300 m above sea level. Its territory stretched along some 300 km, from the Runde River in the south to the Save River in the east and north-east. The economic basis of the Great Zimbabwe state was not qualitatively different from that of Mapungubwe: it combined intensive cattle husbandry with grain agriculture. The connection to international Indian Ocean trade was, however, much stronger with an intensified export sector involving copper, gold, ivory, gems, leather and animal skins. The town of Great Zimbabwe, at the centre of the southern half of the plateau, was the main centre and capital of the state. Almost all settlements included prominent stone buildings, but nonetheless differed in size with homesteads clustered around small villages. Small villages generally attached to large villages, which formed part of a regional district dominated by small towns with the state capital at the top of the settlement hierarchy. Characteristically, all the regional centres and the Great Zimbabwe site are located along a south-west-north-east diagonal axis between the 800 and 1000 m contour lines. Nenga and Pamuuyu are located in the south-west, Great Zimbabwe and Majiri in the centre-south, Musimbira and Chibvumani in the centre-north-east, and finally, Matendere and Muchuchu in the north.

The spectacular architecture of the Conical Tower, Great Enclosure and Hill Complex at Great Zimbabwe is a testimony to the prestige and power harnessed and displayed by the state rulers and elite (Holl, 1996b; Huffman, 1996, Pikirayi, 2001). At the peak of Great Zimbabwe state power, from 1300 to 1450 CE, the Hill [royal] complex was divided into five main components: the Western, Cleft rock, Southern, Recess and Eastern enclosures. The Eastern Enclosure was devoted to state ceremonies and rituals as suggested by the discovery of a series of six carved soapstone birds, soapstone bowls

and geometric pattern decoration on stone monoliths and bowls. The heavy investment in the construction and monumentality of the whole southern side of the Hill Complex, which overlooks the lower City of the Valley Complex, was very likely designed as an unmistakable display of the prestige and power of the Great Zimbabwe ruling elite.

The demise of the Great Zimbabwe state was gradual but accelerated in the middle of the fifteenth century when the emerging competing states of Torwa, Mutapa and others captured the bulk of international long-distance trade. The post-fifteenth century period saw the arrival of a new player in the international scene, the Portuguese. They negotiated trade agreements with many African polities along the Indian Ocean coast and Southern Africa hinterland. Competition was fierce involving successive attacks, counter-attacks and retaliation. The Portuguese won and imposed a series of trade unilateral regulations and monopolies that ruined the previously thriving economies of the Swahili city-states (Kusimba, 1999).

City-states of the rainforest

The West African rainforest stretches from Cameroon to Guinea, interrupted in modern Benin by the 'Dahomey Gap'. It comprises a more or less narrow vegetation zone along the Atlantic coast, 400 km wide in parts of Nigeria but generally much narrower elsewhere. Archaeological research has focused principally on two areas: Ghana and Nigeria. In the former, trends toward urbanization have been documented at Begho and Bono Manso (Connah, 2001). Both sites comprise a number of distinct mounds. Begho, a large market centre with four distinct quarters set apart at 1-2 km, appears to have been settled in the eleventh to twelfth century, with its wealth and prosperity peaking at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Its inhabitants traded with the savanna, Sahel and Sahara to the north. The inhabitants were mixed farmers practising grain and yam cultivation with livestock husbandry, notably cattle, sheep and goats, as well as domestic pigs. Hunting as well as the gathering of wild and aquatic resources were common practices. The Bono Manso occupation started in the thirteenth century and lasted up to the middle of the eighteenth century. The settlement initially comprised separate and dispersed habitation mounds that later fused into an extensive coherent site (Effah–Gyamfi, 1985). The sociopolitical systems of which these settlements were part are still poorly investigated. However, it has been suggested that 'Begho and

Bono Manso do throw some light on the origins of urbanization, or perhaps state formation, in the fringes of the Ghanaian forest' at the beginning of the second millennium (Connah, 2001, p. 153). Both localities were either large autonomous settlements that controlled an extensive hinterland, or small 'city-states' connected to regional and interregional long-distance trade.

The developments in southern Nigeria were much more spectacular, revealing stunning art and craft traditions, as well as an extensive original urban tradition. The site of Igbo–Ukwu is located east of the Niger River in Igboland, south-east Nigeria. T. Shaw (1972) excavated an extraordinarily rich burial site that may have been that of a 'priest-king' dated to the tenth century CE. The deceased was laid in a rectilinear burial chamber, and grave goods included no less than 685 copper and bronze objects, 65,000 carnelian and glass beads, three elephant tusks, a crown and many other items. Ife, Benin, Old Oyo, Koso and Ipapo Ile, are all found in the west and south-west of Nigeria, in Yorubaland. Most of the ancient Yoruba towns are located in the forest-savanna mosaic. From a cultural perspective, Ife, located more in the forest than the savanna, and considered as the place of 'the creation of the world', possesses a remarkable range of art masterpieces (Connah 2001). Ife occupation seems to have started at the end of the first millennium CE, and floor pavements made of recycled shards and stones were a frequent attribute of domestic architecture from the twelfth to the fifteenth century. The town, delimited by an intricate series of walls, includes the Oni Palace at its centre. While the precise chronology of the walls is still poorly understood, it is nonetheless possible that the inner wall surrounding the Old town may have been the first to be built, with the outer one built after episodes of population growth and outward extension of the city.

Benin City, deep in the rainforest, appears to have been settled during the thirteenth century. Floor pavements were common in the fourteenth century, and an excavation probe sunk in the old Palace (Connah, 2001) has revealed the presence of a sacrificial well containing the skeletal remains of at least forty-one young women, dressed in fine clothing, wearing bracelets, beads and finger-rings. They were dropped into the 12.5 m-deep sacrificial well during ceremonies that may have reoccurred throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Offerings, including elephant tusks, were deposited in the top fill of the pit, highlighting the importance of the rituals performed in this part of the old Royal Palace. The Benin earthworks are particularly impressive. They cover an area of some 6,500 square km, and are estimated to have a total length of approximately 16,000 km. Their function and use are still debated among experts (Connah, 2001). The earthworks are the material testimony of patterns of land

allocation that probably involved corporate social units, extended families, lineages and/or clans. Their size, shape and boundaries seem to have been re-adjusted to cope with changing demographic and socio-political situations.

Ancient Yoruba city-states were political centres controlling a surrounding hinterland of a certain size. The Oba or king's palace built at the centre of the town also included ancestral shrines, ceremonial spaces and ritual features lavishly furnished with impressive works of art (Willet, 1971). The city-state officials resided in the inner-sanctum of the town, close to the rulers' palace. These members of the city-state government, the Oba family and relatives, the artists and craft specialists sponsored by the palace, were probably granted land and owned farms in the countryside, all plots that may have been delimited by earthworks. Dependents and other family members were very likely living on these plots, growing yams, oil palms and other products needed to feed the towns' inhabitants. The system of earthworks incidentally strengthened the static defence systems of each of the city-states. The onset of the Atlantic slave trade sharpened the competition among Yoruba city-states, and the brutal intrusion of the Europeans, epitomized by the sack of Benin by a British Expeditionary Force in the nineteenth century, inflicted a deadly wound on this otherwise prestigious and powerful ruling dynasty.

Intriguing concentrations of monoliths are found in the Cross River area, in south-eastern Nigeria. They are organized in two sub-regional clusters, the Ikom in the south and the Ukelle/Nsadop in the north. These blocks of standing stone are made from a variety of local rock, some short, others tall, some plain and others elaborately decorated. The decoration is generally articulated around human body characteristics. Archaeological research has not yet tackled the issue of the Cross River monoliths but the versatility and polysemy of their use within the local cultural systems is remarkable. Some represent lineages, others are used to perform rituals, others still served as 'wishing spots', etc. Clearly, the 'meaning' of these culturally charged standing stones cannot be accessed without a good grasp of the social practices of which they were a part. This is precisely the kind of dilemma archaeologists are faced with daily. The socio-cultural relevance of these monuments, which are still part of the fabric of local communities, remain out of archaeologists' reach.

Differentiated urban traditions emerged in the West African rainforest during the last two millennia. The onset of the Atlantic slave trade exacerbated the competition and rivalry between Yoruba city-states resulting in the rise of expansionist empires like Old Oyo. Elsewhere, dispersed homesteads, nucleated villages and strong urban centres coexisted with fluctuating physical and cultural boundaries.

Concluding remarks

Surprisingly, in West and Southern Africa, the earliest cases of emergent complexity and state formations are found in a drought-prone zone (Durand and Paris, 1986). With time, larger states and empires expanded to the south and north. The Mali Empire included a significant wetter portion in the south-west. Songhay and Kanem-Bornu, on the other hand, spread more significantly north into the Saharan desert. The Dhar Tichitt-Walata and the Eghazzer Basin were settled during periods of heightened climatic instability, as was also the case for the Houlouf region, the core of the Ghana kingdom, and the Méma. Well depths recorded systematically at Awdaghost provide interesting clues on climatic change: the water table was reached at a depth of 9.90 m in a new 1971 well. The depth of early wells up to the eleventh century varied from 3.00 to 4.40 m and for later ones, dating from the twelfth to the seventeenth century, from 5.40 to 7.30 m. Agricultural production, livestock management, craft works and organized community life were certainly periodically disrupted by drought spells. In the context of such instability, one might expect the creation of cultural structures and institutions geared to monitor and buffer changes in resource availability to ensure survival and order (Baines and Yoffee, 1998). Such arrangements range from virtually equal group interaction to unequal and often violent domination, including through religion.

Native African religious practices went unchallenged in the Dhar Tichitt-Walata, the Eghazzer Basin, the Toutswe chiefdom, and the Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe states. Islam was adopted early and imposed as the official religion of Tekrur royalty. Ghana monarchs kept faith in their native land religion but tolerated the presence of cosmopolitan Muslim merchants and scholars diaspora. Early Mali relied on traditional religions and later shifted to active but still tolerant Islam in the fourteenth century. Kings were then expected to participate at undertake, at least once in their lifetime, the *Hajj* (pilgrimage) to Mecca. Songhai and Kanem-Bornu more or less followed the Mali model, but implemented a more militant and radical Islam with frequent *Jihad* (Holy wars) (Holl, 2000).

> Apparently, the various aspects of rivaling and cooperating groups, both occupationally specialized and socially distinct; the complex routes of circulation of goods, services, and information from both local and long-distance ventures; and conflict with neighboring cities and regions all built up a head of sociopolitical and ideological steam manifested in the emergence of new leaders, new forms and symbols of centralized authority, and new demographic shifts (Baines and Yoffee, 1998, p. 219).

The control of *means of legitimization* was the critical step in the emergence and routinization of elite groups in all the reviewed cases. Apart from settlement hierarchy and regional site distribution, the Dhar Tichitt-Walata archaeological record indicates the changing facets of the process of centralization aborted by increasing environmental hazards, during the second half of the first millennium BCE. Raiding, warfare and territorial expansion were key. The mobile pastoral elites from the Eghazzer Basin were buried with status symbols and prestige goods of copper and iron. For Tekrur, Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe, societies were ranked and/or stratified both vertically and horizontally. Differential contributions and access to services, goods, prestige and power were the norm. The emergence and maintenance of elites, and then of elites within elites, lie at the heart of civilization: legitimizing inequality is fundamental. 'Elites control symbolic resources in such a way as to make them meaningful only when they are the ones who exploit them. This appropriation of meaning is complementary to, and at least as important as, other legitimization available to controlling individuals or groups' (Baines and Yoffee, 1998, p. 234). The subversion of such elite symbols by emerging competitors generally triggers the collapse of complex social formations through fragmentation and secession.

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CHAPTER 1

POPULATION GROWTH IN THE INNER NIGER DELTA (MALI) PRIOR TO THE FORMATION OF THE GREAT EMPIRES

Mamadi Dembélé

Introduction

In textbooks focused on the history of West Africa, and in the subconscious of all those interested in the history of this region, the great empires of western Sudan (Ghana, Mali and Songhay) are considered to be the first complex societies in this sub-region. Even in research circles, very few scientists have questioned (or are questioning) the prevailing situation in this region prior to the emergence of these empires. However, this issue is not a taboo subject and has been addressed by a number of eminent researchers (Devisse and Vernet, 1993; Mauny, 1961, 1970). The questions raised were certainly pertinent, but very little research data were available at the time to back the interpretations being put forward. Fifty years on, the need for researchers to reposition themselves with regard to this issue has become even more pressing. This current approach is to investigate the demographic in the Inner Niger Delta, a prerequisite for the development of solid social organizations. It is impossible for a state organization to emerge from a void without any human intervention.

The Inner Niger Delta is a good case in point. This is a region with natural resources that favoured human settlement and expansion. This vast alluvial plain, fed by water from the upper basin and flooded for most of the year, extended over almost 30,000 square kilometres across the heart of the Republic of Mali, wedged

between the Dogon plateau and the sandy uplands of the lake region south of Timbuktu. The almost constant availability of water made this region a population catchment area. This explains the presence of numerous settlement mounds, which are in fact ancient habitats, and alluvial levees resulting from changes in the river beds of the Niger and its tributaries; the latter taking the shape of sporadic mounds, which are practically the only habitable areas in the region.

A region bursting with natural resources

The Inner Niger Delta is distinctive in the Sahel heartland because of the rich biodiversity of its ecosystems, both flora and fauna. Even today, the Delta is a migration hotspot for a host of birds, including ducks, storks and herons that flock here for the abundance of fish (Gallais, 1967).

The domestication of rice and fonio, fishing and hunting have played a key role in stabilizing populations in this region. Indeed, studies of paleo flora have established that the Inner Niger Delta was a centre for rice domestication. Various pollens and seeds were found during excavations of sites such as the *Togué* at Diohou (1992) and Ladikouna (1994). The presence of fishing-related artefacts is also significant at these sites (size of nets, hooks, diversity of fish bones) both at surface level and in excavation probes. The same is true of items related to livestock husbandry and hunting following the discovery of large quantities of animal bones (both wild and domesticated, including poultry) during archaeological excavations in the area. Crafts, too, are part of the picture. Ceramic shards litter *Togué* sites, with some locations distinguished by the presence of funerary urns and *Djenne-ferey* – small oblong clay bricks used for house construction. Craftmanship is also revealed by the presence of slag and furnace debris, as well as metal objects (hooks, diverse tools, jewellery, blades and knives). We cannot overlook the famous terracotta figurines (anthropomorphic and zoomorphic) either, which even today fuel a lucrative international trade, resulting in the looting of *Togué* archaeological sites, organized or sponsored by art traffickers.

An ancient population hub

It is difficult to examine the primitive settlement of the Inner Niger Delta without considering its relationship with the southern fringes of the Sahara, known to have been inhabited during Neolithic times. It should be remembered that these

southern fringes would have witnessed the retreat of Saharan populations as a result of a deterioration in climactic conditions. Indeed, the Méma, Tilemsi Valley and the Mauritanian Hodh saw the withdrawal of *Kobadi* people of the New Stone Age (3300-2600 BCE). The Méma, the closest region to the Inner Niger Delta, reveals its Neolithic culture via food-related items (fish, mammals), lithic (stone tool) implements (polished axes, spears), bone artefacts (harpoons, smoothing tools, pendants) and pottery (various vessels), etc. In fact, during this early Holocene period, it is more or less accepted that the area was characterized by excessive rainfall and that the tributaries which are now dead were probably fully functional. The region was so humid that it did not favour human occupation. However, the gradual deterioration of climactic conditions on the margins of the Sahara led to the drying up of tributaries of the main rivers in the Inner Niger Delta, as well as a sharp decrease in hygrometric capacity, conditions that do favour human occupation, hence the emergence of several villages, the ruins of which are referred to by the local Peulh populations as '*Togué*' (plural) and '*Toguéré*' (singular).

To illustrate this point, between 1989 and 1991, as part of the Inner Niger Delta archaeological site inventory initiative, entitled 'Projet Togué', 834 ancient archaeological sites or key anthropogenic mounds were recorded in the southern section alone, between the limits of Bandiagara plateau in the east, the River Niger in the north and the non-flood areas in the west (a diamond shape covering Djenné, Kouakourou, Mopti and Sofara), a region of nearly 2,000 square kilometres, fairly representative of the region (Dembélé et al., 1993). Field surveys were preceded by the interpretation of aerial photographs. These revealed hundreds of mounds, each of which had to be investigated to establish whether they were natural mounds, ancient alluvial levees, anthropogenic mounds or *Togué*.

A *Toguéré*, by definition, refers to an anthropogenic mound, an ancient dwelling, village or encampment. This means that 834 villages were recorded in the area indicated above, with an average distance of 2.8 km between two villages. This is a very dense settlement system, especially when compared to today's average (over 6 km between two villages). Within a 4 km radius of Djenné, 65 *Togué* have been inventoried around key sites such as Djenné-Djeno, Hambarkétolo and Kaniana, each with a surface area of several hectares (McIntosh and McIntosh, 1980).

Why is a *Toguéré* considered an anthropic mound? A typical *Toguéré* 'is a mound formed by the successive accumulation of debris of human occupation, especially mudbrick (banco) or plaster used in dwellings that have collapsed or been eroded by rainfall over the years' (Dembélé et al., 1993, p. 224). It is usually circular, with fairly steep sides sloping down into a circular depression

filled with vegetation. The circular depression results from the over excavation of banco used to construct the dwellings, giving the mound its steep slopes. This hollow also served a defensive function, especially during high flood periods. An oral tradition from Djenné reveals that this was the case for this city which, surrounded by flood waters, was inaccessible to French troops for almost three months in 1893. Had this city been abandoned centuries ago, the site would have had the same layout as Djenné-Djeno.

In a floodplain region like the Inner Niger Delta, it is possible that most ancient habitats were formed on natural levees. Why then an anthropogenic mound? As the main component is banco (mudbricks), after tens or even hundreds of years of erosion and abandonment, the earth loses all of its finer components. The coarser components, such as stones, pottery fragments and building debris, remain in place, buried in banco, and this is generally what can be seen littering the surface of the mound.

A settlement and refuge area

The results obtained in recent years from archaeological research confirm ideas already put forward that the Inner Niger Delta was settled by people from the northern fringes of the Sahara and later abandoned. The area became a zone of human occupation following a decline in favourable conditions for people living on the southern fringes of the Sahara. Neolithic inhabitants from the latter areas had no choice but to move to the neighbouring Inner Niger Delta with its highly favourable natural conditions for human occupation. We can see its initial colonization in cities such as Dia/Shoma in the ninth century BCE (Bedaux et al., 2005) and Djenné-Djeno in the third century BCE (McIntosh, 1995) during the last millennium BCE. It should be noted that the introduction of iron brought about profound socio-economic changes with the improvement of agricultural and craft tools and, above all, the production of weaponry for defensive purposes. In fact, the Méma proved to be a key province for the production of this metal, which was probably as valuable as gold at the time.

As a fall-back area, all the conditions were in place for the Inner Niger Delta to experience a real population boom. The creation and expansion of a state organization (Ghana) on its western fringes, based on the gold trade, certainly caused a population surge towards the west. While here is not the place to revisit this state, which established a strong social and administrative government in the region based on trade (mainly gold) with the Mediterranean

basin, local and Arab-Berber sources provide a wealth of information about the Ghana Empire and the Inner Niger Delta nestling along its northern fringes, which functioned as an essential route for goods either going to, or coming from, the Mediterranean basin (Ouédraogo, 2013). The same historical traditions suggest that the decline of Ghana was followed by seven successive years of drought (according to some) and a Saharan Berber invasion (according to others). Whatever the motive, the country of Ghana experienced a strong migratory push eastwards towards the humid fringes of the Inner Niger Delta, a passageway towards the immense floodplains of the River Niger and an area favourable to human occupation.

All of which leads us to another settlement phase in the inner Delta, that of the *Togué*. We have described the *Togué* as the only places in the area providing a safe haven from water for most of the year. This occupation phase, which probably started around the ninth century BCE, must have continued during the era of the great empires of Western Sudan. The fall of Ghana in the eleventh century probably resulted in a significant influx of people from its major cities. The emergence of Mali two centuries later, not only boosted settlement levels in the region which was both a reservoir of natural resources and an essential transit route for products that fed trans-Saharan trade, commercial endeavours that created the eminence and prosperity of the great empires of Sudan (Keita, 2011).

Méma, an iron-producing province that boosted regional development

The introduction of iron brought profound socio-economic changes in the sub-region. This metal was the basis for the improvement of agricultural and craft-making tools, as well as the production of weapons for defence. Indeed, the Méma region was a key hub for iron-manufacturing activities. This vast expanse of land, covering almost 10,000 square kilometres in the central-northern region of Mali, nudging the border with Mauritania, features flat terrain throughout, with vegetation made up of grasses and thorny shrubs. Annual rainfall levels range from 250 to 400 mm and the only crop production possible is pearl millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*), on the low plains where rainwater assembles. The main means of subsistence are cattle, goats and, very occasionally, camels. The area is now desert, with a very low population density. However, it must have been densely populated in the past, as evidenced by the many prehistoric settlement sites scattered across the area dating back from the Neolithic to the Iron Age. For

example, 102 archaeological sites were recorded during an inventory initiative carried out by the Institute of Human Sciences in 1984. In fact, the climatic conditions experienced in the Méma of the past are not the same as today. Rainfall levels were greater, probably between 400 and 600 mm per year, as is currently the case for the Inner Niger Delta in the east. What is more, Méma was watered by a tributary of the Niger (the *fala* of Molodo) that diverged at Markala, not far from Segou, snaking directly northwards before veering off in a north-easterly direction prior to emptying into Lake Debo. The soil consists mainly of a clay and laterite mix, indicating that the region was formerly a flood plain. This plain was once home to a melting pot of people as indicated by a high density of archaeological sites.

This region is a treasure trove when it comes to vestiges of human settlements, especially in terms of the presence of sites from different periods of history. It is not uncommon to find Neolithic and Iron Age sites side by side. This is in stark contrast to the Inner Niger Delta, where there only Iron Age sites have been found, despite a striking abundance of archaeological vestiges. As a result, the Méma region has been and still is an important research hub for understanding the evolution of human occupation of the Sahel in West Africa. The abundance of vegetation for fuel and the proximity of lateritic and ferruginous soil must have favoured the expansion of metallurgical activities in the region. Randi Haaland has already confirmed the existence of industrial-level iron production in the Méma region (Haaland, 1980), and believes that the Méma area provided a solid base for demand for iron by local consumers and for trade with neighbouring regions such as Ghana and the Inner Niger Delta. It is true that, at one time, researchers were divided on the issue of the introduction of iron to the continent. However, it seems that this question is no longer relevant. What is important to note is that recent research has led to metallurgical remains being found in the earliest settlements in Dia (end of the ninth century BCE) and Djenné-Djeno (third century BCE). It therefore seems reasonable to conclude this chapter by stating that iron production began in different areas of sub-Saharan Africa almost simultaneously (Bocoum, 2002).

During the Holocene period, approximately 5,000 years ago, the Méma region was watered by several tributaries of the River Niger, such as the Nampala branch and the Fala de Molodo, so would have boasted favourable conditions for human activities, as testified by the plethora of archaeological sites. The oldest of these are Akoumbu B, which dates back to the fifth century BCE, and Tiabel-Goudjodje, found on the ancient riverbed of one of the tributaries and dating back to the third century BCE. From these dates onwards, human

occupation appears to have continued uninterrupted as evidenced by the existence of many sites from different periods. Indeed, the aforementioned research initiatives undertaken by the Institute of Human Sciences recorded over 150 archaeological sites of varied dimensions, some of which exceeded one square kilometre in size (Raimbault and Sanogo, 1991). Subsequent research confirmed the growing number of sites (Togola, 1996). It is also known that all the sites yielded slag fragments and iron objects with various investigations confirming the presence of iron-rich crusts within an area 100 km long and over 15 km wide. The Méma was a strong iron-producing zone due to this rich crust, the water provided by the tributaries of the river and the wood used for fuel. Given that iron production requires large quantities of wood and water to heat and cool the metal, it is likely that the people inhabiting the Méma region would have been widely scattered across the region to prevent a rapid depletion of their natural resources. This probably explains why almost all the Méma sites had slag. The exceptional number of low-shaft furnaces on or near the ferruginous crust layers is particularly notable. The largest of all these sites is at Boulel, with over 500 low-shaft furnaces. The existence of such a large number of ancient metallurgical sites is unknown in the sub-region, except in Méma where iron production reached a level that Haaland describes as 'industrial' (Haaland, 1980). Such economic development in the Méma region, through the cultivation of fonio and other grains and, more specifically, iron production, must have contributed to the expansion of the political system which resulted in the emergence of great organized states like Ghana and Mali.

Conclusion

In the western Sahel, the emergence in the sixth century of the kingdom of Ghana, in the dry zone north of the Méma region, must have required the colonization of the hinterland to produce food, fuel and craft items, even though the climate at the time was considered milder than today. If we examine the location of this kingdom and its possible hinterland, the latter would undoubtedly comprise the Inner Niger Delta and its surroundings, watered by the tributaries of the Niger, in the south-east. Indeed, various studies have provided insights into how it functioned as an economic hinterland. The Méma, an important centre of iron production and a melting pot of cultures (crop farmers, livestock breeders), was undoubtedly key in supplying the nascent kingdom of Ghana, the precursor to a succession of state organizations that

stamped their mark on the turbulent history of the savannah and the western Sahel (Bocoum, 2002). The Inner Niger Delta and the lake region benefited greatly from these exchanges. Some traditions indicate that the kings of Mandé are likely to have installed representatives in the region in order to secure this crucial commerce, which would explain the existence of Mandé surnames (Keïta, Diarra, Coulibaly, Sogoba, Traoré and so on). Even the decline of Mali did not make a dent in the population boom (and hence economic growth) of this region. The last state organization of renown, the Songhay empire, also worked to maintain the momentum of trans-Saharan trade, which faded at the end of the sixteenth century with the defeat of the Songhay at the battle of Tondibi, which marked the fall of the greatest empire in Western Sudan. The situation changed dramatically in the sub-region after the fall of Songhay. As trade routes could no longer be secured, trans-Saharan trade was gradually abandoned in favour of trade established by Europeans on the Atlantic coastline. This naturally led to a shift in population to the savannah regions further west.

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CHAPTER 2

POLITICAL CONSTRUCTIONS IN MADAGASCAR

From Their Origins to the 19th Century

Manassé Esoavelomandroso

Introduction

A melting pot of humanity in the southwest of the Indian Ocean, Madagascar became a laboratory to test several types of states. Socio-political organizations favoured the emergence and consolidation of human groups with powerful identities, creating challenges for those wanting to unify them as a regional whole and at the island level in particular.

Settlement history sheds light on the political formations that emerged during a long period dubbed by historians the 'Proto history of Madagascar'. As immigrants arrived, communities increased in size and their organization became increasingly complex.

The first tompontany communities (prior to the 8th century)

It was through trade between Austronesians and the west Indian Ocean that the first immigrants settled in Madagascar. Arriving in successive waves and often settling in remote areas, they undoubtedly organized themselves in small autonomous or independent groups, and lived by hunting, fishing and foraging. In their villages and clearings, whether fringing bays, river mouths or confluences, united by the bond of residence, they lived under the authority of wise and influential older men. As the first settlers, they called themselves

tompontany or ancestral masters of the land, to affirm that their habitat and the land that fed them were theirs. They were the *tompontany* of the pre-Vazimba period and included the Kimosy or Gola in South Betsileo (Raherisoanjato, 1982, pp. 7-17), the Rasikajy in the north-east (Rabemanantsoa et al., 2011, pp. 133-148), the Antankoala and the Kajemby in the north-west, and the Antevinany in the south-east.

Later, other Austronesians, newcomers who were better organized than the first arrivals, settled on the island and established their own villages. Farmers who practised slash-and-burn agriculture, their contact with the *tompontany* was either peaceful or violent. Gradually, marriage alliances led to the assimilation, absorption and integration of the older settlers into the communities of new arrivals. But the two sides still frequently clashed and defeated *tompontany* were driven from their lands, ousted, minoritized and denigrated. The victors, the Vazimba, then declared themselves to be *tompontany*. However, until the eighth century, they had not established a political construction of any complexity. Indeed, 'even though the concepts of hierarchical political organizations were brought in by migrants from the beginning of settlement, conditions in Madagascar restricted their implementation because of the small size of the communities and their relative isolation' (Beaujard, 2012, p. 127).

Vazimba city-states, bridgeheads and principalities (8th–10th century)

Evoking the settlement and encountering processes of different migrants in Madagascar, Allibert clarified the roles played by city-states and bridgeheads (Allibert, 1991-1992, pp. 115-132). Founded by Austronesians, the bridgehead, he recalls, 'is defined by its dependency on metropolitan power. It is a colony, or a nascent colony and is in fact a satellite city of the metropolis'. Over time, it was 'doomed to transform into a city-state and then a State'. The Austronesians favoured the most irrigated regions on the Eastern seaboard as well as the highlands. Trading hubs and city-states founded on the northern coastline by the Islamized Antalaotra and Antalaotse ('Sea Peoples') from the ninth century, such as the Mahilaka in the northwest and the Irodo in the northeast, were self-reliant, self-governing entities. During the ninth and tenth century, migrants from East Africa consisted of Africans and probably also Austronesians who had settled there long ago, establishing themselves in the west and south of the island, both along the coast and inland.

The Vazimba were therefore joined by Africans, Arabs, Islamized peoples and more Austronesians. Contact was both peaceful and confrontational. Under the first scenario, the Vazimba mixed with the new arrivals, became their allies or were absorbed into their societies. The second scenario saw them resisting or succumbing to their attacks, following which they fled and found refuge elsewhere.

At this time, numerous political organizations appeared. Ideologically, despite exogamous practices, groups with an endogamous preference formed lineages that affirmed their identity by differentiating themselves from others. Their power was based on the bloodline that united them and on the *tanindrazana* ('ancestral land') that was their heritage. Seniority was the principle underlying the political organization of lineage. Specific lineages were reunited under the authority of commanding families, creating principalities whose leaders controlled the river mouths through which goods that fostered the Indian Ocean trading network passed. Thus, alongside the city-states, related, allied or competing principalities flourished, sometimes as rivals or enemies.

'State-building' dynasties (12th–15th century)

The period from the twelfth to fifteenth century was marked by great upheaval, with the peak of Bantu expansion on the east coast of Africa, the triumph of the Muslim navy in the Indian Ocean and the retreat of Insulindian fleets towards South-East Asia (Domenichini, 2007). Islamic ports were established in the north-east, and particularly in the north-west, where towns such as Langany or Nosy Manja (at the mouth of the Mahajamba River), Kingany, Boeni and Bali began to prosper, and where Arabs settled. Mahilaka's boom period in the fourteenth century declined in the next, and Langany took central stage becoming the capital of trading posts run by sheiks living in sumptuous palaces (Radimilahy, 1998, p. 130, p. 14).

In the sixteenth century, Langany was ruled by a Sultan who had religious and political authority over other chiefs and for whom prayers were said (Poirier, 1952, pp. 193-261, p. 218). Relations between these city-states and Malagasy political structures were cordial until the Portuguese invasion in the early sixteenth century and the creation and rise of Skalava kingdoms during the seventeenth century.

In the west (between Boina bay in the north, and Sadia or Sahadia at the mouth of the Manambolo river in the south), African pastoralists, hunters and blacksmiths organized themselves into several political groups, the most significant of which was the kingdom of Sadia, 'in contact with the Malagasy of

the interior and the "Moors" in the northwest' (Beaujard, 2012, p. 499). A divine priest held the most prestigious office: this was either the king himself or one of his close relatives.

New Austronesian arrivals from the twelfth to the fourteenth century along the coastline, the migration of the Anjoaty along the coast and their settlements in the river mouths in the south, as well as the arrival of the Zafiraminia and the rise of ancestors of the Andriana Merina in the interior, changed the Malagasy political scene, leading to the creation of numerous principalities (Rasamuel, 2007) and 'the establishment of kingdoms marked by strong social differentiation on the east coast and then in the highlands' (Beaujard, 2012, p. 366). These political formations, frequently allies but occasionally enemies, took root in the territories that give them their identity.

Different types of states and the ossification of identities (16th–18th century)

By the end of the sixteenth century, and from the early seventeenth century onwards, the different populations in Madagascar, which until then had been organized into lineages or clans, occasionally grouped together in principalities, forming kingdoms under the leadership and authority of dynasties originating from the last waves of immigrants who had integrated with the natives. The creation of these kingdoms, each extending within a well-defined geographical region, owes much to Arabized elements in the south-east that contributed to spreading the structures of a monarchical state on the island.

Principalities, confederations and kingdoms.

From the sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century, not all the populations in Madagascar lived under the same political regime – far from it (Esoavelomandroso, 1993, pp. 39-55). Some ignored the monarchical system outright or enjoyed a very short experience of royalty which they then promptly rejected. Others, in contrast, developed it in various forms. The Tsimihety (Jaotiana, 1987; Rabedimy, 1983–1984, pp. 157–161), for example, formed the state of Marosaina (the State of Multiple Pavilions) composed of 38 lineages or clans. Founded by the *Mpanazary* (prophet or law-maker) Rona, who was both the religious and political head, the Tsimihety state was a confederation of clans. Each of the 38 clans elected an *Andriana* to lead them (hence the name

Andriambaloambitelopolo) with the help of the *Sojabe* (guardians of traditions). After Rona, the *Mpanazary* who succeeded as supreme heads of the confederation were nominated and recognized by the *Andriambaloambitelopolo*. Another confederation of clans settled on the coastline was the Maroantsetra at Nosy Varika who became a unified political entity in the first half of the eighteenth century. This short-lived experiment was undertaken by Ramitsimilaho, with the collaboration of his Zanamalata compatriots. He wanted to create a great kingdom on the coast like the Boina kingdom, whose wealth, power and renown he knew well. However, the kingdom of Ratsimilaho fell apart after his death. The tangible result of his work is the name 'Betsimisaraka', which was adopted by coastal inhabitants who chose to remain united during his reign.

In the south, the Mahafale, divided into four kingdoms, and despite occasional agreements that brought them together in battle against the Antandroy and Masikaro, often engaged in raids to boost their zebu herds or slave numbers.

In the seventeenth century, people living in the Androy region came together under the rule of the Andriamagnare dynasty, a branch of the Zafiraminia. But by the eighteenth century, the Sakalava, Bara and Antanosy who came to settle in Androy caused the collapse of the kingdom. From then on, the Antandroy were divided into several principalities or clan groups, sometimes united in warrior confederations. In the far south, the Antanosy (De Flacourt, 1995), whose main king lived in Fanjahira, were split into dozens of chiefdoms, frequently at war with each other and only recalling their shared origin when fighting the French at Fort Dauphin or when facing attacks by Antandroy warriors.

The south-east was mainly a mosaic of small kingdoms whose authority barely exceeded the geographical boundaries that formed them. The 'peoples of the Southeast' (Antemoro, Antesaka, Zafisoro, Antefasy, etc.) were ruled by a multitude of petty kings who were either incapable of unifying this narrow, compartmentalized coastal plain, or unaware of the value and importance of such a political act (Deschamps and Vianes, 1959). The Zafirambo, who claimed dual noble origins via the Anteony of Matitanana (Amtemoro) on the paternal side and via the Zafiramania on the maternal side, founded a kingdom in the seventeenth century in the Tanala region. It was characterized by the sharing and balance of political and religious power exercised by the Mpanzaka (noble chiefs) and the Anakandria (indigenous chiefs) (Beaujard, 1983). In the sixteenth century, four great kingdoms (Lalangina, Arindrano, Isandra and Manandriana), organized and ruled by descendents of the Zaforambo (Tanala) and Anteony (Antemoro), emerged but failed to form a single kingdom.

The *Hova Mandrefy* or King, aided by diviners-healers *Tsimeto* and *Anakara*, the *Ondevohova* (administrators) and *Fanalolahy* (warriors), presided over the destiny of the kingdom. In Vohibato and Lanlagina, for example, the *Hova Mandrefy* 'is the symbol of supreme power, and of the political and territorial unity of said kingdoms. Royal officials and leaders of subdivisions who were well acquainted with the realities at ground level took care of business and sorted out problems and assisted the *Hova Mandrefy* on a daily basis' (Solondraibe, 1991-1992, pp. 15-46).

Regional hegemonies

The Sakalava, ruled by Maroserana dynasties, dominated the entire west. In the seventeenth century, and more especially in the eighteenth century, their two very well-organized kingdoms (Menabe and Boina) were rich thanks to booming trade in the region, with the kings establishing themselves as the only legitimate intermediaries with foreigners. In the Menabe region, noble clans and clans allied to the King choose 'a *Masondrano* (eye-in-the-house ambassador) with all the *Masondranos* comprising a kind of royal council. ... [T]he King is assisted by the Fihitse, genuine officials charged with collecting dues and disseminating the King's decisions throughout the land' (Lombard, 1988).

In Boina, government had more structure and more defined roles. The King was surrounded by a number of advisors similar to the *Masondranos*; in addition, he was supported by the *Manantany* (Minister of War and of the Palace) along with a Minister of the Interior, a palace marshal, a holder of traditions and a diviner-healer. In both kingdoms, the rulers had armies consisting of bands of warriors sent by clan or lineage groups and led by elders. The Merina (Delivre, 1974), following many clashes with the Vazimba, managed to reorganize themselves into little chiefdoms frequently at war with each other.

Andriamasinavalona (1675-1710) was the first to succeed in uniting most of the principalities in a vast kingdom. But during his lifetime his kingdom was split between his four sons, and Imerina did not regain its unity until the reign of Andrianampoinimerina (1787-1810).

The Merina people were surrounded by warlike neighbours (Sakalava, Sihanaka and Bezamozamo) who enslaved their captives, raided their herds and even destroyed their crops. To combat chronic famine, they undertook major agricultural hydraulic initiatives and introduced a network of canals to boost rice cultivation.

Marsh drainage and rice field irrigation, and therefore water distribution, required the population to work together in a cohesive and disciplined manner. Fear of an enemy attack and the dread of a bad harvest encouraged and fostered

an ongoing atmosphere of insecurity which further strengthened the cohesion of the group. Thus, at the end of the eighteenth century, Merina peasants were ready to accept a king capable of enforcing the discipline and solidarity that was crucial for the survival of all.

Andrianampoinimerina responded to this need. His wars, within and beyond Imerina, were aimed at ensuring the security of his kingdom, thereby satisfying the peasant body. But his wars also tended to meet the requirements of Merina merchants who wanted secure trading routes, some degree of control and the creation of a huge market where they could conduct their activities in peace. The concerns of his subjects therefore coincided with the dream of unity, that is, of the King's glory and political power.

Regional groups or historical identities

These Malagasy groups, although of diverse origins, have an undeniable ethnic unity because Madagascar acted as a true melting pot of human culture in the south-western Indian Ocean. However, as groups became more distinct over time in remote geographical areas, they created states, some of which were solidly structured, and which opposed each other as they sought to gain precedence.

These states, regardless of structure or size, are called *fanjakana* in Malagasy. This key concept of political organization refers to a territory (kingdom or principality), mode of government, the process of succession to the throne, the power or body vested with power, the period during which a man ruled his clan or kingdom and said ruler's manner of governing or reigning.

These *fanjakana* gave rise to 18 'regional groups' in which the Malagasy were usually distributed. The geographical setting played a great role in the creation of these 'regional groups' such as the Antandroy, Tanala, Antakarana and Antemoro. It impacted directly on their way of life, and their isolation from others added to the unity felt by those living in the same region. Historical factor also played a major part in consolidating 'regional groups' typified by the feeling of unity among their constituent communities. Their sense of belonging enhanced the birth of a collective consciousness within territorial zones, and a political consciousness that pitted people in other *fanjakana* against each other. This led to the ossification of historical identities of these 'regional groups': the loyalty of the Malagasy towards a particular region became stronger, without excluding village consciousness but often leading people to regard other *fanjakana* and hence other 'regional groups' as strangers, competitors, adversaries or enemies.

The kingdom of Madagascar – an unfinished construction

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, profound changes turned the political scene in Madagascar upside down. On the east coast, torn by internal strife, Betsimisaraka unity was just a memory. On the west coast, the power of the Sakalava kingdoms gave way to a slow inexorable decline. In the highlands, however, the Merina kingdom annexed Betsileo, coveted Sakalava territory and planned to take over the whole island. Andrianampoinimerina left the unification of Madagascar as his testament to his son and advisors.

Thwarted implementation of a plan for unification

During his short reign, Radama I (1810–1828) endorsed Merina dominance over other Malagasy groups, except those in the south, and a substantial portion in the west that evaded his rule. Aided by the English and by division between his enemies, and driven as much by his desire to unify the island as the pursuit of profit that mobilized his richest subjects, Radama succeeded in creating a state focused on integration, the 'Kingdom of Madagascar', but one which did not include Ambongo, northern Menabe, the lands of the Masikoro and Ibara, the Mahafaly people, and the Androy and Sahafatra region. This 'Kingdom of Madagascar' was recognized by foreign powers. In terms of international law, Radama therefore not only succeeded in creating a state but also a nation which should have been the task of his successors (Raison-Jourde, 1991).

Ranavalona I (1828–1861), accused by some of being a bloodthirsty queen and perceived by others as a determined nationalist, was in fact influenced by her official lovers Rainijohary and Rainiharo. From the beginning of her reign, it was the leaders of the main Hova clans (Tsimahafotsy and especially the Tsimihambolahy), already army chiefs, who seized political power and monopolized trade. Following the assassination of Radama II in 1863, and the expulsion of his brother and Prime Minister Rainivoninahitriniony in 1864, Rainilaiarivony, the brother of the Prime Minister, took control of the destiny of the 'Kingdom of Madagascar'. The husband of the past three queens (Rasoherina, Ranavalona II and Ranavalona III), and combining the roles of Prime Minister and Commander in Chief of the royal army, he exercised real power and ran the country for over thirty years. A worthy representative of commoners enriched by commerce and army professions, Rainilaiarivony focused all of his energy on reorganizing and modernizing the army, a key tool for establishing peace in conquered regions and defending the kingdom. Andrianampoinimerina's dream of a unified Madagascar, achieved in part by Radama, was derailed by the oligarchy.

The 'Kingdom of Madagascar'– an assertion of dominance

From then on, the nascent Merina oligarchy would do everything it could to increase its gains and maintain its privileges even at the cost of considerable hardship for the people. This policy aimed at maintaining the injustices and divisions within Malagasy society that undermined its cohesion. Wanting to ward off any potential danger, the oligarchy promoted the cult of nationalism to turn the anger of the oppressed Malagasy in Imerina and elsewhere towards its enemy, foreign imperialism. The concept of unification proposed by Andrianampoinimerina and initiated by Radama I became a 'colonialist' enterprise. High-ranking officials and ministers, as well as the governors of the provinces and the great families of Antananarivo, competed with foreign companies in Tamatave and Majunga to monopolize trade, securing many estates (especially on the east coast), raising huge herds of cattle and building magnificent mansions in the capital (Nativel, 2005). Thus, they gained control over both economic and political life. Apart from the responsibilities of the *Andriambaventy* (judges or assessors at hearings) given to non-Merina (Esoavelomandroso, 1979) minions amenable to the Merina cause, high administrative jobs and the top levels of the hierarchy of honours remained inaccessible to them. Indeed, the *foloalindahy* ('ten thousand men', who comprised the royal army) consisted almost exclusively of Merina, except for odd auxiliaries recruited from peoples considered safe (like the Silamo or Antalaotra Muslims). As a consequence, the royal army was perceived to be an army of occupation in the provinces.

The ruling oligarchy therefore sought domination rather than the fusion of the various communities on an island that was, nevertheless, formed of a single people. As a result of their colonial policy and because they were dictatorial, monopolist conquerors, Merina oligarchs were regarded as foreigners outside their province of origin. And so, the gap between the Merina and other communities continued to widen, a chasm borne of conquest, political domination and economic exploitation.

The Malagasy face an unusual enemy

The French conquest of 1895 would reveal the true situation of a country marked by division, antagonism and misunderstandings between its different populations. At the heart of the 'Kingdom of Madagascar', different social groups were in conflict with each other, creating an atmosphere of ongoing insecurity both in the capital and the countryside (Esoavelomandroso, 1989-

1990, pp. 307-317). At the end of the nineteenth century in Vakinankaratra (the sixth *toko* or district in Imerina), for example, the people were exploited and terrorized by *jirika* (bands of brigands) and *olon-dratsy* (pillagers) of all kinds as well as by those in power and members of the *foloalindahy*. Moreover, expeditions undertaken by the Sakalava brought desolation, resulting in most villages in the western section of the Betafo region being abandoned. The helpless population, left to fend for itself, tried to organize to defend itself against the abuses of royal army officers and Sakalava aggression. Most of the time, individuals and even groups of people turned to the Sakalava and made pacts with them. By doing so, they turned their backs on the royal administration and the army. The case of Vakinankaratra demonstrates the divide between the actual country and its legal structure, a divide that had serious consequences for the future of the 'Kingdom of Madagascar'.

This situation, more than ever, exposed the fault lines of Merina society. What could the defence of the kingdom mean to slaves, who, by definition, had no homeland or ancestral tomb? What could this kingdom mean to Merina soldiers who were not paid by the government and could only rely (as their predecessors had) on a fair share of the spoils of war that were now being snapped up by military chiefs? Senior civil servants themselves did not share the same attitude regarding the French conquest (Esoavelomandroso, 1977, pp. 43-73). Some of them, falling for the propaganda of the General Residence or mistaking their desires for reality, believed that if the war was lost, they could take the place of the politician Rainilaiarivony as Prime Minister and husband of the Queen or attain some other prestigious position, since France was only supposed to be concerned with Madagascar's external relations.

What could the 'Kingdom of Madagascar' possibly mean to a subjugated people? Moreover, the centralized administration, with its inefficiency and abuse, alienated them from the oligarchy, giving independent populations even more reason to remain unconcerned. When France began colonizing Madagascar in 1896, political unification of the island had not been concluded by the kings of Antananarivo. Nevertheless, this state with integration on its mind still existed. All that remained was to build the nation.

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CHAPTER 3

MODALITIES OF ENSLAVEMENT IN SOUTH CENTRAL AFRICA (18TH-19TH CENTURY)

Isabel Castro Henriques

Introduction

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, anthropologist Claude Meillassoux, while pursuing a new line of research centred on the study of African slavery, made the following assertion, drawing on the work of French historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet: 'in African societies, as in ancient societies ... the terms translated as slave could also apply to other categories', marked by relationships of subjection, protection, dependence, and temporary or permanent obedience 'towards an elder, a sovereign, a protector'. He also highlighted the fact that in these societies there were diverse vocabularies capable of accurately characterizing and defining the conditions and situation of submission or dependence, with no equivalent in Western languages which, faced with this linguistic void, chose to trivialize the term slave (Meillassoux, 1975).

In fact, both the term 'slave' and the term 'slavery' are relatively recent in the cultural history of the world: the term slave, from the medieval Latin *sclavus*, derived from *slavus*, appeared in the thirteenth century, while the word slavery only entered European languages in the sixteenth century. The use of both terms is thus a form of trivialization that, in a sense, created a kind of homogeneity in social practices, denying the very meaning of history. Even if historians and anthropologists have sought to handle this situation with the necessary care, we can see that the vast sum of notions and categories that define the positions

of each individual in the social grid have been replaced by two rigid notions that deny the very flexibility of society. The Western interpretation of ancient societies, especially African societies, is still structured today – despite the advances that have been made – according to the importance and generalization of the notions of slave and slavery.

A similar idea can be found in the late nineteenth century in authors such as Henrique de Carvalho, a Portuguese military officer and explorer, who could not help but notice the extreme inadequacy of the European linguistic grid. He found that the vocabulary of African societies was much more differentiated than that used by any Europeans, who depended on Latin terms: 'they [Africans] have words to distinguish between men and women, as well as words to distinguish them according to age, and even, for men, words that distinguish them according to their social class' (Carvalho, 1890a, p. 284). Carvalho, referring to Lunda society, points out the existence of *mururos* and *mubicas,* whom 'the Portuguese interpret as slaves', although for this author there is 'no equivalence between *mururo* and *mubica* except in the fact of dependence on a master who can pass them on to others – they are the currency of their transactions' (Carvalho, 1890b, p. 284).

While this reflection highlights the complexity of the issue surrounding the condition of the slave and the nature of slavery in Africa, it introduces the notion of dependence that, while generic and comprehensive, allows us to emphasize the diversity of forms of domination and existing social relations.

The dependants: categories and systems of organization

Integration and kinship

Let us begin with an observation: no African language seemed to know the word 'slave' before the arrival of Europeans, let alone 'slavery'. Although we cannot attribute to language the perverse effects unleashed on African societies by the slave trade, the truth is that this trivialization rejected more subtle and appropriate African forms. Today, we are faced with the dryness of terminology to highlight how the societies involved in the process were marked, to varying degrees, by this situation.

Nineteenth-century European travellers realized the great complexity involved in the condition of the slave and the nature of African slavery. In south-central Africa, the Hungarian Lazlo Magyar, using Western terminology, pointed out in the mid-1800s that in the societies of the Bié plateau in Angola,

'at least a third, or even half of the population… is enslaved, but among the slaves only a third are women' (Magyar, 1992, p. 37). What is immediately striking is the profound demographic imbalance, which is at the root of another difficulty: what technical, military and other means would have allowed this situation to be created and, above all, maintained? This can only highlight the inadequacy of the vocabulary that considers any and all dependants slaves. All the more so since the existing social techniques designed to ensure the integration of men, such as marriage, tended to reduce the number and status of slaves: slaves could marry free women, and their children were considered free, insofar as they were integrated into the matrilineal structure. In addition, slave women could marry free men, in which case their descendants were also free, this time via the patrilineal route.

African forms of slavery were quite tenuous and involved integration into family structures and the community. Kinship made it possible to resolve all problems of integration and status, making the social system flexible and repelling the most violent forms of domination and exclusion: newly arrived dependants – captured, exchanged, sold – were integrated into the kinship structure, acquiring essential prerogatives, including the possibility of reproducing.

The aim was to expand the demographic size of the group, as well as to reduce or eliminate the risk of the norm being distorted by an excess of unintegrated men and women. This is why Magyar's quantitative information is extremely useful, although his conclusions should be rejected. While these references make it possible to identify lifelong slaves, this category is difficult to consider, as it seems so contrary to African structures.

In this region, and taking into account the historical processes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the situation of dependants essentially focused on their integration, not only to create family members and increase the power of the lineage, but also to strengthen the group's demographics. The number of slaves who, as emphasized by several nineteenth-century authors, were able to reproduce and increase the networks of dependents and kinship, is testimony to the 'dignity... and general respect' associated with their condition (Capello and Ivens, 1881, pp. 294-295). It was thus thanks to the mechanism of integration that political leaders were able to regularly expand their family numbers, which would contribute to strengthening their authority.

If what most characterized African societies was the intertwining of family, kinship and religion, which allowed for the constitution of integrated and complementary structures, such processes naturally authorized the emergence of patriarchs, depending on a *primus inter pares*. That is, the political leader was

also the head of a family, which in turn was dependent on the rules of operation. This means that the social hierarchy, based on the family under the authority of the patriarch, was integrated into a broader kinship network.

This situation necessarily implied forms of organization that depended on relationships of authority and dependence. It seems excessive to resort here to the classic Hegelian pairing of the relationship between master and slave, given the way in which the rules governing the relationship between authority and dependence, which implied obedience, functioned. In fact, what characterized African societies was the enormous elasticity of situations, which implied an extremely flexible relationship between the different levels of social structure.

Origins of the situation of dependence

In this vast region covering the south-central part of the African continent, we can see from existing documentation that enslaved men and women were part of a much more complex situation than one that considers the slave as someone's property or possession. Not only could these dependants put into action personal defence strategies, accepted by the rules of society, but their conditions of origin, categories and functions were well defined and diversified.

We can identify the main conditions that could lead to the process of dependence or enslavement of African men: the absence of family, free will, heredity, debt, purchase/sale, war and 'witchcraft'.

The absence (real or apparent) of family

African rules considered that a male found wandering could be captured and integrated among the captor's dependants. In other words, the fact that he could not name a family or relatives made him prey who, as Henrique de Carvalho noted, would soon be captured: 'The *mururo* in the lands of Muatiânvua is the abandoned one, the one who is found in the bush and who has no family or relatives, or whose family or relatives are unknown. Whoever finds him takes him into their company and says *mururo á hunona* (abandoned to whoever finds him)' (Carvalho, 1890a, p. 284).

In a family situation, African societies provided for a system capable of resolving the incident at little cost, as any relative could ask the temporary 'owner' to return the captured person, who would thus be reintegrated into African social norms. This situation was particularly important when political and housing units were dismantled as a result of, for example, raids organized by

European or African slave traders. This meant that the family structure had the capacity to intervene beyond the village space, since status was not determined by area, but by kinship first and foremost.

Free will

The mere fact that there were mechanisms that allowed an individual – male or female – to voluntarily become another person's slave underlines the enormous flexibility of the system. The decision to become a 'slave' was made to solve an individual/personal problem – hunger, poverty, calamity – with such slaves regaining their freedom, with the support of their master, as soon as their circumstances became more favourable. Similarly, in many African societies, the slave had legal means to change owners if he wished to do so. One of the techniques used, called *vatira*, *shimbika* or *tombika*, consisted of offering dependants the possibility of changing 'masters', causing the latter a loss and offering themselves as slaves to compensate him (Magyar, 1992, pp. 16-17). In general, this operation involved not only the transfer of the slave but also of the family and all dependants, that is, all those connected to him, sometimes forming very large groups of between forty and fifty people.

This possibility of separation recognized for dependants forced the masters to manage their relationships with them cautiously, since such a separation, especially in small villages with around 500 inhabitants, represented real social upheaval and a severe loss of wealth – since this was based on the number of dependants – for the owner abandoned by his slave.

A situation of this importance had to be carefully prepared, but it is worth highlighting its primary function: to prevent the 'master' from creating conditions so violent that they would force the dependant to seek another solution. This situation highlights the impossibility of imposing a system of domination that objectified the dependant, as was the case in colonial slavery. Although African societies were deeply hierarchical, these hierarchies were not so rigid as to allow excessive authority on the part of the masters.

It should be added that such technical possibilities offered by African societies were designed to avoid slavery-type outcomes, since those who placed themselves in dependence on someone could regain their freedom – or rather their autonomy – thanks to their work, to which was added that of their dependants. These reasons make it difficult to resort to notions as reductive as 'slave' and 'slavery', which are still heavily steeped in prejudice.

Heredity

In these matrilineal societies, the children of slaves remained slaves if both parents were slaves. Children of a slave mother were also born slaves, regardless of the status of the father, whether slave or free, which implied the existence of marriages between slaves and free women/men. Magyar gives us vague indications on this issue, stating that in marriages between 'slaves...and free women…, their children, as the property of their mother, [were] free persons' (Magyar, 1992, pp. 14-15). Male slaves were likely to seek such a solution, with the support of their masters, to avoid having slave children. Apparently, society sought above all to create free men and women. This is a complex issue, and the explanation required knowledge of marriage as an integrating agent and of the rules of kinship that characterized the various communities.

Debt

The situation of debt slavery was always temporary, although it could become permanent if the debt could not be repaid by the slave himself, namely through his labour, or by the family that wanted to recover him. This debt could result from non-payment for goods received or from failure to pay compensation or fines for offences committed. In the matrilineal societies that dominated this region, it was rarely the debtor himself who was reduced to slavery, but rather a maternal niece or nephew – his sisters' children – whom he requested for this purpose: 'According to the laws of these peoples, nephews and nieces [can become] slaves, provided that their maternal uncle is unable to pay a debt' (Magyar, 1992, p. 16). This system, characterized by the existence of 'pledged' women, is hinted at in the social history of the region, based on the observation of Mary Douglas – who studies it and refers to it as a *pawnship system* – later taken up and expanded by historian Joseph Miller (Douglas, 1964, pp. 301-313; Miller, 1970, pp. 175-201).

The purchase/sale

A man, woman or child could be sold – for example, in times of famine – or exchanged for goods such as salt by a relative whose kinship status gave them that right, becoming 'slaves' to those who bought them. In Magyar, we find reference to the existence of these purchased 'slaves', called *dongo* or *pika,* 'considered as animals, without legal protection and therefore at the mercy of their "owner", who can sell them and subject them to corporal punishment'

(Magyar, 1992, p. 8). However, in the event of death at the hands of the owner, the latter had to pay the political chief a 'blood indemnity', which was translated into a sum of goods. This mechanism meant that situations of violence were very rare. The way Magyar emphasizes this particular aspect serves to highlight the restrictive nature of these actions, which also means that there were few genuine slaves in African societies. Moreover, the purchase may be considered a consequence of the commercial operations organized by Europeans characterizing the slave trade.

War

Eighteenth and nineteenth century authors report that war was one of the most favourable situations for ensuring the production of slaves, who were captured on the battlefield among the defeated adversaries. Prisoners of war, the defeated became slaves, dragging their families with them, all becoming the lifelong property of the victors/masters. Unexpected attacks that triggered violent combat also allowed for the capture of 'prisoners capable of working [who were] tied together and dragged away as slaves' (Magyar, 1992, p. 19). These situations of violence, that allowed for the capture of a very significant number of slaves, explain the constant wars between neighbouring populations, war being one of the most effective means of enslaving men and their families, that is, of increasing the number of dependants and, consequently, the power, prestige and wealth of the masters/owners.

'Witchcraft'

Using a European term to designate an act of a supernatural nature, Magyar referred to 'witchcraft' as a means of reducing a man or woman to slavery: 'people found guilty of witchcraft are not always killed... they are sold with their family as slaves, usually abroad, if possible to Europeans; because, they say, the sorcerer cannot exercise his powers against white people… This terrible and inhumane law is the main cause of the abundance of slaves for sale' (Magyar, 1992, pp. 43-44). This was the only situation in which the slave became undesirable, with society seeking to remove him as far away as possible, usually by selling him to the European slave trade. This highlights the importance of religion, which forced society to quickly separate itself from these 'cursed slaves', without renouncing their commercial value.

These different origins of the slave condition allow us to underline the complexity of the issue, while at the same time accounting for the importance

of African slaves in the organization of society. Reduction to slavery revealed kinship and particular ties, while the existence of rules for the protection of slaves and the different categories of slaves, with precise designations, fulfilled particular functions in maintaining social cohesion and the economic and political balance of society.

Social functions of dependants

Integrated into the domestic space and treated not as dominated people without rights, but individuals with their own mechanisms of protection, African slaves were not repelled by society or regarded as a threat. On the contrary, in societies where a man's power, prestige and wealth were measured by the number of dependants he had, they were very much a part of normal social practices and able to exercise their skills. Many artisans reduced to slavery did not have to renounce their normal activities, which aided them in regaining their freedom. As men dependent on others, their participation in the productive system contributed to strengthening the economic power of their owners.

The economic role of slaves in society should therefore be emphasized. Although they constituted a symbol of their owners' wealth, they also participated in productive tasks, whether in family farming or exercising a craft. Agricultural and craft production were the pillars of commercial activity that dominated the regional economy.

The commercial function of the slave thus went far beyond being a commodity, since they often performed the duties of a trader in the service of their owner. They were also used as porters – a role also performed by free men – in the vast caravans of long-distance African trade, which, before and after the arrival of the Europeans, crossed Southern Africa from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean.

Slaves did not therefore find themselves in a closed situation characterized by professional downgrading. It is true that, in most cases, their status prevented them from carrying out certain activities, but these were almost always temporary impediments, which society sought to eliminate in order to prevent slaves from becoming an autonomous body capable of disrupting social rules.

It was also possible to perform political functions within the framework of slavery. In many cases, slaves could attain political power, and in more than one political-family history it was mentioned that the family exercising power was descended from a former slave. Even if this origin was simply mythical, it revealed the desire to integrate the slave into the hierarchical structure of society.

One of the known situations in this region was the use of slaves by the Lunda chiefs to ensure the consolidation and homogenization of the largest empire in south-central Africa until the end of the nineteenth century. The Lunda emperors or their representatives entrusted the management of economically and politically important regions, usually distant from Musumba, the capital of the empire, to slaves appointed as political chiefs, with all the privileges and honours that came with the position. This was the case in the kingdom of Kazembe – dependent on the Lunda and rich in salt – which, at the end of the eighteenth century, was entrusted to a slave of the emperor, as reported by the pombeiro[1] Pedro João Baptista – the Angolan slave of a Portuguese merchant, commander of the Kasanje fair – in the early nineteenth century (Baptista, 1843, pp. 437-438). The fact that a slave could be controlled by his master and, above all, the fact that, as a man without a family of his own, he was not subject to the obligations and responsibilities imposed by the rules of kinship, made it possible to ensure the control of spaces, the strengthening of central power and the cohesion of the empire. Other examples were mentioned by nineteenth-century authors, such as Rodrigues Neves, a merchant entrusted with military tasks by the authorities in Luanda, who recorded a situation similar to that of Kazembe in the Kasanje region of Angola (Neves, 1854, p. 93). In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Capello and Ivens claimed that the Iacca populations were descendants of 'slaves from Lunda who had settled there' to consolidate the hegemony of Muatiânvua, the Luanda emperor (Capello and Ivens, 1881, pp. 123-124).

We can thus identify different degrees, situations and types of dependence, but a substantial part was circumstantial or temporary, offering Africans the immense possibility to manage socio-technical conditions. A man could place himself or be placed in dependence on another, but only temporarily, for various reasons, ranging from hunger to the need for protection, access to forms of power, and integration into a lineage and society. We are faced with a society that could not help but combine permanent conditions with the management of circumstantial ones. In all these situations, however, we can highlight the possibility, offered to all members of a given group, of being able to choose between dependence and freedom.

1 Merchant in the service of others, often African and enslaved.

The construction of the commodity slave: the violence of slavery and the objectification of Africans

The transition from the African condition of dependence to that of the European slave was a complex process. This was structured by European traders in Africa who were involved with internal trafficking. This allowed them to transport dependents, but also free African men acquired in the interior regions of the continent, to the coast, where they were definitively transformed into commodities and exported to the Americas.

Learning about slavery

Since the seventeenth century, documentation has highlighted Portuguese efficiency in the slave trade, whereby Africans were forced into Western-style slavery after their capture in the African interior. This process involved techniques of restraint and coercion beyond the physical marking of Africans' bodies, which were thus commodified.

Slaves were transported from the interior to the coast of the continent via the caravan system, and were restrained to control and prevent them from escaping. The techniques employed included ropes, pitchforks, handcuffs and *libambos* – iron chains that bound the slaves together by the right hand or neck, one after another, with little space between them, which made movement very difficult. These chains formed 'trains' of slaves, each carrying their *carapetal,* or neck pouch, as described by Luís António de Oliveira Mendes in 1793 (Mendes, 1977, p. 45). These internal journeys lasted for months, with trade agents taking on supplies from *presídios* – Portuguese commercial and military installations located mainly in the Angolan interior – where they sometimes remained for long periods of time. There, the slaves were forced to engage in new activities, and encountered the rules, habits, religion and language of the slave traders who bought and exported them. The harsh conditions of these journeys weakened the enslaved Africans, many of whom arrived exhausted, beaten and sick by the time they arrived at the coastal ports, where they remained imprisoned until they were sold to merchants and slave traders.

These enslaved men and women, who until recently had been free or dependants integrated into African families, saw their new conditions as slaves accentuated as they moved away from their region of origin, which eliminated their social relationships and marked the beginning of their process of desocialization. Enslaved Africans were quickly and brutally removed from their nation, their

community, their ecology, their culture, their religion and, above all, their families, and forced to integrate their new condition as 'commodity slaves'.

While in the interior of the continent slaves were held in prisons or occasionally in fortresses that had closed spaces for this purpose, the places in coastal cities and towns where slaves were sold and awaited shipment were logistically varied. They included open courtyards with high walls, with or without shelters, or enclosed spaces such as ground-level warehouses devoid of any standard of living. Food rations were scarce and the slaves were forced to go naked or wear standardized apparel very different from their African clothing. They were organized into groups, imprisoned and kept under guard, even while washing in the sea or undertaking activities imposed upon them by their owners.

Imprisoned in these coastal spaces, far from their group of origin, enslaved Africans were branded and forceably domesticated as slaves, using European techniques. These men, who had been free yesterday, were now dominated through sheer violence, with no possibility of escape or even revolt.

The transformation of African men into slaves destined for tasks in the Americas involved a series of operations that sought not only to turn them into a commodity demanded in the Americas, but also to disconnect them from their own origins. It was not enough to be a slave; like any other commodity, they also had to display the marks and characteristics sought by the buyer. For this reason, the caravans from the interior sought out the quickest and most reliable supply areas, choosing regions where men and women possessed characteristics and qualities appreciated by buyers, rejecting men who were uncooperative and unwilling to accept the discipline of plantations or urban activities.

The 'manufacture' of slaves

Marking the bodies of the enslaved Africans was an important step in 'manufacturing' slaves: it ensured their depersonalization and commodification and eliminated their African identity.

African bodies were carriers of 'information', just as the languages spoken served as indicators. Tattoos and scarifications functioned as authentic identity documents, not only denoting origin but also providing additional information about the initiation processes whose social relevance marked African societies.

For Europeans, these African marks that could not be removed were the symbol of the diabolical burden attributed to Africans. To neutralize this negativity and enable men to integrate into white society, they had to be enslaved and subjected to purifying rituals, such as baptism, their cohabitation with true humanity only possible through suffering and sacrifice.

The enslavement of Africans, whether free and captured or dependent and purchased, took place under these conditions, transforming them into the slaves of Europeans. Their bodies were re-branded and, torn from their group and territory; they were reduced to a position of absolute inferiority. Without family or deities, they ceased to belong to the 'diabolical' African space and became things within the space considered humanized, the space of European slave violence. The tortures inflicted upon them served to compensate for the violence that their mere defiling existence wrought against men, Christians and their religious conceptions.

Circumcised, tattooed or scarified Africans were violently torn from their civilizational framework with the brands that inscribed the names of their successive owners on their skin:

> They suffer the private mark of the Sertanejo, which takes them into slavery, so that they may be known and found in the event of escape... Upon arrival at the seaport, where they are to be shipped, they are again marked on the right of their chests with the coat of arms of the King and Nation... whose mark is branded on them with a silver instrument when their duties are paid. This mark is called a *Carimbo*. They then have to endure yet another brand…which their private master orders to be branded on them, under whose name and negotiation they are transported to Brazil. This is placed on the left of their chest, or on their arm (Mendes, 1977, p. 29).

Their own physical topography was thus profoundly altered. These African men lost their relationship with their group of origin as they were transferred and prepared to be sold as merchandise. In effect, if previous marks – circumcision, tattooing, scarification, dental modifications, hairstyles – created visible and legible links with their social structures, the purifying brand acted as a rubber that wiped them out and made them null and void. The new marks were indicative of the unprecedented situation of those who had been Africans and were now commodity slaves of the Europeans, first destined for the slave trade, then entrusted to American planters. The fact that the slave trade managers imposed baptism upon African slaves as an integrating mechanism was clearly insufficient, since only physical marks could ensure the importance of the transfer. Only a visible, traceable firebrand upon the naked body – as used on animals and goods – would prevent dissimulation.

Branding was the first major operation to transform the slave's body, and began when they were still on African soil. In combination with *libambos*, shackles, fetters, stocks, leg irons, chains, collars and masks, these firebrands ensured that they were unable to move freely in white society. They lost their individual autonomy and became commodities.

This characterization of African 'slavery' reveals how modern slavery, in which men lose their human qualities to become simple commodities, is an invention resulting from the intervention of Arabs and Europeans in Africa. Dependent Africans or slaves remained on the continent, integrated into African societies that depended on homologous values. This changed from the moment slavery and the slave trade practised by Europeans changed human and intercontinental relations. Exported slaves lost their connection with their territory, their deities and their familiar social values: kinship structures, an essential element of the African system, were rejected by European slavery. This system transformed Africans into commodity slaves, violently separating them from their structures of origin, denying their humanity and appraising their value in relation to the preferred commodities circulating in organized trade between European traffickers and African societies.

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CHAPTER 4

SLAVE TRADE AND RESISTANCE IN SENEGAMBIA

Ismaila Ciss

Introduction

Slavery and the slave trade in the Senegambian region have been the subject of numerous scientific, literary and artistic outputs, indicative of the interest that researchers and cultural actors have shown in this phenomenon, whose painful nature marked the collective consciousness of African populations. Slavery and the slave trade created a climate of physical, psychological and moral violence wherever the system was established, and the reactions to this climate of terror were strong and multifaceted. Social groups that experienced a hierarchical, state-based socio-political system, and were active participants in the system, were opposed by those whose political structures were more diffuse. These were lineage-based societies, often the victims of raids and slave captures carried out by aristocratic elites. It should be noted that opposition between these forms of socio-political organization was not limited to armed confrontation arising from slave-trading practices: it took many complex forms, depending on the particular political, economic and cultural contexts of each group. This makes the task even more difficult for researchers who decide to address the issue of slavery and the slave trade in the Senegambian region, where reactions to slavery and the trade in captives did not take the same form, have the same content or carry the same meaning everywhere.

This chapter does not claim to capture the full complexity of resistance to slavery and the slave trade in Senegambia. Without overlooking other aspects of the opposition that developed against slavery, it focuses more on the historical and anthropological dimensions of resistance, still rarely taught to students in Senegalese schools and universities. The following sections first discuss the dynamics of trafficking in the West African context, then focus on the armed resistance that arose in response to the numerous attacks by political and military elites against vulnerable groups (often cultural minorities), who also used their physical environment as a natural shield. It then focuses on the unique political and social institutions developed by vulnerable groups, and the reforms initiated by certain charismatic figures, to change the institutional order imposed by elites engaged in enslavement practices. The final part of the chapter discusses cultural and artistic expressions that exemplified peaceful resistance to enslavement practices.

Slavery and the slave trade in the Senegambian region

Specialists in slavery have advanced the theory that the slave trade was a longstanding part of African culture. Olivier Petré Grenouilleu emphasizes the internal origins of the slave trade in Africa and points out that slavery was commonplace there long before the arrival of Islam. These practices were facilitated by the organization of African societies into a multitude of clans and tribes engaged in chronic warfare, after which the victors took captives who were either integrated into their families or sold to slave traders (Grenouilleu, 2004). The author thus seems to focus on the 'complicity' of Africans, which is said to have predisposed the continent to serve as the main source of slaves for the Saharan, Eastern and Atlantic slave trade systems. For Djibril Tamsir Niane, although there is no doubt that certain African societies were involved in the slave trade, it is an exaggeration to speak of slavery being rooted in African culture, which is said to have carried the seeds of a system that made the continent a magnet for Arab, European and Asian traders (Niane, 2001).

Mbaye Guèye has placed great emphasis on the communal nature of African societies, where captivity was a 'humanized' practice, excluding the humiliation of the 'captive of the hut', whose sale was forbidden (Guèye, 1983). The thesis of a 'gentle' captivity is also taken up by Michèle Dacher, who maintains that the Gouin rarely hunted captives for commercial purposes, those acquired through purchase or payment of unpaid debts instead being integrated into the lineages of their new masters upon their arrival in the villages. Their new living

conditions were comparable to those of their adoptive 'parents', even though they continued to bear the mark of servitude (Dacher, 2007).

State systems in some societies in ancient Africa were discriminatory and exclusive, with rulers coming mostly from an aristocracy and chosen from within a few families, according to the law of heredity. In the context of the slave trade, war for this aristocratic class was an enterprise that sublimated, as Chérif Daha Ba points out, 'the virtues of the reckless, fierce, hardened warrior who neither feared nor fled death' (Ba, 2013). Although trade between the nomadic Berbers and sub-Saharan Africa flourished in the pre-Arab era, it became a source of discord as soon as camel-trading merchants began carrying out raids and pillaging in the Sudanese regions. It is in this context, during the first millennium BCE, that the kingdoms of Ghana emerged – the first Sudanese-Sahelian states for which knowledge exists albeit with varying degrees of precision (Bathily, 1989). The slave trade was certainly present in African societies, but it is difficult to speak of an organized system before contact with Arab-Islamic civilization. It seems that trade with the nomadic Berbers focused more on precious metals and salt than on 'human merchandise'. It was favoured by Sudanese traders, especially the Wangara (ancestors of the Joula) who used to travel to the Lamlam country to bring back gold (Ba, 2013). The few slaves transported to the Maghreb and other Mediterranean countries were, for the most part, the result of raids and pillaging by nomadic invaders rather than the outcome of ongoing commercial transactions.

The expansion of Islam in Africa, which marked a turning point in the history of the Berber Arabs, gave rise to the Umayyad and Abbasid empires. In Sudanese Africa, relations with the Arab world were fostered from the seventh century onwards by the conquest of North Africa and the conversion of the Berbers by the Muslim conquerors. These relations gave new impetus to Islam thanks to trans-Saharan trade, but above all to the development of powerful states in Sudanese Africa. Islam was already present in Ghana, where there were many mosques and Arab masters who taught the Koran. From the eleventh century onwards, the Almoravid movement encouraged the expansion of Islam in the *Bilad es Sudan* (Land of the Blacks). The cities of Awdaghost and Koumbi Saleh (the capital of Ghana) were destroyed, but the *Bilad es Sudan* continued to evolve within the trans-Saharan network. Cities such as Takrur, Awlil, Sila, Ghiyâru, Mafzâra (Makzâra) and Barisa were strongly influenced by Arab-Islamic culture, which, from the twelfth century onwards, underwent a new expansion with the emergence of the Mali Empire (Thilmans and Ravisé, 1980).

African princes who converted to Islam became increasingly involved in the trans-Saharan system, which was initially based on trade in metals and

agricultural products. However, slaves gradually came to play a central role, serving as labourers on Arab plantations in Spain, the Near East and the Middle East. Aristocratic elites mobilized enormous military resources to procure able-bodied workers for the slave trade, targeting mainly groups that remained faithful to their traditional beliefs (i.e. the inhabitants of *bilâd al-kufr,* or *bilâd al-harb*). These groups were considered by Muslims to be *mushrikûn* (polytheists) and *kâfirûn/kuffâr* (infidels), against whom they used religious arguments to enslave them (Ibn Khaldûn, 1997). Kahn Piankhy points out that as early as the ninth century, there were about 40,000 Nubian soldiers of servile origin in the army of Ahmad Ibn Tulun (founder of the Tulunid dynasty in Egypt). Hundreds of other Black slaves also worked on the plantations of the princely family at that time. In West Africa, the Lamlam country, reputed to be pagan, served as a reservoir of slaves for the powerful states (Takrur, Mali) and principalities of Barisa and Silla (Thilmans and Ravisé, 1980) from the twelfth to the fourteenth century. Expeditions against the *mushrikûn* (polytheists) were frequent, resulting in large numbers of individuals being captured and sold to Black (Joula) and Arab-Berber merchants, who then transported them to the Maghreb (Ba, 2013). The Songhay Empire was also heavily involved in the 'slave' wars thanks to its powerful army, which never missed an opportunity to attack the Soninké, Tuareg, Mossi and Kâdo groups. These expeditions could turn into inter-ethnic wars, resulting in large-scale slave captures. Diouldé Laya gives the example of the Mossi country, where Askia Daoud obtained more than 10,000 slaves during a raid (Person, 1968). According to Diouldé Laya, when the Askia were not themselves involved in raids, they encouraged other ethnic groups to engage in fratricidal wars, which allowed them to acquire human merchandise at a lower cost. A particularly interesting case occurred during the reign of Askia Issâka Mâmar or Issaka I (1539-1549), concerning the Boussanse (Boussanga), Dagâti, Mamproussi, Konkomba and Tchokossi populations concentrated around the town of Doûri, their capital, located at that time north of Timbuktu. The author points out that these populations, who were ignorant of slavery, came to ask the emperor what steps they should take to distinguish free men from slaves. On his instructions, they forged arrows and fought each other. From these wars the Mamproussi emerged victorious, displacing the other populations to the lands they inhabit today. The prisoners they took were enslaved: the emperor thus demonstrated that slavery originated from war (Laya, 2001).

It seems that war was still the main activity of certain African political elites when Europeans began to frequent the Atlantic coast of Africa in the fifteenth century. In regard to the Atlantic slave trade, certain elites had developed an

ideology that elevated military and warrior courage as a virtue; anyone who did not fit this model was deemed socially inferior and exposed to multiple kinds of abuse. Such social fragmentation, pitting the political elites against the peasant masses, reinforced violence wherever Europeans established the slave trade system. Some rulers in Senegambian quickly grasped the economic and military stakes of Atlantic trade and organized powerful commercial and administrative networks to oversee their interests on the coast. They needed to strengthen their control over the trade routes, which had become vital to their survival, with the support of European slave trading companies that had set up trading posts along the coasts, where a host of brokers (such as Lançados and Kulang) were responsible for facilitating commercial transactions (Boulègue, 1989; Ciss, 2012). Gorée, Rufisque, Portudal, St. Louis, Joal, Albréda, Cacheu, Freetown, etc. served as landing and embarkation points for slaves and other products supplied by Africans to European traders.

The slave trade expanded significantly from the seventeenth century onwards, especially in coastal states, which viewed it as a means to acquire weapons and ammunition, in order to further consolidate their hegemony. European trading companies used every means at their disposal to push African political elites to increase the number of slaves being transported to the American colonies. But while intensification of the slave trade was initially a source of economic prosperity and political and military prestige, it soon caused serious turmoil within the Senegambian states, which were embroiled in chronic wars (Barry, 1988; Niane, 2001). These conflicts exacerbated the economic and demographic crisis that was ravaging the slave-trading states, which were unable to meet the ever-increasing demands of European traffickers. In such a context, it is understandable why, in order to revitalize the trade, certain elites mobilized their armies to engage in warfare against the populations confined to the periphery of their states.

In northern Senegambia, for example, the favourite period of the Tieddo raids was harvest time, which gave them an opportunity to amass a substantial haul. Their strategy was to surround the village they planned to destroy at night. The attack took place at a time when the entire community was fast asleep. As soon as the leader of the band gave the signal for the assault, the huts were set on fire. The loot thus amassed was then shared between the ruler and the leader of the band, and the captured people were taken to Rufisque, Gorée or Portudal, the main slave trading centres of Kadior and Bawol.

Southern Senegambia evolved in the same way. In this region, the political entities most involved in manhunting were the Fulani states of Fouta Jalon and the Mandinka states of Gabou. Their political elites organized incessant military campaigns against ethnic groups opposed to the slave trade. They never

missed an opportunity to send punitive expeditions against the Wassolon, Sankaran, Solima or Bassari who opposed the slave trade or the rigour of Islam which the *Almami* wanted to impose on them. This led to endless wars, but the *jihadists* rarely succeeded in subjugating those they called infidels. However, these wars provided the *Almami* with an opportunity to amass a substantial haul of prisoners, who were sold to European traffickers (Camara, 2001).

Mandingo country oral traditions have preserved the memories of this period of lawlessness, known by the local population as 'the time of brigands' (*Tĕguéré* or *Téré Tĕlé*), when certain local chiefs set themselves up as petty kings, employing bands of vagabonds who specialized in warfare, raids and kidnappings. These operations allowed them to obtain weapons and ammunition supplied by European traffickers, and acquire goods in exchange for captives (Niane, 2001). Among the afflicted countries was Gouin, mentioned above, which was ravaged by marauding bands originating in the Joula states (Dacher, 2007).

In essence, the Atlantic trade enabled the Senegambian political and military elites to acquire goods from Europe in exchange for slaves captured during military expeditions. The captives were chained and lined up in single file to be taken to the nearest trading posts. This was the ordeal of the 'long march', which took place in unbearable conditions due to physical abuse, hunger, fatigue, etc. Mamadou Camara Lefloche describes the torment suffered by these 'wretched of the earth' arriving from Fouta Jalon, via well-known routes, with chains attached either to their feet, their necks, or both, to better control the recalcitrant ones. They were confined using a *Tintiliyi* (a piece of hardwood resistant to insects and weather [*Khari or timè*] carved and cut into a Y shape, firmly embedded in the ground, as in a cattle pen (Camara, 2001).

In general, the relationships that the elites of the Senegambian states involved in trafficking established with other groups (often ethnocultural or religious minorities) consisted of raids, looting and confiscation of their property, and they did not hesitate to use political and diplomatic cunning when the balance of power was against them.

Enslavement, violence and counter-violence: exploiting the harshness of nature

As noted above, rejection of subordination as evinced by certain ethnocultural groups prompted slave-owning states to redouble their military incursions into their territories. Mbaye Guèye showed how, initially, these politically fragile

groups managed to turn the rough terrain into a kind of protective shield, giving them relative security and more or less complete independence. This defensive strategy posed serious problems for the warrior elites, who found it difficult to integrate them into their model of slave society. Idrissa Bâ writes about Lamlam:

> To resist the fury of their powerful neighbours, the Lamlam initially employed a strategy that could well be described by historians of the art of war as a system of defence in depth: a systematic withdrawal of troops to strategic locations that could then form a network. Mountains, strongholds, and naturally protected or fortified towns are typical examples of such strategic locations. This system, with its grid-like coverage of the territory, reflects the multiplicity of powers within a world that, politically, remains fairly fragmented. It should be added that the insecurity caused by the slave trade played a major role in this grid-like coverage of the territory. In fact, for the Lamlam, the strategic location par excellence is the fortified city. This is the case of Mallal, which stands on a mound of red earth, with well-protected sides. The people of Mallal take refuge there in case of attacks by other Sûdân (Ba, 2013).

In northern Senegambia, during the Atlantic slave trade, the Serer groups of the north-west adopted strategies similar to those described by Idrissa Ba among the Lamlam. When frontal warfare became ineffective, these strategies consisted of abandoning their original settlements and taking refuge in the heart of the wooded areas of Thies and Diass, where farmers had scattered their dwellings to facilitate the mobility of village communities at the slightest warning. The Diobas basin, for example, is a strategic site that was home to villages or hamlets consisting of a small number of huts, separated by strips of scrubby undergrowth. Groups of families hid their abandoned dwellings there, ready to take to the hills and hillsides, their places of refuge, when circumstances required. These sites were solid natural ramparts with winding paths through the undergrowth of the valleys. According to Daouda Thiao, 'they were arranged in such a way that, from the bottom of the depression, the population could spot enemy troops attempting to cross the summits (of the hills) to surprise them. To further strengthen their defence system, they had dug wide, deep trenches around the village boundaries' (Thiao, 2001).

The peasants also used beekeeping as a means of retaliation, discreetly placing hives of warrior bees in dense trees. These proved to be a powerful defensive ally in their efforts to contain the advance of the Tieddo cavalry. The frontal war that broke out between the Diobas and the Kadior-Bawol in the second half of the eighteenth century gives an idea of the strategic importance of these natural 'bunkers' in compensating for the absence of a regular army capable of withstanding the firepower of the Tieddos (Thiaw, 1980). It should be noted, however, that Serer

resistance was not limited to direct opposition to the Tieddo armies. It also took the form of guerrilla warfare, which can be likened to social banditry. This form of resistance was used in Thianguine, Sili and Safene, where the mysterious Kagne and his band lay in wait in the forest of Thies, preventing caravanners from Kadior and Bawol from crossing Serer territory, whose independence they proudly claimed. Father Boilat recounts another head-on confrontation between the Tieddos and the Serer groups of the north-west, following a raid ordered in 1850 by the Damel in the Diéguem (Fall, 1974). 'This incursion was a terrible raid by the ruler of Cayor who, wanting to drink, as was his noble habit, had sent a few adventurous Tieddos on an excursion to the borders of Ndiéguem, where they surprised a number of young girls and children, whom they enslaved and led, in chains, to the house of the demel' (Boilat, 1984). The climate of tension reached its peak in the first half of the eighteenth century and continued until the dismantling of the states of Kadior and Bawol by the French colonial army between 1886 and 1889.

Throughout the Southern Rivers region, the many villages of free men were surrounded, as was the case with the Lamlam and the Sereres of the north-west, by natural ramparts or walls built to defend themselves against the raiders who infested the area. In the Rio Pongo region, Mamadou Camara Lefloche notes that the same concern for securing territory and protecting property led some free men who did not have effective means of defense to take refuge in caves, such as Nienguissa, north of Kossinsin. He also cites the case of the Soussous, whose defence strategy was based on camouflaging themselves in the bush with leaves and branches to escape the enemy (Camara, 2001). Another author, Jean Girard, gives the example of the Belyan (Bassari), a people entrenched in the foothills of Fouta Jalon, where they had dug numerous caves and built ramparts to escape persecution by their neighbours – from the advance of Koli Tenguella towards the north to the advent of the *Almami* of Fouta Jalon in the nineteenth century. He describes the Koté rampart as a structure consisting of 'a wall of stacked stones several metres high surrounding an area of two to three hectares, the centre of which is hollowed out by a circular depression about ten metres deep [while a] permanent spring flows at the foot of a vast rock shelter' (Girard, 2000). The author informs us about the recurrent nature of these attacks and the strategies adopted by groups of Bassari villages, as was the case when Fulani neighbours attacked the Ambur cave, which was defended by men armed with flintlock rifles. 'Believing the besieged to be unarmed, the attackers approached unsuspectingly and were greeted by gunfire from the shelter, with stones partially blocking the entrance to the cave. Two Bassari men usually stood on either side of the threshold, and those inside passed them loaded rifles' (Girard, 2000).

Aware of their inferiority in terms of weaponry, the Bassari often used cunning strategies to trap their enemies. This strategy seems to have been successful, if we are to believe the numerous anecdotes collected by Jean Girard in the villages during the long wars that pitted them against their neighbours. It seems useful to highlight the following episode, which illustrates the insights of this group of peoples described as primitive.

> The Beliyas were so mistreated that their syabutyra held council meetings with them to decide what measures to take. The Biyil who participated in these assemblies one day brought peanuts, which they ordered the Bassari to roast on a slab along the path usually taken by their enemies. The seeds were burned, piled up in the clearing near the cave of A-Mongi and abandoned before dawn ... When their enemies ate them, they became thirsty and drank the water flowing nearby on a stone at a place called Bindyer-bind-ofow. Once they had done so, they fell powerless to the ground, where they were slaughtered to the last by the Bassari, who had retraced their steps. This was the first time the Biyil had come to their aid (Girard, 2000).

From these accounts, it is easy to understand why slave-trading practices had created a sense of fear and mistrust among the target groups towards foreigners, who were often perceived as enemies or spies in the pay of slave hunters. Among the Serer groups of the north-west, as among the Bassari, the fate reserved for these individuals was extremely cruel. Oral traditions in the villages of the Thianguine (part of the Nones region of Thies) tell us that they were killed with poisoned arrows or burned alive, so as to give them no chance of escape and therefore of survival (Ciss, 2004). These methods of execution gave the Nones of Thies the image of a 'tribe' committing numerous murders in Serer territory, which was considered very dangerous for foreigners. These murders were aimed particularly at Wolof traffickers from Kadior or Bawol, who were accused of being the main perpetrators of acts of pillage in Serer country. Pruneau de Pommegorge wrote about these acts: 'Trade on this island (Gorée) is insignificant; it barely brings in two or three hundred pounds a year. However, there are circumstances in which much more is earned; such as when the King of Hamet is threatened with war; then he plots to carry out some pillaging on the borders of his country, particularly on the Seraires, his neighbours' (Pruneau de Pommegorge, 1789).

It should be noted that resistance to Tieddo's tyranny was not exclusively a male affair. Serer oral traditions mention the decisive contribution of women in almost all the battles fought against the armies of Kadior and Bawol. They highlight the case of Diéguem, where such female resistance is symbolized by Jambogne Ndour, a woman who entered the restricted circle of mythical

local heroes. The battle which she is said to have waged alone, aided by her mystical powers, against a detachment of the Tieddo army from Lambay, the capital of Bawol, remains etched in the collective memory (Sène, 2008). Rather than lawless bandits, these men and women, who could be described as the 'Robin Hoods' of the Serer country, symbolized 'local patriotism' in the face of the hegemony of the states of Kadior and Bawol. Boilat highlighted this attachment to freedom and the independence of their territory, and speaking of the Diéguem, he points out that:

> It is a small nation, it is true, but strong and courageous, all its glory embodied in its spirit of independence and freedom. No traveller has yet spoken of this section of the Serer people who are proud to bear the name of the Republic of Ndiéghem, named after the forest they inhabit, and whom their neighbours like to label with the infamous title of brigands and murderers, while other men, perhaps more just and disinterested, do not hesitate to honour them as heroes. If one takes the trouble to listen to the various reasons why neighbouring nations strive to vilify this people, whom they like to portray as a bogeyman to travellers, one will quickly become convinced that their greatest crime is to fight for their freedom and independence, to defend their fields and forests, to freely possess their herds, but above all, to struggle for the inviolable freedom of their women and children, whom others would like to hunt down like wild animals and reduce to servitude and slavery. The small Republic of Ndiéghem regards slavery as a crime (Boilat, 1984).

Djibril Tamsir Niane also mentions a war that broke out in the middle of the nineteenth century in Rio Pongo, at the time of the clandestine slave trade. According to the author, this famous 'war of the mulattos' or 'guerrilla mulatto' pitted the servile population of Dominghia against their white slave masters and their mulatto descendants (Niane, 2001).

The climate of chronic violence and insecurity created by trafficking triggered a survival instinct and, one might argue, a particularly strong spirit of rebellion and vengeance among fragile and vulnerable groups, who remained ready to do battle with the enemy, responding to violence with violence whenever circumstances allowed. According to Jean Girard, the Bassari did not hesitate to organize themselves into camouflaged armed gangs to penetrate Fulani territory and kidnap children, no doubt to avenge the loss of their wives and children captured by the elite of the Fouta Jalon theocracy. Girard points out, however, that the captives were not sold on the slave market, but were integrated into the families of their new parents (Girard, 2000).

This rebellious and vindictive spirit was even more pronounced among captives destined for the slave trade, who were reduced to the status of 'human

commodities'. Both written sources and oral traditions provide a wealth of information about their reactions, which often took the form of violent collective revolts, from their places of confinement to their 'parking' in captivity and their embarkation to America. Pruneau de Pommegorge mentions in his *Description of the Negritia* several revolts or attempted revolts that broke out on the island of Gorée in the second half of the eighteenth century. He provides a detailed account of the one organized by captives captured in the hinterland, starting from Kadior:

> I once collected the spoils of one of these wars, amounting to nearly five hundred of these yolofs; a war that could be called a civil war, since it was the uncle of the young reigning king who had gathered all his people, including the discontented people of the country. With his forces, he entered Cayor and attacked his nephew Hamel, who defended himself well but was nevertheless defeated and dethroned by his uncle. Most of the prisoners, numbering nearly five hundred, were sold in several batches, but this victory proved very costly for all the Whites on the island. ...The five hundred captives ... plotted a revolt.... As soon as we were informed of this conspiracy, while they were outside at work, the guard was tripled, with orders to be under arms, bayonets fixed on their rifles... The next morning, the commander of the island gathered them in the courtyard of the fort and addressed in particular the two or three leaders of the revolt, who were known to be important figures in their country, to ask them if it was true that they had planned, the day before, to massacre all the Whites on the island. When this first question was put to them in front of everyone, the two leaders, far from denying the fact or seeking to evade the question, replied boldly and courageously. ... At this truly Roman response, all the other captives cried out in unison: 'Déguela, déguela' (It's true, it's true…) (Pruneau de Pommegorge, 1789).

Pruneau de Pommegorge speaks of yet another revolt (again on Gorée) that mobilized nearly 300 captives, who were undoubtedly very unhappy with the inhumane conditions of their detention. They waited until nightfall to break their chains and attempted to scale the wall of the fort where the garrison was sleeping, no doubt deadened by the effects of the alcohol they had imbibed, as was their custom every Sunday. Without even waiting for all the captives to climb over the wall, the first six insurgents threw themselves at the sentry, who had time to alert his comrades. All the escapees were neutralized, and then run through with bayonets. The other captives gave up the fight and returned to their cells. The author relates that one member of the garrison was killed during the fight (Pruneau de Pommegorge, 1789). However, these insurrections should not obscure the less visible reality of individual revolts, which could also be extremely violent. Some of these revolts underscore the recklessness of their

perpetrators, who did not hesitate to murder their masters and the men charged with ensuring their safety.

Based on these examples, it can be argued that slavery practices created an atmosphere of suspicion and constant tension almost everywhere in Senegambia, leading to a collective psychosis among vulnerable groups, who were forced to devise a host of strategies to ensure their survival. The struggle initially took the form of armed confrontation, which was sometimes successful, but often resulted in failure. Retreating to refuge areas proved more effective, as it mitigated raids, looting and other slave-trading practices. It was in these refuge areas that the most vulnerable groups developed political and social institutions that would become the antithesis of the slave-trading model of society.

Political and social institutions diametrically opposed to the slave society model

These institutions were developed to meet the demands of a difficult political and military context particulary difficult for communities exposed to slavery practices. Michèle Dacher points out that in Gouin society, residential units (i.e. households, neighbourhoods and villages) each operated at their own level as defensive units, responding to the scale of the military challenges they faced. She adds that defensive ties were stronger between people of the same matrilineage than between neighbours. She also emphasizes the autonomy of individual households, each of which tried to ensure its own defence to the extent possible (Dacher, 2007).

The organization of Serer societies in the north-west was based on the same defensive principles, even if their political structures appear to be more elaborate than those of Gouin society. Their political system was based on a village assembly comprising all the heads of families, who were initially also the heads of matrilineal clans (Ciss, 2004). Decisions were taken by consensus, but once adopted, they were enforced with the utmost rigour. This was the real strength of the organization of these societies, which had neither a regular army nor a conventional police force. The absence of a central authority and prisons was compensated for by the requirement for members of the community to adhere to the sacred values of group solidarity and scrupulous respect for community norms. Those who refused to comply were severely punished, and their families were forced to either expel or physically eliminate them. If not their fate was decided by ordeal or by one of the initiation societies, village

'courts' run by magicians capable of transforming themselves into snakes, leopards, monkeys, hyenas and so on. Drawing their strength from the depths of the local religion, these two 'institutions' were responsible for punishing and, if necessary, eliminating the enemies of the village community, resorting to occult practices or simply poisoning.

By examining the historiography of the slave trade in the Southern Rivers, we discover that trials by ordeal and initiation societies were also widespread in this part of West Africa. The information provided by most authors who have studied this issue emphasizes the entrenchment of these social 'institutions' which, as in Serer society, served as a shield against all forms of threat to village communities. Anne Retel points out that in Casamance, in order to judge those accused of colluding with invaders, the population resorted to the *tali* test, which consisted of making them drink toxic substances (Retel, 1974). Djibril Tamsir Niane notes that priest-magicians had the power to cover their tracks and mislead invaders, who were then unable to find their way back to their targets (Niane, 2001). In Rio Pongo, Mamadou Camara Lefloche cites the example of the cities of Konyéya, Sagnan Sossota and Bassaya, which had a reputation as 'occult villages'

> capable of causing a state of psychosomatic or hypnotic disturbance in the aggressor, thus preventing him from orienting himself in relation to the four cardinal points; thus lost, he would wander around in circles until death ensued. It was this refusal to engage in the slave trade that led to the founding of 'Sagnan Sossota' (the Soussou city of Sagnan), whose resources and occult powers prevented any capture or raid on their city, located a few kilometres from neighbouring Sagnan Paulia, the stronghold of slave traders Paul and Marie Faber (Camara, 2001).

These examples help to better understand the role of myths and taboos in shaping everyday behaviour and, above all, the mentality of certain ethnic groups deeply rooted in local religion. Their influence is noticeable in the political and social institutions that contributed to maintaining the social cohesion essential for defending communities regularly exposed to external aggression (Ciss, 2004). The repression and/or withdrawal of certain ethnic groups into refuge areas, and their refusal to adhere to the political-military model of chiefdoms and centralized states involved in the slave trade, were decisive factors in their political isolation in the difficult context of trafficking. It was, therefore, necessary to safeguard an identity that was under serious threat from the fury of slave hunters and the arrival of an ever-increasing number of fugitives in their territories.

Escapes were one of the many forms of revolt by captives, and were very common during the 'long march' (Camara, 2001). Diouldé Laya gives the example of a group

of slaves who fled Dargol (Niger) to take refuge in Teat (Niger). A confrontation ensued in which the Dargol camp was defeated and the arrogant master killed. According to the author, the event occurred in the nineteenth century (Laya, 2001).

These escapes, which can be likened to the marronage of slaves in America, seem to have been very common in Senegambian societies, and captives or slaves were quick to resort to this means of struggle as soon as circumstances allowed. Village oral traditions are fairly discreet about the history of the Maroons who settled in their host territories, no doubt so as not to offend the dignity of their descendants who are now integrated into their host societies. It should be noted, however, that while accepting the settlement of fugitives and refugees in their territories, some ethnic groups engaged in a policy of marginalization in order to preserve the 'authenticity' of their political and social organization. Father Labat cites the example of the Nones and the Ndout, who rejected any form of marriage alliance with their neighbours, leading Pinet Laprade to liken them to marginalized and anarchic societies, largely impervious to outside influences (Pinet Laprade, 1865). This 'withdrawal' is also noticeable in the lineage societies of the Southern Rivers, such as the Baga and Diola, who built their dwellings on dykes in marshy areas that were difficult for raiders to access (Niane, 2001).

These ethnic groups lived in egalitarian societies with less elaborate political structures than those found in the Tieddo states or Muslim theocracies that dominated the history of Senegambia before colonial intrusion. Moustapha Kébé points out, with regard to the Diolas, that the dialectic between insecurity and the desire to humanize the environment has had beneficial effects for these peasant communities, who have been able to exploit their land to make it habitable without completely disrupting the ecological balance. They have thus succeeded in integrating their natural environment into the concerns of their daily lives, which are centred on the pursuit of political sovereignty and food security.

It would be a mistake, however, to believe that groups opposed to the slave trade (whether trans-Saharan or Atlantic) lived in a rigid institutional framework. In many cases, political, social and cultural reforms were attempted to address the challenges posed by slavery practices. The constant pressure from invaders and raiders who swarmed across Senegambia acted as a catalyst for some groups to develop a unified political and military dynamic that transcended clan and/or tribal boundaries. Idrissa Ba points out that this process very early on caught the attention of Arab chroniclers who, as early as the tenth century, noted among the Lamlam the centralization of political power around a single leader, who had a powerful army to defend his lands and his men against incursions by neighbouring Muslim slave traders. In the fourteenth century, as resistance to the conquerors

became increasingly fierce, the Lamlam reformed their political and military system becoming a formidable force, thanks to their horses, weapons and art of warfare – all innovations that made them a direct threat to enemy territories. This restructuring changed the balance of power with their neighbours, forcing Mali, the main military power of the time, to conclude a pact, whereby the *Mansa* the rule of Mali, agreed to put an end to incursions into their territory. In return, he received a tribute of gold from his former adversaries (Ba, 2013).

The information provided by Idrissa Ba is of great importance for understanding this aspect of the history of resistance to slavery practices in ancient Black Africa. Youssouf Tata Cissé seems to follow this logic, in his book *La Charte du Manden* : *Du serment des chasseurs à l'abolition de l'esclavage* [The Charter of Manden: From the Hunters' Oath to the Abolition of Slavery]. The author asserts that

> the first act of the members of the initiatory society of hunters was to solemnly proclaim the abolition of slavery, that heinous crime that men calling themselves civilized committed against other men in the name of God. To this end, its members waged a merciless and relentless struggle against slave traders throughout central West Africa for ten years (Cissé, 2015).

It should be noted that the fight against slavery continued (even after the decline of the Sudano-Nigerian empires), gaining momentum with the Atlantic slave trade, which created a new geopolitical configuration in the Senegambian region. The emerging states on the Atlantic coast involved in the slave trade faced fierce opposition within their own territories. Internal popular uprisings were frequent but ruthlessly suppressed. In northern Senegambia, this violence turned many villages away from the Tieddos in favour of reformist Islamic movements opposed to the continued export of slaves to America. It was this popular support that seems to have precipitated the Muslim 'revolution' initiated in the seventeenth century by Naser Al Din, a Moorish marabout and emblematic figure of a vast political and cultural movement, thanks to the support of oppressed peasants. Determined to establish an Islam free of all 'pagan perversion', he mobilized these oppressed masses, with the support of local marabouts, embarking on a war that engulfed almost the entirety of northern Senegambia. The movement was highly successful in Walo, Jolof and Kadior, ousting the Tieddos from power and replacing them with leaders committed to the Islamic cause.

However, from 1674 onwards, the Marabout movement began to lose momentum following the death of Naser Al Din. In Kadior, as in Walo, the

fallen aristocracy reorganized itself with the military support of the French, who were based in Saint Louis and were keen to maintain the slave trade, which had been seriously compromised by the instability caused by fratricidal wars between supporters and opponents of slavery. The collaboration bore fruit, as the fallen elements were restored to their positions, giving new impetus to the slave trade (Barry, 1988).

The failure of Islamic reforms in Kadior, Walo and Jolof had disastrous consequences, exacerbating the political fragmentation of the Senegambian states that depended on the Atlantic slave trade (Barry, 1988). The increasing involvement of the French, English and other European nationalities in the internal affairs of states, thanks to the massive sale of firearms, accentuated the climate of insecurity almost everywhere in Senegambia. The persecution of political and military elites led to numerous migratory movements of marabouts from the coastal regions and the Senegal River valley to the interior of the country, where they hoped to find a more peaceful environment in which to consolidate the cohesion of Muslim communities. These vast movements gave rise to theocracies whose success can be interpreted, according to Ismail Camara, as a posthumous victory of Nasir Al Din, the forerunner of militant Islam, who shook the corrupt and slave-trading powers of the Senegal Valley between 1673 and 1677.

These theocracies took root in Boundou (late seventeenth century), Fouta-Toro (late eighteenth century) and Fouta Jalon (eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), but (and this is important to emphasize), they did not succeed in ending slavery, particularly domestic slavery, which they went on to institutionalize. It seems that in Fouta Toro, the failure of Abdel Kader, who wanted to create an Islamic state, was due to vehement opposition on the part of the new provincial dignitaries to the abolition of domestic slavery, which represented an inexhaustible source of labour. Under these circumstances, it is understandable that no almaami dared to plead the cause of captives who continued to toil under the yoke of slavery. This attitude, which was also observed in other Muslim theocracies in Senegambia, contributed, as in the Tieddo states, to reviving internal social divisions and, above all, to eroding relations between the Senegambian political and military elites and the ethnocultural minorities who were often excluded from state structures.

Resistance evident in ideological constructs and artistic expressions

Drawing on data collected from village oral traditions, Mbaye Guèye studied the stigmatization of groups or individuals who were victims of slavery practices, seeking to clarify the ways in which dominant ideological constructs provoked hatred among these groups towards slave hunters who wanted to turn their territories into human hunting grounds (Sy, 2009-2011).

Among the Serers of the north-west, hatred of slave hunters was deeply rooted in a collective mentality forged by initiation rites. The practice of *ndut* and *ndoon*, for example (rites related to circumcision for boys and lip tattooing for girls), was not limited to surgical or cosmetic procedures. Like wedding rites, these rites were above all a crucial stage in the educational process of young Serer people, exceptional moments of immersion in their magical, mystical and cultural environment (Kandji, 2013). Transmission took place through secret codes that the initiate discovered through songs, dances, stories, riddles, proverbs, nursery rhymes, and so on, during the three to four months of 'seclusion' spent deep in the forest, away from prying eyes.

Analysis of these cultural expressions reveals that the cultural and artistic world of the Serer groups has been profoundly marked by dramatic episodes linked to the slave trade and, above all, to atrocities committed by the aristocracies of Kadior and Bawol during the era of the Tieddos' 'permanent raids' (*dawal Jaap*). These expressions also shed light on the tendency to demonize European traders and their Tieddo allies, all likened to vampires, *kañaam suur* (vultures or scavengers) 'who pick at the social body' (Faye, 2013) of their targets to feed themselves. Hence the need for mystical protection to escape 'vampirization', symbolized by the raids, cattle poaching and looting carried out on their territory (Ciss, 2004).

However, it is reasonable to assume that this tendency to demonize the Tieddos, likening them to abominable creatures, can be explained by their warlike and fearless behaviour. It would not be an exaggeration to say, as Chérif Daha Ba points out, that the Tieddos saw themselves as birds of prey, 'carnivores' with a warlike and bloodthirsty destiny, always facing mortal danger head-on. We can therefore understand why atrocities committed by certain political and military elites engaged in deadly wars have been transformed by the dominant ideology into heroic deeds proudly recounted in the songs of griots glorifying their epics, with the aim of legitimizing the violence that accompanied the

practice of slavery. This explains the collective representations constructed by these elites to stigmatize groups (often ethnocultural minorities) that existed on the margins of the system. Lamlam country was thus described by Arab authors and the Islamized Black elite as a place where cannibalism was commonplace and 'prisoners from other groups were killed and eaten like any other game' (Al Dimashki quoted by Ba, 2013). The Serer groups of the north-west did not escape this caricature, which led Father Labat to liken them to 'tribes well versed in anthropophagic and orgiastic practices, so that one can hardly think of a greater insult to a Negro than to call him a Serer' (Labat, 1728). It was also in this vein that the legends attributed to Mboye Ciss and Kagne, two figures who left their mark on the imagination of the political and military elites of northern Senegambia, were constructed. Mboye Ciss is described by the Tieddo ideology as

> a highwayman, a bloodthirsty man who spent most of his time organizing the worst orgies, to which he invited pregnant women, whom he would inevitably disembowel when the fumes of the alcohol he had ingested clouded his brain... While he swayed majestically in his hammock, his warriors surrounded him, praising his exploits and exalting themselves along with him, intoxicated by war songs and, above all, by memories of their acts of vandalism that had gone unpunished (Samb, 1981).

As for Kagne, he has become legendary in the Tieddo mindset as one of the most famous 'brigands' in the history of northern Senegambia prior to French colonial occupation. This is why the area between the present-day towns of Thiès and Pout (sanctuary of his band of 'highway robbers') bears the place names *Alloup Kagne* (Kagne Forest) and *Ravin des voleurs* (Thieves' Ravine).

Abdourahmane Ngaïdé has studied the prevalence of artistic expressions in the collective memory of the Harratin, the Black slaves subjected to the Baydan, the economically and politically dominant Arab group in what is now the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. His analysis of the normative and conceptual framework of such expressions allows us to grasp the depth of their roots in the history of slavery in Moorish society. According to the author, they are expressed through *medh* (songs and praises, rhythms, cries and their various fragments) and *redh* (rhythms, dance and other sounds), which can be understood as the first instinctive response towards ending the master/slave relationship (Ngaïdé, 2009).

Ngaïdé points out that Harratin music is not only an expression of leisure; it is above all a peaceful revolt against an attitude of exclusion and stigmatization coupled with outrageous contempt on the part of other members of Mauritania's ethnic communities, especially towards the Baydan who enslaved them and

then assimilated them into Arab culture. *Medh* and *redh* are artistic expressions inspired by both Arab-Muslim and Black African culture, and they serve as an outlet, a way of expressing the frustrations and sufferings endured by the enslaved. *Medh* and *redh* are manifestation of cultural dissent for a servile community that has created its own codes of expression, incomprehensible to their masters. 'They are part of the desire to break the bonds of cultural servitude that have kept the Harratin group frozen in an Arab-Muslim culture that refuses to accept and embrace its own syncretism' (Ngaïdé, 2009). This explains, Ngaïdé further emphasizes, the tendency to denounce the insensitivity of slave masters, a facet that occupies an important part in Harratin lyrical songs that sublimate their confiscated freedom.

The Pulaar society of the Senegal River valley, especially in Fouta Toro, has also been affected by this socio-cultural divide since the failure of the *Torodo* revolution, which relegated the *maccudo*, or slave or captive (whatever the name), and their descendants to the bottom of the social hierarchy. Here again, slaves are considered beings without moral virtues or intellectual qualities. Accused of all kinds of faults, they must endure the ostracism of the masters and humiliation born of prejudices rooted in the culture of the political and social elite. Song and dance were used here too as a means of expression to free themselves from this heavy burden of exclusion and stigmatization. Chérif Daha Ba gives the example of the *naale* of the *jiyabbe*, whom he says, 'are to slavery what the primordial leaf, the cotyledon, is to the seed' (Ba, 2013). This image is interesting because it emphasizes the central importance of artistic expression in denouncing the practice of slavery in this society. For the *maccudo,* the *naale* are an outlet, a way to let off steam 'to relieve the pain associated with their status as inferior beings, beasts of burden recreating themselves in joy and merriment' (Ba 2013). The *naale,* as a collective work, can furthermore be analysed as a 'peaceful' form of resistance by united and supportive servile groups to confront the harsh realities of their status and living conditions.

In short, in light of the above, it can be argued that vulnerable groups were able to develop a culture of resistance, drawing on the depths of their environmental and cultural heritage. This culture reflects power relations marked by high tensions within Senegambian societies, which were severely impacted by the practices of slavery. Singing, dancing and other cultural and artistic expressions served as outlets to alleviate the suffering endured by slaves who were despised and oppressed by their masters.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to identify various aspects of resistance in African societies subjected to slavery and the slave trade. It has tried to show that analysis of slavery practices in Senegambia should not be restricted to the perspective of the involvement of local political and social elites, who played a significant role in reinforcing a system which, it should be remembered, was developed in Europe, the Middle East and the Near East (i.e. trans-Saharan, Eastern and Atlantic dynamics). Furthermore, it is inaccurate to consider that African societies were passive in the face of slavery in its various forms. Instead, written sources and oral traditions reveal that resistance was strong everywhere, based on multifaceted strategies that evolved over time and space. In general, political, social and cultural institutions, developed by groups exposed to slavery, drew their strength from their ability to adapt to the conditions of the physical environment and from their roots in the local religion, which embodied a high degree of solidarity and community spirit necessary for their survival. Reactions to the slave system also manifested themselves in attempts at political, economic, social and cultural reforms designed to create conditions for stability in Senegambian societies plunged into deep crisis. This was the aim of political and religious movements whose social projects reflected aspirations for freedom on the part of peasant communities faced with the tyranny of the powerful Tieddo aristocracies. However, these movements did not put an end to the slave trade, which took on new dimensions in the eighteenth century, a period that marked the height of the Atlantic slave trade. The measures adopted by the colonial powers from the nineteenth century onwards certainly put an end to the Atlantic system, but they did not succeed in eradicating domestic slavery and other more or less hidden practices related to slavery. The stigmas of internal slavery, which are still prevalent in certain Senegambian societies, and servile practices, have given rise to new forms of resistance at the state level, but also at the international level. The 'stigma of servitude' today raises the issue of the exercise of citizenship and democracy in post-colonial African states, while the struggle against slavery is embedded in the broader context of the defence of human rights. Finally, the idea of an African Renaissance seems to be based on pan-African solidarity, one that rebels against all forms of discrimination and exclusion.

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CHAPTER 5

CONFRONTATION, COLLABORATION AND REBELLION

Resistance Strategies and Enslavement in Central Africa

Alioum Idrissou and Ahmadou Sehou

The outbreak of jihad in Northern Nigeria and its spread to the borders of the Central African Republic in the early nineteenth century led to an unprecedented escalation of violence throughout this region. The driving motive was to procure the optimum numbers of captives, and to get traffickers and caravans preceding or following military expeditions to transfer the captives across the trans-Saharan networks. Far from bowing down resignedly to this process of subjection and loss of freedom brought about by the enslavers (the Fulani being the key protagonists), the early inhabitants of the northern regions of Cameroon began planning ways of responding to the new circumstances undermining their socio-political structures. Their resistance took many forms, ranging from armed confrontation, political negotiation and large-scale raids to the establishment of colonial rule and even beyond. This chapter will take a look at the diversity of forms and strategies of resistance implemented by slaves and some of the key figures involved in efforts to escape capture, survive abuse and maintain some degree of independence when faced with the military enslavement machine and its key driver: the subjugation of others.

The literature on slavery and the slave trade has so far given little attention to the strategies of resistance developed by enslaved populations to oppose the actions of slave traders on the African continent. The focus has been more on a supposed passivity, or complicity and collaboration, understood to have led to the massive

and remorseless participation in the capture, abduction, sale and deportation of a considerable number of people. This is a significant gap in the historiography of the slave trade and slavery in Africa that must be quickly filled in order to allow for a more complete appreciation and understanding of these phenomena.

It is in that context that the collection of essays edited by Sylviane Diouf on this subject (Diouf, 2003) took its meaning. Through a dozen contributions covering a large part of Africa, the authors examined the defensive, protective and offensive methods employed by individuals, societies and states. They looked at the transformation of the living environment, changes in places of residence, the ransom of captured persons, altered social relations, political centralization and the issue of runaways. Other tactics examined include violent attacks on traffickers' ships and warehouses, mutinies on board ships and limited participation in the slave trade. All this puts a new spin on the assessment of enslavement and sheds light on the methods used by Africans to defend themselves, fight back or protect themselves from the Atlantic or Saharan slave trade. Resistance to capture, deportation and enslavement punctuates the journey of slavery and the slave route, which leads from the freedom experienced in one's group of origin to the most revolting submission in the hands of one's master. Rape and violence of all kinds have been used to respond to such resistance or to temporarily put an end to its expression.

In addition, the volume, clearly factual in nature, as it is based on unpublished archival documents and publications as well as in-depth socio-anthropological knowledge of the area in question, explores the various resistance strategies developed by enslaved populations to escape capture, survive enslavement and retain a certain degree of autonomy in the face of the Fulani military machine and the subjugation it brought about in a defined area, in this case northern Cameroon in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Confrontation, collaboration and protection during the precolonial period

By enslaved groups, we mean the populations established before the Fulani settled in northern Cameroon. Several attitudes were observed in the relations between the Fulani and the other populations they encountered in this region, particularly in Adamawa: the former wanted to impose total domination, while the latter sought to maintain their autonomy.

Armed confrontation

The undisputed rulers of much of the Adamawa Plateau before the Fulani invasion, the Mbum were the first to realize the threat posed by the new arrivals, albeit belatedly. And yet, the Mbum offered hospitality to Fulani herders transhuming in their country before the 1820s, as evidenced by their attitude towards Ardo Sambo, who settled in the town of Tibati and with whom they maintained cordial relations of vassalage. Thus, the second wave of Fulani immigration, led by Ardo Njobdi in the early 1830s, settled in the territory of Ngaw-Hora, with the authorization of Belaka Koya, its administrator. It is reported that the chief dignitary under Belaka Koya, the Vang a Wari (Froelich, 1954b, p. 14; Mohammadou, 1978, pp. 277-278), was appointed to be the leader of the protest against the Fulani presence in this region (Mohammadou, 1978, pp. 277-278). Aware of the Mbum's military superiority at that time, the latter prepared for war against the Fulani, who were described as invaders and oppressors, with the Mbum term *birari* used to refer to them. Thierno M. Bah confirms that it was the Fulani's desire for hegemony that put an end to peaceful coexistence with the Mbum, paving the way for a period of confrontation (Bah, 1993, p. 72). All in all,[1] it was a coalition of the Fulani armies from Ray and Tibati, summoned by Njobdi, that swept away the Mbum troops of Belaka Koya.[2] The latter was driven out of his capital, Lawboro, which was completely destroyed (Froelich, 1954b, p. 14). However, it should be noted that as the enemy coalition approached, the Mbum troops withdrew to the summit of Ngawkor Mountain, near the present-day village of Wari, where they set up a heroic defence, digging two trenches around the mountain in anticipation of the Fulani attack (Froelich, no. 45-46, 1954b, p.14). Unable to dislodge the Mbum troops, the Fulani armies decided to besiege them, surrounding them to prevent escape and waiting for famine to overcome them, as the cavalry used by the latter was unsuitable for combat in the mountains, caves or trenches (Mohammadou, 1978, pp. 278-279). After an extended siege, lasting anywhere between three months and four years, depending on the author (Bah, 1993,

1 For the reasons behind, and the stages of, the first agreement between the Fulani and the Mbum, see Mohammadou, 1978, p. 278.

2 According to Eldridge Mohammadou, the Belaka refused to join this military adventure, asking the Vang a Wari not to engage in the confrontation given the balance of power against them. Only a few minor chiefs joined him. It is therefore likely that it was the Vang a Wari Mâmou who single-handedly organized the resistance at the head of a number of his supporters (see Mohammadou, 1978, pp. 278-279). This position is also supported by Mohamadou Saliou, who saw it as an opportunity for Belaka Koya to get rid of the Vang a Wari, whose power tended to overshadow him (cf. Saliou, 2000-2001, p. 49).

p. 72; Froelich, 1954b, p. 14; Mohammadou, 1978; Njeuma, 1978, p. 88), the Mbum decided to surrender to the Fulani, but not before agreeing on the terms of their surrender (Mohammadou, 1978, p. 279) and choosing Ardo Njobdi to deal with, whose rule on the plateau was the smallest, least powerful and most inclined to accept certain compromises, provided that one did not challenge his authority. Nevertheless, this did not prevent some of the Mbum from being enslaved, while the rest were allowed to settle in Laouboro.[3] Through this revolt, the Mbum were quickly able to integrate into the various spheres of Fulani rule and preserve a certain degree of autonomy for their group. Apart from the tribute they were required to pay, they suffered less pressure and fewer human losses at the hands of the Fulani. By joining the army, they were at the forefront of conquests and raids against other groups. This is an example of military art in Central Africa in the nineteenth century, in terms of the tactics and strategy of armies on the front line.

The Mbum people's resistance to occupation and Fulani abuses did not end there. Uprisings and discontent continued openly or covertly, reflecting their deep desire to protect their community and live in peace and freedom. Lawan Hamman, who succeeded Ndjobdi in 1838, confronted Belaka Faebelli, son of Belaka Koya, who had rebelled after moving his residence to the Nganha mountains.[4] There is evidence of a fairly long struggle between the Belaka Mbum and the lamidos (traditional rulers) of Ngaoundéré, which was characterized by rivalry during the colonial period and outright enmity in the aftermath of independence.[5]

Another people, neighbours of the Mbum, the Dii (or Duru), located on the rocky foothills of the Adamawa Plateau, on the border between two lamidats (polities), Ngaoundéré and Ray, had to deal with this dual expansionist aim (Muller, 2001, pp. 11-42). Comprising around a hundred independent chiefdoms of varying importance, the Dii adopted different attitudes towards the Fulani. Some complied and quickly submitted, particularly those near Ray, where they became official collaborators of the Fulani. The Dii of the Tcholliré region notably

3 Following Ngawkor's victory, the Mbum became the protected subjects of the lamido of Ngaoundéré, but were nevertheless required to pay an annual tribute. This is where the nickname *birari* (oppressors) given to the Fulani by the Mbum comes from, to signify that it was by force that their country was taken from them (Cf.: Froelich, 1954b, p. 14; and Mohammadou, 1978, p. 280).

4 Froelich, 1954b, pp. 12, 14; National Archives of Cameroon (NAC), 1911.

5 From his status as a subject, Belaka now considered himself equal to the lamido of Ngaoundéré. The intrigues of a certain political and economic elite wished to place Belaka administratively on the same level as the lamido, i.e. both as first-degree chiefs (see also the confidential report by the head of the Ngaoundéré subdivision dated 26 January 1955, to understand the nature of this ongoing tension; National Archives of Cameroon (NAC), 1955).

helped Bouba Njidda's armies to capture slaves from the Laka and Gbaya. However, exasperated by the enforced labour and tributes demanded by the lamido of Ray, they retreated to Ngaoundéré, where they were received by the Mbum, following the siege of Ngawkor. Caught between two evils and choosing the lesser of the two, they entered the service of the lamido of Ngaoundéré, who enlisted them in his armies to conquer the Gbaya (Muller, 1997, pp. 59-72).

In fact, several Dii chiefdoms withdrew to relatively remote and inaccessible locations to protect themselves from attack. Nevertheless, they were targeted by regular incursions from Ray and Ngaoundéré, which disapproved of the existence of these rebellious enclaves (Froelich, 1954b, p. 14). In addition, the lamidos were irritated by the attacks and looting of caravans travelling along the Ngaoundéré-Garoua road, carried out by Dii warriors who controlled this route. The village of Mbé had been under siege for nine days by part of the Ngaoundéré army when the Germans arrived in the town in 1901. It was the news of the death of Lamido Abbo in battle against the German soldiers that loosened the siege and put an end to this punitive operation (Muller, 1997, pp. 59-72). This example shows the resistance of a people caught in the crossfire, who tried every strategy to safeguard their freedom or at least their relative independence. Those who decided to collaborate, settling on the plateau alongside the Mbum, found themselves enlisted in the armies or subjected to enforced labour and tributes, just like the defeated populations. The only ones who were able to retain relative autonomy were those who chose to take refuge on the ridges and in the rocky gorges, armed with their poisoned arrows, which were obstacles to the deployment of the cavalry, whether it came from Ray or Ngaoundéré.

Another resistance strategy employed by populations targeted for enslavement involved attacks on trading caravans by well-organized bands. They spread insecurity along the routes, making expeditions costly and limiting their expansion to a certain extent. Focusing largely on the slave trade, it is not unlikely that they also aimed to limit captures and sales by attacking those who enabled this trade to flourish. Thus, another interpretation of these attacks is possible – i.e. one of self-protection from various groups – besides that of the first European explorers, who saw them only as bandits, ruining the regional economy and spreading insecurity. How else can we interpret the reactions of people who saw several members of their group or family arrested, sold and taken away by slave traders from northern Nigeria?

Similarly, in Gbaya country, it was reported that, in the early 1860s, despite their strength in numbers, 500 people in total, two Hausa caravans were attacked near Gaza by the inhabitants of Buschuku and Nababare (Flegel, 1885, p. 12).

These various attacks enabled the Gbaya to save some of their people, at least on these occasions, and to recover a certain amount of ivory that the Hausa traders were forced to abandon in their flight. The same was true of the extension of the Gbaya country located on the borders of Sangha, Kadéï and Oubangui, where there were numerous acts of resistance targeting the Fulani, their local supporters and the French, demonstrating a certain awareness of the stakes and the gravity of the situation. In Laka country, the Fulani feared their throwing weapon (*Ngalyarê*), which was effective at cutting off horses' legs. This weapon was also used to great effect in close combat.[6]

In the Lamidat of Tibati, there were numerous cases of revolt among the populations subjected to the annual tribute of young children. Despite the formidable military stature he had acquired by attacking all his neighbours, Ardo Hammadou Nyâ Mboula, ruler of Tibati, faced defiance from certain Voute and Tikar chiefdoms, the most illustrious of which were Nyô, Ngrang, Nguila, Linté and Nguèr (Mohammadou, 1978, p. 65). Despite crushing these uprisings, it was during another attack on the Nyem-Nyem that he met his death in 1868, when he was killed by a poisoned arrow shot by a warrior (Fofou, 1994, p. 40).

The desire to protect their people and ensure their relative survival led some groups to attack their neighbours or to restructure themselves politically and militarily. With regard to the Voute, Thierno Bah notes a more or less direct relationship between the emergence of their chiefdoms and the establishment of the Fulani in the region. This process began in the aftermath of the capture of Tibati. From then on, the Voute, who had previously been scattered across hunting camps, gathered together in villages; their political organization evolved towards relative centralization around warlords keen to assert their hegemony over neighbouring clans. It was this process that gave rise to the powerful warrior chiefdom of Nguila (Bah, 1993, pp. 79-80). This explains the great admiration that the Germans had for this people when they discovered them at the end of the nineteenth century (Sieber, 1925, pp. 7-8; von Morgen, 1982, p. 256). The challenge facing the Voute today is still how to manage this warlike heritage, which led this segmentary society to political centralization and the abandonment of agricultural activities in favour of predation.

6 Other cases of resistance by local populations were noted in the south-eastern part of the Lamidat of Ngaoundéré towards the end of the nineteenth century. These attacks were directed both against invaders from the north and French explorers who were attempting to establish themselves there by collecting precise data on the region (see E. Ponel, 1895, 'La Haute Sangha : Le développement de l'influence française au nord du Congo français - Historique et résultats des dernieres missions 1891-1894', *Annales de géographie*, p. 76).

On the north-western edge of Adamawa, in the Kontcha region, the Fulani had their work cut out with the Pere (or Koutine), who, under the leadership of their chief, showed strong opposition (Hamadou and Bah, 2001, pp. 34-35). Two distinct attitudes were adopted in the aftermath of their defeat: some converted to Islam and placed themselves under the authority of the Fulani, becoming their zealous collaborators; others, preferring avoidance, fled to the nearby mountains. Until the mid-twentieth century, the Lamidat of Kontcha was still known for the harshness of its slave regime and the continuation of its capture operations in a more or less open manner, given its isolation and remoteness. In the middle of 1950, in response to various complaints from the Pere, the chief of the Tignère subdivision, Maurice Baudelaire, decided to dismiss Lamido Babbada Atikou and loosen the Fulani stranglehold on the Pere. Significantly, it was a woman, Dicko Yébé, who led this final revolt against the capture and enslavement of the Pere people (NAC, 1950). War, resistance, negotiated alliances, collaboration and revolt punctuated the Pere people's integration into the Fulani Empire of Sokoto. Despite their defeat, they continued their resistance, in the plains and in the mountains, until they placed their cause at the heart of French colonial policy in Adamawa, thereby obtaining relative autonomy and guarantees of survival as a social group.

The conqueror of the Pere in 1823, Hama Gabdo, was also the founder of the Lamidat of Banyo in 1862. But to achieve this, he had to fight the Nyem-Nyem (or Nizoo), the Kondja, the Tikar and the Mambila, who had taken refuge in rugged areas. When he reached Mgba, he fought the Wawa and Bouté of Mount Mati, who defended themselves fiercely, and victory was achieved with difficulty (Hamadou and Bah, 2001, p. 38; Mohammadou, 1978, p. 172). The campaigns of his son and successor, Ardo Oussoumanou, were also directed towards suppressing the uprisings of certain conquered populations, such as the Mambila, Tikar, Tem, Nsoungli, Kentou and Pati. The Wawa Ndéra put up strong resistance, forcing him to seek reinforcements from his father, who had retreated to Kontcha. On the western fringes of the Lamidat of Banyo, he attacked the regions of Nwa, Nsop, Ndou, Nkambé and Doumbo; the Banso owed their salvation to the escarpments that defended their country, which his horses were unable to cross (Mohammadou, 1978, p. 175). As a result, they lived in relative safety for as long as the Fulani conquests and raids lasted.

Another survival method, one of collaboration with the Fulani, was employed by the Voute chief of Mbamyang, Boutimine, who begged them to join forces against the threat menacing his people by the Pere, who were fleeing to his land in search of refuge. Having suffered heavy losses at the hands of these armies

of fugitives, Boutimine asked Hama Gabdo to help stop them (Hamadou and Bah, 2001, p. 37). History was to reveal that this was a bad idea. Far from protecting his people, he hastened their subjugation, giving the Fulani a pretext to seize his capital and found the Lamidat of Banyo.

The tribute of slaves demanded by the lamidos of Banyo led the Mambila to develop attitudes similar to those of the Voute of Tibati. The Mambila of Songkolong satisfied them by raiding the neighbouring Tikar or Bamoun (Hurault, 2001, p. 6). Unable to continue to bear these demands, Chief Yé took his own life, followed by several members of his court (Hurault, 2001). This act of collective suicide is symbolic of the high regard they had for their people and their condemnation of the process of enslavement implemented by the Fulani. It demonstrates the inhumanity of the system that had developed there and highlights its cruelty.

The Nyem-Nyem occupy a special place in this vast galaxy of resistance fighters. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, they took over the Galim-Tignère region after defeating, subjugating or driving out the Voute, Tikar and Mbum populations. Through their warrior spirit, bravery and ability to resist better-equipped troops, they carved out a reputation that was inversely proportional to their numbers or the small, rugged area they still occupy today. At the time of the Fulani conquest, the Nyem-Nyem had become masters of the entire Tignère plateau and had established their chiefdom of Galim near Mount Djim, which they had turned into an impregnable fortress. From there, they launched regular raids throughout the country, with the Fulani and their allies as their primary targets. Exasperated by all these abuses and by their refusal to submit to his authority, the lamido of Tibati, Hammadou Nyâ Mboula, decided to put an end to this resistance in 1856. He sent two emissaries to the Nyem-Nyem chief, Mancun: one carried a spear and the other an ear of millet. Mancun had to choose between submission, symbolized by the ear of millet, and confrontation, represented by the spear. Mancun interpreted this embassy as an insult to his honour, for he did not submit to anyone. He took the spear, thus choosing war. The Nyem-Nyem drew a line of demarcation five kilometres from their fortress and posted sentries there. The battle that ensued routed Tibati's army and claimed many victims, struck by poisoned arrows (Hurault, 2001). It was a crushing defeat for Nyâ Mboula, who lost a large part of his men and cavalry.

Nyâ Mboula's second attack was launched a decade later, in 1865, with a larger army, estimated at a thousand horsemen. Tibati's army, which was camped at Mayo Dankali, was spotted by Nyem-Nyem lookouts before nightfall. After four days of waiting, spent devising plans of attack, it was surprised by Nyem-Nyem warriors as it began its advance towards Mount Djim. The battle that

ensued was once again won by the Nyem-Nyem. Nyâ Mboula, who liked to lead operations himself, suffered the most crushing defeat of his career. Chased towards Tignère and cornered in a dead end, he was struck by a poisoned arrow. Brought back to Tibati under the protection of his guard during the night, he died there (Hurault, 2001, p. 40). Thus ended the life of one of the greatest conquerors of Adamawa. The Nyem-Nyem military expertise, combined with the topography of their country, proved too much for the Fulani cavalry. Well organized and disciplined around their leader, entrenched in the surrounding caves and mountains, transformed into veritable strongholds that were inaccessible and impregnable, the Nyem-Nyem trounced the Fulani. To our knowledge, it is the only army that succeeded in routing the Fulani cavalry during the entire period of the conquest of Adamawa. It repeated this feat a few years later against a Fulani-German coalition that was attempting, through punitive expeditions, to put an end to the looting of caravans orchestrated by the Nyem-Nyem (NAC, 1972).

The tragic end of Nyâ Mboula is similar to that of his enemy from Ngaoundéré, Ardo Issa. In 1878, the latter ended his twenty-four years of conquests, falling victim to a poisoned arrow that struck his left foot in the Batouri region. Suffering from internal bleeding and vomiting blood, sensing his imminent death, Issa asked his companions to keep the news secret, as they would all risk being massacred if the local population learned of his demise. His body, seated on his horse, crossed the region with the entire procession that usually accompanied him, and everything seems to indicate that it was his advanced state of decomposition that forced his companions to bury him in Koundé, contrary to their desire to take him back to Ngaoundéré (Hamoua, 1997, p. 108).

Overall, in all the lamidats of Adamawa, the Fulani encountered fierce resistance from the populations they tried to subjugate or capture to feed the demand for slaves from the Hausa country. This resistance generally took the form of direct military confrontation, bringing together armies with different infrastructures and structures. Where the Fulani gained the upper hand, i.e. almost everywhere, the vanquished had two alternatives to try to save some integrity for their community: the establishment of more or less acceptable compromises, laying the foundations for future collaboration, sometimes to the detriment of neighbouring groups; or a strategy of avoidance, through flight and retreat to sites that were difficult to access and easy to defend.

Natural defences and defensive constructions

The transformation of the natural environment for defensive purposes also emerged as a resistance tactic to enslavement. Indeed, in the area between Lake Chad and the Atlantic coast, violent conquests and slave raids were particularly prevalent between the sixteenth and nineteenth century. This prolonged state of war can be explained by the crises and conflicts of all kinds that accompanied the process of state-building and the establishment of empires such as Bornu, Baguirmi and Sokoto. Natural features such as mountain ranges, swampy areas, rock shelters, caves and caverns were combined with fortified structures such as walls, palisades, trenches and dwellings to meet the need for protection and defence against war and predatory attacks (Bah, 2001, pp. 15-30).

Despite its predominantly flat appearance, the Adamawa Plateau offered scattered topographic features of great military value to the lamidats. Its northern and western edges are steeply sloped, interspersed with mountain ranges and dotted with underground galleries and caves. Its surface is drained by a major hydrographic network feeding the country's main basins. Its populations did not fail to integrate them into their defence strategies against the threat of capture and subjugation by the Fulani and their various allies. In the Mbum country, the prefixes *Ngaw* indicate the presence of peaks of varying heights, which played a definite defensive role against Fulani advances. The Dii owed their relative safety to the inaccessibility of their settlements along the ridge overlooking the Benoue valley (Bah, 2001, p. 18).

More than any other people in Adamawa, the Nyem-Nyem knew how to take advantage of their environment, made up of mountain ranges, rock shelters, caves and underground galleries, to successfully resist the Baare-Chamba invasions (Fardon, 1988; Mohammadou, 1999, pp. 59-109), Fulani and German invasions between the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Here is a series of parallel mountain ranges overlooking the Galim region, with an average altitude of 1,300 metres. One of the main peaks, Mount Djim, located about five kilometres from Galim-Tignère, is notable for its role as a refuge and a place where the Nyem-Nyem developed their military strategies during the conflicts that pitted them against their many attackers. This mountain seems to hold within its depths the entire odyssey of the Nyem-Nyem people.[7]

7 Mount Djim itself is an environment made up of rocky outcrops, caverns and endless caves that have been transformed into bunkers and entrenched camps. Gaping holes in its flanks clearly show the impact of bullets fired during joint Fulani and German attempts to put an end to the Nyem-Nyem resistance (see Fofou, 1994, p. 24).

With these natural advantages, ideal for attack, retreat and resistance in the event of a siege, the Nyem-Nyem used a wide range of tactical measures against their enemies, including raids, ambushes, guerrilla warfare and surprise attacks. They were thus able to escape capture by routing the Fulani armies of Adamawa, sowing insecurity in the region with their targeted raids, combining speed of execution and retreat, and victoriously repelling the German colonial forces until 1915 (NAC, 1972). The gathering of intelligence through sentries posted at strategic locations, the practice of divination, and the belief in their invisibility and invulnerability were of great importance in boosting the morale of the warriors and building victory.

Certain caves located on the sides of mountains served as hiding places and places of retreat during Fulani attacks and thus acquired a reputation as impregnable strongholds. This was the case with Bamkoutou, near Linté, which is in fact a group of caves with several compartments, capable of accommodating all the inhabitants of the village. This site had the advantage of being well lit during the day, and no one could approach it without being spotted. The village of Fouy also had a renowned cave that was difficult to access. To enter it, it was necessary to use a ladder specially made by the members of the *Tok,* a magical-religious society that is spoken of with some reluctance. It presented a real danger, as some people who had taken refuge there to escape the Fulani had disappeared forever (NAC, 1972, p. 15). To reinforce this natural defence and compensate for some of its weaknesses, the Voute built a variety of defensive structures. These included trenches with drawbridges, tight palisades and the layout of the dwellings.

In terms of defensive structures, trenches were one of the most important elements of military architecture and the most striking reflection of the Voute warrior civilization. Oral tradition does not provide precise information about their origin or introduction to the region. It is therefore reasonable to assume, according to the succession or contagion theory, that the Voute borrowed the technique for building them from the peoples who preceded them in this art. It may have come to them through the examples of the Fulani fortified cities, which were themselves built on older models transmitted from western Sudan. One of the most important Voute chiefdoms, Nguila, shows the care taken in their construction, based on ancient remains, despite the visible reclaiming of its rights by nature.

The builders of the trenches, mainly slaves (Mvogo Ndzana, 2000-2001, p. 37), used great ingenuity to create passages giving access to plantations or sources of supply outside the fortifications. These were a kind of drawbridge, made of

assembled stakes, connected to each other by ropes or vines. With a width of 80 to 100 cm, they could not support the weight of more than two people. Functional during the day, they were removed at night to prevent possible foreign intrusions. Two to four people were needed to manoeuvre the wooden structure, remove it and place it close to the trench so that it could be put back in place the next day. A few well-guarded breaches were also made in the trench to allow warriors to pass through (Mvogo Ndzana, 2000-2001, pp. 38-39).

After the trench, which provided the first line of external protection, there were palisades leading towards the centre of the village. These were a kind of rampart, protective wall or fence, built from wooden stakes, flowering plants or palm trees. Their defensive value depended mainly on their height, density, thickness and resistance to enemy attacks. This is why the stakes were firmly tied together and, to secure them, the Voute dug holes deep enough in the ground to bury their bases. The structure was both aesthetically pleasing and as sturdy as stone walls. The upper ends of the stakes were sharpened to a point, similar to modern parapets. Loopholes completed this system, allowing snipers to fire their arrows and crossbows at attackers (Mvogo Ndzana, 2000-2001, pp. 38-41).

After crossing the trenches and palisades, the interior of vaulted villages such as Meré and Nguila presented other obstacles independent of the defensive enclosures. The architectural layout of the dwellings and the organization of the living spaces met both the requirements of supervision and protection of the family. Patriarchal family units were grouped together in small enclosures within the village. The various huts, with walls made of earth or wood, were built close together and tightly packed in order to ensure the protection of the whole. The chief's hut received special attention. It was surrounded by several protective belts to prevent certain regalia and magical compositions from falling into the hands of enemies (Mvogo Ndzana, 2000-2001). This architecture was designed to deter attackers or slow their advance through its relative resistance, allowing shield bearers and archers to choose the best way to fight back. However, while it enabled the Voute to face, with varying degrees of success, Muslim troops whose weapons could not easily penetrate this level of protection, the same could not be said of the Germans' cannons and firepower.

The Tikar were victims of Banyo slave raids as much as the Voute. They adopted similar defensive systems to resist them and surrounded their villages with fortified walls. Von Stetten made this observation in 1895 during his visit to Tikar country: all the villages are surrounded by moats and ramparts and generally have a large circumference, because there is enough cultivated land inside the fortifications to keep the inhabitants safe from want even

during a prolonged siege (NAC, 1895). According to observations made by Eldridge Mohammadou, the city of Nditam was protected by a series of three concentric trenches, the largest of which had a diameter of about 4 km in the direction of the Ngoro-Ngambé road. Each of the approximately circular enclosures circumscribed one or more distinct neighbourhoods. The enclosure forming the central core was the smallest and delimited the palace, while the third enclosed all the other neighbourhoods and the surrounding fields (Mohammadou, 1990, pp. 344-345).

The art of castrametation (military camp design) was therefore perfectly mastered by the Tikar and the Voute peoples. But unlike the Voute, who built exits to the plantations outside the ramparts, the Tikar enclosed everything within their walls. This arrangement meant that they did not have to venture outside their defences, where they would have been vulnerable to ambush, and enabled them to resist longer in the event of a siege. These fortifications enabled both peoples to repel certain attacks by the Fulani, most often in retaliation for non-payment of the annual tribute. The construction of the ramparts was the prelude to the revolt against this requirement and the preparation of resistance to possible coercive action by the lamido. This was the case with the Voute of Meré, who successfully repelled an attack by the army of Tibati (Mohammadou, 1967, pp. 79-80).

The increasingly unbearable demands for annual tributes led the people of Adamawa to barricade themselves behind fortifications and prepare for long sieges. This was the case for several chiefdoms that had initially welcomed and fraternized with the Fulani vanguard on the plateau. Their collaboration did not protect them from these levies, and they eventually adopted uncompromising and openly hostile attitudes. The Ngambe chiefdom in Tikar country was a brilliant example of this turn of events.

When the founders of the Lamidat of Tibati arrived, they were received by Ngambé I, who accepted their conditions without resistance: to supply them with ivory tusks, food and captives every year. As a token of his collaboration, he agreed to send his son Nyandji to the court of Tibati as a hostage. Anxious not to burden his people with the demands of Tibati, Ngambé I went on raids against the neighbouring Sanaga and Médjanti tribes. Upon his death, a delegation of notables travelled to Tibati to ask the lamido to allow Nyandji to return to replace his father. The lamido agreed, but in exchange demanded that his brother Mondji replace him as hostage. The situation remained unchanged until Ngambé II came to the throne towards the end of the nineteenth century. Tibati criticized him for appearing to be too independent, so he had several

deep trenches dug around his new capital, Mba Ngoukou, and erected wooden palisades. These trenches stretch for kilometres between Ngambé and Nditam and between Ngambé and Tibati. When the Tikar refused to comply with Tibati's order to depose their chief and replace him with Yélé, son of Mondji Djoueng, they were besieged for several months by the troops of Lamido Hamman Lamou. It was during this siege that the Germans invaded Tibati and came to the aid of Ngambé (Mohammadou, 1971, pp. 111-114).

The misunderstanding that led to the conflict between the Voute and the Germans stemmed from the latter's refusal to supply them with weapons to resist the attacks on Tibati. It is therefore not surprising that between 1897 and 1899, relations between the Voute and the Germans became confrontational (Mohammadou, 1971, p. 141). The defence systems prepared to resist the Fulani raids were reorientated towards resistance to German imperialism.

To cope with the Fulani invasion of the plateau, the populations used the natural features of their environment and the military technology they had developed. Their attitudes, far from being consistent, oscillated between collaboration, the establishment of compromises and alliances, and taking up arms in direct confrontation, in an effort to preserve their integrity and safeguard a certain degree of independence. In their military engagements and resistance efforts, mountain ranges, caves, trenches, palisades, vegetation cover, and sacrificial alliances such as with the *Mandjara*[8] provided them with places of refuge, havens of peace, areas of retreat, and centres for preparing offensives. Despite the difficult living conditions of these troubled times, when the slightest mistake could lead to capture and enslavement, the resistance movements that developed here and there enabled different groups to delay, limit and sometimes escape the total control of the Fulani. Among those who fell into the clutches of the slave traders, there were some who continued the struggle in other forms, perpetuating the eternal aspiration of human societies for freedom, regardless of the vicissitudes of their historical trajectory. When captured, they attempted to see through the links of their chains and untie the knots of the ropes that bound them.

8 This was the case, for example, with the alliance between the Tikar of Nditam and the Voute of Linté; through a blood pact, the two peoples swore not to wage war against each other, under penalty of severe curses for those who broke the pact.

Rebellion and escape

It should be noted from the outset that troublemakers were systematically removed from the captives and either killed, sold to Hausa traders or enlisted among those who were sent as annual tribute to Yola. The slaves who remained were therefore those who were considered the most docile and most inclined to follow their masters' instructions. The threat of being sold or put to death was always present to deter those tempted to revolt or rebel. Unlike the slave uprisings in the American plantations, these rebellions were therefore quite exceptional.

The lack of unity and cohesion due to the fact that they were widely scattered within families or living in *dumde* (farming villages) far from each other, along with the lack of a notion of class or group solidarity, and brutal techniques of deterrence all seem to have played a role in preventing mass rebellions. Slave revolts were therefore limited to individual acts of disobedience. Some masters preferred to sell recaptured fugitives or put them in chains for a certain period of time, whereas others, mainly those living in the capitals of the lamidats, sent them to the Sarki Yara (prison governor), who tortured them or sentenced them to death.[9] All the lamidats in northern Cameroon had private prisons that, despite being formally banned, were still maintained more or less clandestinely and used as a means of coercion by the lamidos.

Slaves also favoured escape as a means of resistance and expression of their refusal to be enslaved.

Escape, disobedience and the struggle for liberation during the colonial period

The colonial period called into question the omnipotence of the Fulani lamidos in the various lamidats in northern Cameroon. The colonizers used various methods to impose their authority on the existing powers of the land. For the slaves, this brought a new context and a new opportunity to escape the arbitrariness of domination and exploitation, through increased escape attempts, disobedience and the struggle for liberation.

This disorganization and disruption caused by the colonial presence in the lamidats was exploited by some of the enslaved who escaped in increasing numbers to neighbouring regions. In Adamawa, for example, these escapes appear

9 To find out more about the lamidat prison system, see Idrissou Alioum's 'The prisons of Cameroon under French rule, 1916-1960', Ph.D. thesis, University of Yaounde I, 2006.

to have been significant during the French period due to the division of the region into several subdivisions and the increasingly difficult task of reclaiming fugitive slaves who had fled to other parts of the territory or to more distant regions. A report dated 1923 says that 'runaway slaves' fled as far as possible to neighbouring administrative areas in French Equatorial Africa and even to Nigeria (NAC, 1923). This information, or rather this tendency to 'run away', was confirmed in 1949 by Antoine Desnautes Jamot, who estimated the proportion of runaways as 1 in 5 (NAC, 1945). Public participation in the Armistice celebrations on 11 November was also an opportunity seized by numerous slaves in the lamidos' entourage to flee. The situation became critical in the 1950s, especially in Banyo, prompting the subdivision chief to ask his superiors to review the organization's procedures.[10] Does the fact that the colonial authorities were aware of this issue of fugitives indicate just how big it was? All in all, the destinations the slaves chose to escape to, such as French Equatorial Africa, which did not include Adamawa[11] or Nigeria, had the advantage of offering a place of refuge where they could go unnoticed and where no one would know about their past as slaves. In the Nigeria part, learning the Hausa language was an important factor in their integration and in concealing their previous slave status.

The establishment of a Norwegian protestant mission in the town of Ngaoundere in 1925 also provided a refuge for slaves. The activism of Pastor Halfdan Endresen even provided the slaves with encouragement to flee their shackles. By increasing his attacks against the system he shook up the prevailing state of inertia, forcing the French authorities to react – not to encourage the liberation of slaves, but rather to protect the masters from what they dubbed 'Pastor Endresen's extra-religious activities' (NAC, 1951-1953). The runaways became a social crisis from 1951 when missionaries began to find runaways sitting on their porch when they woke up every morning. In 1954, Pastor Walle, who stepped in for Endresen while he was on holiday, received 61 runaway slaves. Although it did not end slavery, the colonial presence presented an opportunity that slaves tried to exploit in their bid for freedom (Lode, 1990, pp. 117-118).

It should be noted that slaves could complain to the colonial authorities about multiple abuses, even if sanctions against the perpetrators were slow to materialize (NAC, 1945). Other cases of runaways were reported both on the eve and in the aftermath of the proclamation of independence, as evidenced by

10 AAB Correspondence No 38/CF by the Chief of the Subdivision of Banyo to the Chief of the Adamawa Region, dated 6 October 1952.

11 A region included in Cameroon under mandate and then guardianship of France.

the dismissal of the lamido of Ngaoundere, Babba Djeilani, for his abuse and violence against slaves (Lode, p. 120; Pollaud-Dulian, 1967, pp. 66-69).

The tolerance and lack of resolve on the part of the local colonial authorities, especially the French, gave the lamidos, and subsequently all slave owners, considerable room for manoeuvre. The confusion among colonial authorities regarding those who hoped to find refuge there did not encourage a rise in runaways or complaints against their masters. Faced with the procrastination of the local French authorities, the Norwegian mission became a refuge for all runaway slaves. As a result, it posed a serious threat to the authority of the lamidos, and the public denunciation of the lamido of Kontcha in 1950 by Diko Yébé for acts of trafficking and slavery, and his dismissal followed by the release of several captives (Hamadjoulde, 1998, pp. 113-114), was an exceptional act in this environment of complacency.

Leaders of the resistance against enslavement

Through the major slave-owning institutions – *dumde*, *labbadje*, harems (*laou kira*), the palaces of the lamidos and their armies – emerged great leaders whose zeal, bravery and sometimes even betrayal left their mark on the system established in the lamidats. More specifically, certain individuals, due to their extraordinary character, deserve our attention in view of the actions they decided to take. One such person is Wam Kaygama Mbam, a slave dignitary from Banyo in Adamawa, to whom Oussoumanou, the then ruler, had entrusted the city in 1875. As interim ruler, during the disputed succession to Kaygama Mbam, he attempted to have himself proclaimed lamido. Despite the failure of his attempt, which divided the pretenders to the throne and ended in bloodshed, he represents a rare example of an uprising led by a slave dignitary. Another example is that of Gagnon Kassala Yiité, Kaygama Mbam's replacement in the Lamidat of Adamawa, who became its second most important figure. Using the trust he had earned and his influential status as a slave dignitary there, he took sides in the succession disputes in 1893.

In Ngaoundere, there was another interesting case. Kaygama Oussoumanou Naknyi, a slave with Mbum origins, drove out Lamido Dalil to install Issa Maygari on the throne, before being subsequently decapitated by the latter in 1908 under the gaze of the German Resident, Von Krogh. The same goes for a slave with Iaka origins, Adjia Halamdou, who was responsible for liaising with the colonial administration and who rebelled against the authority of Lamido Yaya Dandi in 1924, to the point of threatening his power and ending

up in exile in Doume. In the Lamidat of Kontcha, it was the heroic action of a woman that struck the final blow to slavery, which had been practised locally for several generations. This was Diko Yebe, and she persuaded the head of the Tignere subdivision, Maurice Baudelaire, to depose Babbada Atikou, who had seized power in 1950, and put an end to his abuses against the Pere people. Her bravery led to the liberation of several enslaved people in Kontcha.

Women played an important role as slavery developed across the northern regions of Cameroon, yet their involvement and roles have been little studied to date. In the lamidats of Adamawa, for example, they guided the choices of the main actors, justified the war efforts and were present at all stages of the process of enslavement or the fight for liberation. They were thus taken captive in war or purchased, offered as tribute in the form of diplomatic gifts, or placed with masters as *horbé* or *soulaabé*, victims of segregation and hierarchization, of the system of confinement, of restrictions and imprisonment, of abuse and torture, subjected to a wide variety of roles ranging from service to production or protection. They were accused of having a low fertility rate and of being responsible for spreading sterilizing infections. Female slaves and concubines were sometimes involved in plots to destabilize certain lamidats, thus compromising the collective destiny. Better than the men, who clearly preferred a strategy of avoidance, encouraged by missionaries and under the embarrassed gaze of local administrators, female slaves were at the forefront of the fight against slavery in the northern regions of Cameroon.

Interpretations of the proclamation of independence differed, depending on whether one was on the side of the masters or the slaves. Was it a return to the past, or a step towards general emancipation? The answer was not long in coming from the new authorities of independent Cameroon. Without going so far as to pass a law to liberate all slaves, they decided to remove all administrative support for the slave masters' attempts to keep slavery going; they proclaimed the equality of all before the law, put an end to the existence of several private detention centres, and ordered the lamidos to free all slaves.

Conclusion

Resistance initiatives carried out by enslaved populations in northern Cameroon, especially those living on the Adamawa Plateau, to the slave system established by the Fulani in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can be assessed on two levels: resistance to capture and resistance to slavery. The first of these made optimum use of the natural elements of their immediate environment and their defensive structures, whereas the second involved disobedience, revolt and flight to remote areas and even, on occasion, complaints to the local colonial authorities.

Slaves resisted their masters in various ways in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They used every means at their disposal to escape the degradation and multiple constraints they suffered at the hands of their owners. Their acts of disobedience culminated in individual revolts which were harshly suppressed, escapes to distant places or complaints; in no case did they result in a general uprising organized to regain their freedom. The methods of social control used by the masters, the fact that the slaves were widely dispersed, and the absence of a mass or class consciousness were all obstacles that further bound them to their chains or bonds.

Disorganization appears to be the dominant characteristic of slaves in northern Cameroon, despite their large numbers in the population. They were a body of people without cohesion, whose members struggled on an individual basis for their freedom, without joining forces with others as a way of combating the problem. Once they had achieved their goal, these individuals never tried to join forces with their peers to form a solid entity opposed to their masters. The readiness of colonial authorities to oblige slave masters, in flagrant contradiction to their moral principles and the international context, jeopardized their future and their long-term prospects: in order to prevent the social structure of the northern regions from collapsing, they counted on the gradual extinction of slavery over time.

The lack of a comprehensive perspective, a variety of betrayals and collaborations and the Fulani's tactical and military superiority overcame the sometimes heroic resistance and opposition of the battered populations. Those who fell into captivity and slavery could only count on themselves, with varying degrees of success. These different acts of resistance by members of the population undoubtedly enabled a significant number of people to evade capture, survive enslavement and retain a certain degree of autonomy in the face of the Fulani military machine and its key driver, the subjugation of others. The proclamation of independence led to a new, more egalitarian dynamic, marked by the gradual decline in the numbers of the enslaved masses and the reconfiguration of relations between 'former' masters and 'former' slaves.

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CHAPTER 6

SLAVERY IN MADAGASCAR

Former Servitude and Current Aspects of Inequality

Lolona Nathalie Razafindralambo

Introduction

The ancient institution of slavery was widespread throughout Madagascar. The term used to refer to slaves was *andevo* (or *ondevo*), which meant 'lost man, captive and bought enslaved, and who is sold, who has no control over his possessions, and whose entire property belongs to his master' (Flacourt, 1995, pp. 264-265). The enslaved was therefore an individual who had been separated from his or her group and become the property of another individual. Initially, these enslaved persons came from Madagascar itself, then in the nineteenth century, captives from East Africa were brought to the island. The abolition of slavery in Madagascar was proclaimed on 26 September 1896 by the new French colonial authorities. However, even today, former enslaved people and former freemen continue to be referred to by the old terms: *andevo* ('slave'), *andriana* ('noble') and *hova* ('commoners', free men).

In the history of slavery in Madagascar, three periods can be defined: (1) before the arrival of the Westerners in around the fifteenth century; (2) the formation of kingdoms and the slave trade up to the nineteenth century; (3) after independence in 1960. Few sources are available for the earliest period. However, recent works shed light on the place of Madagascar in the trans-Atlantic slave trade (notably Mosca, 2008, pp. 593-617); until recently, the island's trade relations with its

neighbours in the Indian Ocean were most widely documented (Larson, 2000a). Relatively little research has focused on the situation of the former slaves during the colonial period. As for the current period, it is increasingly interesting to researchers, but the research clashes with the unspoken taboo: confessing to have enslaved ancestors is tantamount to agreeing to be called a 'slave' (Razafindralambo, 2014, pp. 95-106; Regnier, 2012).

This chapter will begin with a discussion of the origins of slavery and the conditions and status of the enslaved. We will then see how the slave trade led to upheavals in Malagasy societies, and how, as a source of slaves, it contributed to changing the composition of the slave population, as political groups organized and centralized themselves to supply the trade. Finally, we will look at how, despite the official end of slavery, inequalities resulting from slavery persist in contemporary Malagasy society.

Slavery in Malagasy societies

The main sources of slaves were initially war and purchase. The wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were aimed at establishing the areas of control and legitimacy of Madagascar monarchies. These wars enabled the capture of prisoners who, once enslaved, constituted a source of wealth for the victorious group. Slaves regained their freedom when they were returned to their parents. Otherwise, they remained slaves, with no possibility of rejoining their former master's group, or they were sold.

In the nineteenth century, slaves consisted of captives, indentured servants, and individuals convicted of crimes or offences defined by law (Rakoto et al., 1995). For crimes punishable by death, the wife and children of the guilty party were enslaved. These crimes included murder, theft of crops, and all forms of undermining the authority of the sovereign. For lesser crimes and offences, the guilty party was enslaved and their property confiscated. This was the case for crimes of witchcraft, grave desecration, or cohabitation with a slave. Another source of slaves was births, as the children born to an enslaved woman belonged to her master. With the intensification of the slave trade in the nineteenth century, captives from East Africa, known as *Makoa* or Mozambicans, arrived in Madagascar and changed the composition of the slave population, which now consisted of former free Madagascans as well as people of foreign origin.

Slaves lived in a variety of conditions. They most often shared the same living spaces with free people. This proximity was maintained in the various tasks

to which they were assigned: domestic work, farming and livestock herding. Women cared for children and even nursed them. However, the royal powers relied on a socio-political structure in which statuses were strictly defined and separated. Aristocratic groups and nobles occupied the highest rank in the hierarchy, followed by commoners (freemen), and finally the enslaved. Each individual's position in this structure was accompanied by privileges and symbolic elements, such as participation in royal rituals.

Free people were subjects of the sovereigns and had to show their allegiance, particularly through corvée labour or military service. The separation was maintained by prohibiting marriage between different social classes, particularly between free people and slaves. The most important difference between free people and slaves was that slaves could not become ancestors. Considered outside of society, they had no tombs, and no rituals were performed upon their death, whereas funeral rites allowed the dead to become ancestors, a source of blessing for their descendants.

However, social status was neither fixed nor definitive. Free people could become slaves, and become free again after emancipation to rejoin their original group. Some emancipated slaves joined groups of freed people, particularly non-Malagasy slaves from East Africa. Emancipation occurred in various ways: it could be granted by the master, or the slave could buy his freedom or be bought by his family. During the second half of the nineteenth century, in the Kingdom of Madagascar, emancipation was an official act and had to be recorded in the registers. This registration completed the emancipation ritual, which involved symbolically 'washing' the slave, so that he could henceforth take a spouse and have descendants among the free.

Madagascar and the slave trade

The organization of the slave trade by Malagasy groups still needs to be studied. Even before the arrival of Europeans, Malagasy captives were taken across the Indian Ocean to the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf. This trade was subsequently controlled by the *Antalaotra,* merchants of Arab and Swahili origin (Rantoandro, 1983, 1984). They were gradually replaced by Europeans, who had been travelling along the coasts of Madagascar since the sixteenth century in search of captives and supplies. Madagascar supplied slaves to the Mascarene Islands and the Dutch colonies of Cape Town and Batavia, but also to the Americas, from the West Indies to North America (Larson, 1997; Mosca, 2008).

The island's involvement in the slave trade had several consequences. Internal wars and raids multiplied in order to supply the trade. Centralized political entities (kingdoms) were formed and strengthened, mainly in the centre of the island, on the west coast and the east coast, in order to control the trade. From the late eighteenth century onwards, the Highlands fuelled the trade in captives (Larson, 2000b; Ratsivalaka, 1999). These were mainly exchanged for firearms, needed for the wars of conquest. The centralization of power continued until the nineteenth century, with the formation of the Kingdom of Madagascar in 1817 and the conquest of two-thirds of the island by Merina power (population of Imerina, central highland region).

The growth in abolitionist ideas in Great Britain would change the situation. The treaty signed by Merina King Radama I and the British Governor of Mauritius, Sir Robert Farquhar, in 1817, provided for the cessation of the slave trade. In return, Great Britain made a commitment to supply weapons. The treaty was not really implemented, and, from 1820 onwards, Madagascar became an importer of slaves from East Africa, as a result of the island's increasing labour needs. At the same time, a decline in warfare led to a decrease in internal sources of supply (Rakotondrabe, 1997). Slaves were a necessity in nineteenth-century Malagasy societies, as they provided a labour force that replaced free workers in production, allowing them to devote themselves to increasingly important tasks such as building dykes and houses for dignitaries.

Current aspects of inequality

After the proclamation of abolition in 1896, former slaves returned to their regions of origin. Others left the estates of their former masters and settled on the fringes of society; some remained in the villages of their former masters. The old social categories continued to be used for administrative purposes and in the context of the 'race policy' introduced by General Gallieni (1896-1905) (Paillard, 2002; Rajaonah, 2002, p. 195). The aim was to classify the population, notably on the basis of phenotypic traits (Rajaonah, 2002, p. 203). The terms of the social hierarchy, whose existence was no longer defined by law, became fixed, with no possibility of crossing the boundaries between groups, as no means of transition was provided for. Each person therefore remained in their status prior to the 1896 abolition, including former slaves.

The establishment of an independent Malagasy republic in 1960 did not bring any major changes. The old social status continued to be in force, with new

meanings. Those freed by the abolition decree were slaves, and their descendants continue to be called 'slaves'. This is a difficult stain to erase, a stigma reinforced by economic inequality between social groups: land and zebu herds, assets whose value is not only economic, belong to the descendants of former masters (Boyer-Rossol, 2015; Ramamonjisoa, 1984). The main change lies in the racialization of the inequalities between social groups: moral characteristics are attached to supposed physical characteristics. For example, in the central highlands, the descendants of former freemen are called whites (*fotsy*) and the descendants of former slaves are called blacks (*mainty*), with different moral characters attached to each category (Ramamonjisoa, 1984; Razafindralambo, 2005, 2014). In the southern highlands, former slaves were considered impure (Evers, 2002; Regnier, 2012). In western Madagascar, the term *makoa* refers to very black people (Boyer-Rossol, 2015). The social barrier has become a racial barrier.

Conclusion

The concept of slavery in Madagascar has changed with the various transformations that Malagasy societies have undergone: the formation of political parties, entry into international trade and the slave trade, colonization, and modern-day citizenship. Precolonial social statuses were fixed, each retaining its ancestral affiliation, in addition to essentialization of inequalities. The abolition of slavery in 1896 did not have the desired effect, mainly because it was not accompanied by any symbolic elements such as a ritual of emancipation. No movement demanding equal rights existed or gained any real significance in the twentieth century, with the exception of the PADESM (Party of the Disadvantaged of Madagascar) in the 1940s (Randriamaro, 1997), or the Zwam movement, known to be home to the descendants of former slaves, in the aftermath of the events of May 1972. The descendants of former slaves do not seem to want to construct a new identity, instead seeking to blend into society by adopting the cultural values of the descendants of former freemen.

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CHAPTER 7

THE LONG-TERM JEWISH DIASPORA OF AFRICA

Between Historical Realities and Borrowing Processes

Idrissa Bâ

Introduction

The presence of Jewish communities in North Africa, especially Egypt, and East Africa is relatively well known. Jewish historiography, or rather African Jewish studies, has devoted several studies to this subject, from the pioneering work of Nahum Slouschz to the more recent work of Peter Mark, José da Silba Horta and Edith Bruder, and including, among others, publications by André Chouraqui, Michel Abitbol and John Hunwick. They have studied themes that shed light on the Jewish presence on the northern and eastern margins of Africa. Among those addressed, those related to the shock waves following the historical traumas suffered by the Jews predominate: such as the destruction of the first and second temples, respectively in 586 BCE by Nebuchadnezzar and 70 BCE by Titus; the massacre of the Jews of the Iberian Peninsula in 1391 and in 1492, and other events. Egypt appears as a recurring theme in this historiography and as a land of refuge or suffering for Jews: the migration of Jacob and his people to the green pastures of the Nile; the exodus of the Hebrews, under the successive guidance of Moses and Joshua, from Egypt to Palestine; and so on. Closer to home, we also have the tragedy of the *pieds noirs* and the *Aliyah* (ascent to Jerusalem) of Jews, individually or collectively, to the modern state of Israel. A final theme

is linked to the Beta Israel of Ethiopia.[1] It is, however, true that there is a debate among experts about the issue of the latter's identity, and the most recent research even tends to deny them any Jewish origin whatsoever. They would instead be 'Ethiopians of Agawe origin who adopted a Jewish identity at a certain point in their history' (Bruder, 2008, p. 89).

These themes, which could be described as traditional, are increasingly being supplemented, if not supplanted, in the historiography of African Judaism by others, related to the Cairo Genizah, the presence of Jewish communities in the African hinterland (particularly in the Sahara, the Sahel, Sudan and the coastal fringe) mainly in connection with trans-Saharan and transatlantic dynamics, and the issue of the Jewish origins or identity of certain African peoples. This chapter is accordingly a review of the Jewish presence in the African hinterland and the issue of the Judaism of some African peoples.

The gateways: the Sahara and the Atlantic

The importance of the Jewish presence in North Africa and the Sahara throughout the Middle Ages is beyond doubt. This centuries-long presence is linked, among other things, and beyond the factors already mentioned, to the long Phoenician domination of North Africa and the various voluntary or involuntary movements of people that these events entailed. These movements were most often the result of violence connected with massacres, deportation and non-compliance with *dhimmi* status. They were sometimes voluntary, prompted by the involvement of Jews in medium- and long-distance trade, both by sea and across deserts, connecting different regions with complementary economies. In this regard, it was the Radhanites and the merchants of Fustat (Cairo) who most distinguished themselves by their proven business acumen. Among Jewish communities, the most important were the Touat, Gourara, Tidikelt, Tafilâlet, Sous and WadiDar'a.

Yet there is still far from unanimous agreement on the involvement of Jews in trans-Saharan trade. This issue, long debated by historians of African Judaism, was recently revisited in a thought-provoking summary by Michel Abitbol entitled 'Jews and Blacks on both sides of the Sahara'. Certainly, various clues seem to point to Jewish involvement in trans-Saharan trade between the ninth and

1 This exogenous ethnonym means in Ge'ez either those who do not have access to land ownership, or wanderers, foreigners, exiles in relation to the Christian and indigenous Amhara, which is why those concerned prefer the name Beta Esra'el. L. Anteby–Yemini, 2001.

fourteenth century: 'the existence of a long string of Jewish communities' at the gates and along the routes of the Sahara, the professional specialization of North African Jews in areas related to the products of this trade, and evidence drawn from both the *responsum* of Rabbi Sherira Gaon and that of Benjamin of Tudela (Abitbol, 1982, p. 234, 2001, pp. 75-76; Bâ, 2014, pp. 119-196; Bruder, 2008a, p. 81; Hirschberg, 1963, p. 320). In reality, during this long period, Jews specialized, among other things, in the redistribution of products from the trans-Saharan trade in North Africa and beyond. Throughout this period, trade functioned on the basis of regional specialization and complementary trading networks: those of North Africa and the northern Sahara were controlled by Jews, those of the Sahara by Arab-Berbers, and those of Sudan, the Sahel and the Guinean region by Sudanese networks: Dyula or Wangara, Hawsa, Marka, and so on. However, from the fourteenth to the fifteenth century, corroborating testimonies from Arab (Jean Léon l'Africain), Portuguese (Valentim Fernandès), Sudanese (Ahmed Bâba, Fettashî) and oral sources (traditions of Tendirma, Morikoyra and Arham) attest to the Jewish presence in the sub-Saharan region, the Sahel and Sudan (Walata, Timbuktu, Gao, Tendirma). All the evidence suggests that they were unable to resist the siren call of trans-Saharan trade and its significant subsidies. In addition to this obvious interest, there was, once again, a wave of violence: the massacre of the Jewish community of Touât, as well as those of Gourara and Tidikelt, instigated by al-Maghilî, which drove the survivors to seek refuge in the northern communities, in the Moroccan Draa, in the Mauritanian Adrâr and much further south in the Niger bend (Bâ, 2014; Bakchine-Dumont, 1975-1976; Hunwick, 2006; Oliel, 1994). But at the end of the fifteenth century, the situation changed on the banks of the Niger. Influenced by his official advisor, a known anti-Semite, who was none other than al-Maghilî, who had brought about the massacre of the Jewish community of Touât and the adjacent oases by putting a price of six dinars on the head of every Jew, Askya Mohamed arrested and imprisoned all the Jewish merchants in his empire, before releasing them following the intervention of Mohamed Aqit, the grandfather of Ahmed Bâba. From that moment on, history seems to have accelerated. What really happened? All indications are that the Jews were expelled from the Songhay and declared *persona non grata* throughout the Sudanese empire, although a weakly substantiated opinion seems to favour the theory of their massacre (Abitbol, 2001, p. 77; Bâ, 2014; Bruder, 2008a, pp. 78-79; Oliel, 1998, p. 154).

However, as one might expect, the interests at stake in trans-Saharan trade were so significant that Jews soon returned to the region in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, according to various corroborating accounts by al-Bartili

al-Walâtî, Mungo Park, Rabbi Mordechai Aby Serour and various Jewish merchants from Timbuktu, whose archives have been translated by I. D. Haidara (Bâ, 2008, 2014; Haidara, 1999). They can be found in Oualata, Sansanding, Timbuktu and throughout the West African Sahel. Rabbi Mordechai Aby Serour, in particular, managed to establish a small Jewish community in Timbuktu between 1860 and 1868. This community was involved in trans-Saharan trade before succumbing to the hostility of the Moroccan traders, who could not tolerate any form of competition and were quick to finance the systematic looting of Rabbi Mordechai's caravans (Abitbol, 2001, pp. 72-73).

The second gateway for the Jews into the African hinterland was the Atlantic Ocean. This was the route used, at the time of the massacre of Sephardic Jews from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492, by young Jews who were forcibly exiled to São Tomé and Príncipe. Reported by Valentim Fernandes, this information is supported by several other Portuguese sources (Fernandes, 1951, pp. 119, 185). But it was during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that the largest migrations took place. Sephardim merchants involved in transatlantic trade settled along the Senegambian Petite Côte (Rufisque, Saly Portudal, Joal, Carabane, etc.) and the Oil Rivers. We know about their journey thanks to the archives of the Dutch Crown, in which their correspondence with fellow members of the sister community of Amsterdam was found, as well as in the onomastics (especially patronymics) and in the funerary and architectural heritage found on site. At the turn of the nineteenth century, they eventually returned to Amsterdam, probably due to a relative decline in their business and the hostility from Christian merchants, who had until then been held back by the Senegambian rulers (Mark and da Silva Horta, 2009, 2011).

The terms and logic of affiliation with Judaism and the creation of the African Jew

This real history of Jewish communities settled on both sides of the Sahara, to quote M. Abitbol, as well as within it, is mixed with myths, legends and traditions relating sometimes to Jewish origins and sometimes to the Jewish identity of certain African peoples.

This dual issue of Jewish origin and identity concerns many Saharan and Sudanese peoples, including the Fulani, the Berbers, the Daggatum, the Bafurs, the founders and members of the Zakhor ('memory' in Hebrew) association in Mali, especially in Timbuktu and more recently the *Abayudaya* in Uganda, the

House of Israel community in Ghana, the Igbo Benei-Yisrael in Nigeria, the Tutsi-Hebrews of Havila in Rwanda-Burundi, the Lemba in South Africa and the Jews of Rusape in Zimbabwe (Bruder, 2008, p. 78; Bâ, 2014).

Analysis of this data reveals arguments with strong biblical foundations: for example, linking the Beta Israel to King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba through 'one of the fundamental texts of Ethiopian royalty, the Kebra Nagast' or 'to the military Jewish garrison stationed on the Elephantine in Egypt', or the filiation of *kaba'il* of the Niger Bend to Og and Noah, or of Sudanese blacksmiths to Abraham. In short, there are numerous and constant references to the exodus from Egypt, the Egyptian hinterland, Yemen, Canaan and the ten lost tribes of Israel, particularly that of Dan. They concern entire ethnicities (Bafurs, Soninkes and Fulani) as well as lineages, socio-professional groups (blacksmiths, Mu'allim) and families (the founders of Gombou in Mali) (Anteby-Yemini, 2001, pp. 46-47; Abitbol, 2001, 74-75).

In addition to these biblical references, and still in line with Judaism, there are symbols and practices such as the Star of David, animal sacrifices and other customs, purity laws, dietary restrictions, circumcision, levirate marriage, onomastic terms, and so on (Anteby-Yemini, 2001, pp. 53-54; Bruder, 2008, pp. 39-53).

With hindsight and analysis, many points of connection between Judaism and many African peoples can be explained by various historical factors. In North Africa, the long period of punicization went hand in hand with a strong semitization of the entire region (Chouraqui, 1988). Both here and in the Sahara, there was a tactical and therefore cultural rapprochement between Jews and Berbers to fight Roman imperialism. As for the proto-Fulani and Fulani, it is plausible that they lived in several countries and regions, such as the Land of Punt, Egypt, the Sahara and the Niger Bend, which, in addition to the channel created by Islam, encouraged the borrowing or transfer of significant cultural elements between these two peoples (Bâ, 2014). Sometimes, it is the historians themselves who are misleading. This is the case with poor translation and/or interpretation of contemporary sources, notably the famous passage by Ibn Khaldûn on the origins of the Berbers, and a misreading by some travellers or Africanists of the socio-cultural realities of the Tuaregs and the Dagga (Abitbol, 2001; Bâ, 2014; Talbi, 1971).

An array of ideological reasons completes this list. This is the case with a strong desire for the East which, especially among the political, religious and intellectual elite in Sudan, is expressed through an attachment to Islam, a religion very close to Judaism, with which it shares the same cultural references. There is no shortage of historical literature and criticism on this subject. It is

in this context that Michel Abitbol, Lisa Antebi-Yemeni and Edith Bruder were interested in the different ways in which Africans connected to Judaism (Abitbol, 2001; Anteby-Yemeni, 2001; Bruder, 2008). They show how colonizers and missionaries – through the thesis of the Judeo-Semitic origin of Africans, the myth of the lost tribes of Israel, the Hamitic myth revisited in several forms, and the contribution of the Old Testament, all of which also apply to the Koran – 'provided the African groups they identified as Hebrews with entry points into a history of origins, the elements of a new discourse and new narratives of identity linking them to the Jewish world' (Abitbol, 1982, pp. 221-252 and 2001, pp. 72–78; Anteby-Yemini, 2001, pp. 46-59; Bruder, 2008, p. 77).

This 'new discourse' consists, for example, in a recently observed phenomenon of connecting with the State of Israel for obvious political and ideological reasons. In the words of Edith Bruder, this is 'a [recent] process of affiliation or conversion to Judaism by groups with no geographic link to each other' (Bruder, 2008, pp. 77-78).

Finally, added to this 'new discourse' is a clear misunderstanding on the part of Portuguese navigators and geographers: the confusion of the Griots of Senegambia with Jews. The Portuguese eye, accustomed to the marginalization of Sephardic Jews in the Iberian Peninsula, very easily assimilated the Griots in Wolof country on this basis.

Conclusion

Taking stock of Jewish destinies in Africa over the long term, particularly on either side of, and within, the Sahara, has proved difficult, as sources are generally scarce and difficult of access, and ideology plays a significant role in the writing of this history and the construction of this knowledge. However, two key ideas emerge from this review. The first is a number of certainties regarding the Jewish presence in Africa. We know that in addition to North Africa, various Jewish communities settled throughout the Sahara (Tuat, Gourara, Tidikelt, Mauritania Adrar, Oued Noun, and others) throughout the African Middle Ages. Jewish merchants probably participated in trans-Saharan trade during its expansion phase in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in ways that have yet to be defined. This involvement encouraged them to settle in the sub-Saharan region and the Niger River basin during the same period. However, the hostility of Askya Mohamed, under the influence of al-Maghili, towards these Jews brought their Sudanese journey to an abrupt halt at the end

of the fifteenth century. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they were found once again in the region, but apparently in isolation, and the open hostility of Moroccan traders prevented their businesses from prospering. Across the Atlantic, Sephardim merchants from the Iberian Peninsula also settled on the Senegambian Petite Côte and in the Oil Rivers at the beginning of the modern era. Today, virtually none of these communities still exist. Only traces of their passage remain in the architectural heritage, onomastics and collective memory. All of this influences the second key idea mentioned above, namely the need to conduct more in-depth historical research, while exercising caution, on the issue of the Jewish origins and identity of many African peoples, because ideology plays a very important role in this area. We dare to hope that new clarifications will be given by field studies as well as a systematic exploitation and analysis of the documents of the Cairo Genizah, and the manuscripts of Timbuktu, some of which date back to the thirteenth century, to help us better understand the Jewish destiny in Africa, on both sides of and within the Sahara.

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CHAPTER 8

ASIAN DIASPORAS IN EAST AFRICA AND THE ISLANDS (1st-15th CENTURY)

Philippe Beaujard

Introduction

The coastal cultures of East Africa were built up through the regular influx of merchants, religious figures and men in search of land coming from Asia or other parts of the African continent. When these visitors – generally men – settled on the African coast, they took wives there, thereby promoting the development of mixed-race groups and cultures.

From the first cycle of the Afro-Eurasian world system (first to sixth century) (Beaujard, 2012a, 2012b), the Greek text of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* teaches us that Yemenis visited the port of Rhapta on the Tanzanian coast. 'Through their continued visits and intermarriage, [they] are familiar with the region and its language' (Casson, 1989).

These contributions were undoubtedly modest during this period. We can also infer a Persian presence from the Sassanid ceramics found at Ras Hafun (Somalia) and the pre-Islamic Chinese ceramics found at Unguja Ukuu (Zanzibar). Austronesians also reached East Africa very early on, as indicated by the ancient presence of banana trees in Africa.

The Persian Gulf and the dawn of Swahili culture (7th-10th century)

The impact of Muslims from the Persian Gulf was clearly apparent from the seventh century onwards. Migrants, particularly from Oman and Persia, initially settled in the Lamu Archipelago and the islands of Pemba (Mas'udi, 1962) and Zanzibar, where they introduced Islam. They obtained ivory, copal and slaves, which they exchanged for fabrics and beads, found as far away as Chibuene (Mozambique) and the Limpopo Valley.

The remains of a mosque linked to the Ibadis were uncovered at Ras Mkumbuu (Pemba). Arrivals from Yemen and the Red Sea were undoubtedly more limited, although immigation of Zaydis from Yemen has been suggested in the ninth and tenth centuries (Horton, 1996).

Indians also frequented the Swahili coast, as evidenced by pottery finds. Influences from Sindh have been suggested for the issuance of tiny silver coins in the Lamu Archipelago (ninth century) and then further south (Hawkes and Wynne-Jones, 2015), and African traditions refer to the 'people of Daybul'.

Austronesian peoples also arrived on the coast and the islands, as evidenced by the settlement of Madagascar around the eighth century and a text by al-Sirafi recounting a Sriwijayan (Sumatra) attack on Pemba in the tenth century.

Muslims from the Gulf participated in the Swahili push towards the Comoros and Madagascar, which led to the development of the Dembeni culture in the Comoros and the creation in Madagascar of the first settlements linked to the African coast, such as Mahilaka (north-west coast).

The new influence of the Red Sea and a growing Indian presence (10th-14th century)

From the tenth century onwards, the Red Sea gained superiority over the Persian Gulf under the leadership of Egypt's Fatimid Caliphate. The technique of building with cut coral was introduced at this time, from the Red Sea and perhaps also the Gulf.

According to the *Kilwa Chronicle*, Qarmatians arrived from the Persian Gulf in the eleventh century. Persians also arrived during the Buyid period, towards the end of the tenth and eleventh centuries as well as in the twelfth century. The origin myth of the Shirazi, 'people of Shiraz' – largely (re)elaborated

in the fifteenth century – is based in part on the memory of these arrivals.[1] Kufic inscriptions found in Zanzibar and on the island of Tumbatu (dated *c.* 1100) attest to links with the Gulf. Omanis also remained in contact with the Zanj coast and the Comoros. Omani documents from around 1116 and 1200 reveal the presence of Ibadis in Kilwa and their opposition to Twelver Shiites from Persia (Horton, 2001, p. 463). Inscriptions from the thirteenth century in Mogadishu and the presence of sgraffito pottery from the Persian Gulf on the Swahili coast and islands until the fourteenth century further indicate the arrival of Persians in this period.

Yemen's importance grew from 1235 when the Rasulids established an independent state.[2] In the second half of the thirteenth century, Mahdalis from Yemen settled in Barawa, Lamu, Pate, Mombasa, Tumbatu (Zanzibar) and Kilwa. The influence of South Arabia was reflected in the appearance along the African coast, in the Comoros and Madagascar, of a 'black on yellow' ceramic characteristic of Yemen.

Alongside merchants and religious figures, artisans and architects also contributed to the formation of Swahili culture. For example, the Husuni Kubwa palace in Kilwa was undoubtedly built under the direction of an architect of Arabic origin (Insoll, 2003, p. 184).

Indians settled on the African coast and influenced the beadwork, weaving and metalworking, for example at Shanga (Lamu Archipelago) (Horton, 1996, p. 418). Indo-Pacific beads, originating from Southern India or South-East Asia, were found along the coast and in the Limpopo Valley. Unlike the previous ones, the Mapungubwe beads are also believed to originate from India or South-East Asia (Wood, 2011, p. 76). The golden rhinoceros found at Mapungubwe has only one horn, suggesting that it is of the Asian species (Fauvelle-Aymar, 2013, p. 182). Brass beads found at the sites of Phalaborwa, Parma and Mapungubwe in South Africa (early second millennium) would imply connections with India (Thondhala and Martinon-Torres, 2009, p. 92). On the Kenyan and Tanzanian coast, Indo-Pacific type beads arrived from the Coromandel coast, along with cowrie shells. From the thirteenth century onwards, India was the main exporter of textiles. The Chinese chronicler Zhao Rugua mentions the annual arrival of ships from Gujarat carrying cotton fabrics (Hirth and Rockhill, 1911, p. 126).

1 The Shirazi were actually Swahilis who left the Lamu Archipelago to spread Islam further south along the coast.

2 However, there is no evidence of a deliberate policy of expanding the Yemeni networks in East Africa by the Rasulid Sultans. Few Yemenite scholars seem to have stayed on the East African coast at this time. See E. Vallet (2010, p. 560).

Idrisi (twelfth century) and Ibn al-Wardi (around 1240) mention the presence of Indians at the mouth of the Zambezi and on the coast of Sofala. Indian influences have been suggested in Shirazi architecture (Pradines, 2003, p. 357) and in the buildings of Kilwa (Pradines, 2003, p. 360).

Austronesian peoples were probably settled on the Mozambican coast. Al-Sirafi refers to the capture of villages on the Sofala coast by 'people of Waqwaq' and Idrisi writes that 'the territory of Sofala was followed by that of al-Waqwaq', a name applied to both the islands of Indonesia and Madagascar. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, other Austronesians brought new concepts of royalty and intensive rice cultivation practices to Madagascar.

During the Song Dynasty, Chinese people may also have frequented the African coast and Madagascar.

15th century: Gujarati supremacy

After the decline of the 1320-1380 period, trade in the Indian Ocean experienced a revival. Merchants from South Arabia and the Red Sea were present, and links with Hadramaut played a crucial role in the progression of 'collective patriciate' political systems known as *waungwana*. There was also significant trade with the Persian Gulf.

However, it was the Gujaratis and other Indians who were pre-eminent in the fifteenth century. The Great Mosque of Kilwa was rebuilt, with Indian influences (Garlake, 1966, p. 115). A marble piece on a tomb in Kilwa came from a Hindu temple in Gujarat (Sutton, 1998, p. 146). When they arrived on the East African coast, the Portuguese were struck by the presence of Indian ships in the main ports. The Indians brought glass beads and ceramics (especially Chinese porcelain), as well as silks, cotton fabrics, and agricultural products, which they exchanged for ivory, gold and slaves. In 1504, Mombasa had an Indian community, particularly Ismaili Bhoras. When Mombasa was captured, the Portuguese took prisoner the merchants from Cambay who were there with three ships from Gujarat. According to the Portuguese, merchants from Cambay arrived in Malindi every year, and it was a Gujarati pilot who took Vasco de Gama from Malindi to Calicut.

Conclusion

The ruling classes of Swahili cities were generally related to Muslim ancestors who had come from Persia or Arabia. New arrivals obviously occurred continuously along the trade routes. Migrations from the greater regions of the western Muslim world and India played an important role in the development of Swahili ports, although this role may not have been as crucial as some researchers once thought, and Swahili culture is primarily a mixed African culture. The arrival of Austronesian peoples also contributed to the formation of cultures on the East African coast, the Comoros and, above all, Madagascar.

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CHAPTER 9

GUJARATIS OF THE WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN

Historical Challenges and Research Prospects

Ludovic Gandelot

Introduction

Unlike indentured labourers who came from the eastern coast of India to work on plantations in Mauritius, Réunion and Natal in South Africa, the Gujaratis came from the region that is now the state of Gujarat in Western India. They are an illustration of the multiple and varied migratory paths taken by the natives of India, Africa and the Indian Ocean. As free migrants, the Gujaratis gradually became involved in the early nineteenth century in the expansion of trade networks between the Kutch region (west of Gujarat) and Muscat in Oman towards Zanzibar. These networks intensified during the last third of the nineteenth century, spreading throughout Africa, then reconfiguring themselves in the context of colonization, the construction of independent nation states and contemporary globalization. Between migration, diaspora, Africanization and transnational communitarianism, the Gujaratis constitute a dynamic, mobile and independent minority that raises questions about the construction of identities and sociocultural relations in contemporary Africa, as well as the place of Afro-Asian exchanges in the history of African and Indian Ocean societies.

Migrations, economy and identities

Since the 1960s, the entire bibliography dedicated to the Indians in Africa has highlighted the socio-economic characteristics of Gujaratis, who are mainly involved in trade, business and services. Although economic history studies are rare, new perspectives have recently emerged in this area (Khouri and Pereira Leite, 2012 for colonial Mozambique) often thanks to access to private archives (Oonk, 2009). A few rare autobiographies (Kalidas, 1966; Madhvani, 2009) have also provided insight, within the constraints of the genre, into the experiences and development of leading Gujarati entrepreneurs in Africa. However, such accounts come from an elite group, and reconstructing the socio-professional landscape (entrepreneurs, owners, employees, artisans, etc.) of the Gujarati minority, which is in reality highly complex, remains a major challenge for historical studies on the subject.

The question is all the more crucial as it is closely linked to that of identity formation and, for many, is a determining factor in Afro-Gujarati relationships and representations. As intermediaries for the large colonial trading companies, the Gujaratis of East Africa and the Indian Ocean were also intermediaries in the colonial order, insofar as they were granted a special status, like 'Indians' in general. This had an even more lasting impact on Afro-Indian relations, as these legal and socio-economic characteristics were compounded by the practice of caste endogamy.

The expulsion of Indians from Uganda in 1972 (Prunier, 1990) is an exceptional example of the acute identity tensions inherited from colonization at the time of the nation-building of African states in the 1970s. Thus, the fragile situation of foreign minorities of non-European origin in Africa is observed through the issue of nationality and the status of outsider. However, the end of colonial rule also brought hope of emancipation for the Gujaratis. It would therefore be useful to study the evolution of Afro-Gujarati and Afro-Indian relations in general, in line with the evolution of the state and the economy in Africa since independence.

Consideration of the historical construction of Indo-Oceanic spaces

At a time of widening globalization and particularly intensifying Afro-Asian relations, the experience of the Gujarati minority also raises the question of Africa's place in the world and the role historically played by the Indian Ocean as a space for exchange. As such, studies on Indians and Gujaratis are no longer limited to British-ruled Africa and now extend to Madagascar (Blanchy, 1995), Mozambique and even the African Great Lakes region (Chrétien, 2008). The full extent of the utilization of the migratory and connected space of Gujarati Africa is observed in recent historiography that takes a more holistic look at the construction of the societies of the Indo-Oceanic region. Furthermore, while this is beginning to be considered from a transoceanic and Indian perspective (Goswamy, 2011), studies examining the influence of the Gujarati migrations on societies of origin are still rare. However, studies clearly show the ability of the Gujarati minority, through its various socio-religious communities, to establish itself, particularly since the 1990s and under the dual impact of the decline of the state and the religious revival in transnational communities (Akthar, 2016).

Finally, if globalization and current Afro-Asian exchanges are attracting the attention of historians, it is because they are questioning these same phenomena over the long term. This perspective is also reinforced by advances in historiography on Afro-Asian world systems before the sixteenth century (Beaujard, 2012) and criticism of the major European narratives on the first wave of modern globalization (Bertrand, 2011; Subramanyam, 2014). The emphasis thus placed on the existence of historical regimes specific to Indian Ocean societies has notably allowed for a decentring of the historical gaze. Afro-Gujaratis today often refer to their centuries-old presence in Africa. While this claim reflects a quest for legitimacy and recognition, it nonetheless implies certain historical realities. The Gujaratis were indeed recognized leaders in Indo-Oceanic trade when the Europeans arrived (Aubin, 1971). Two centuries later, the port of Surat in Gujarat continued to play a major role in trade with the Arabian Peninsula (Das Gupta, 1994). It is therefore legitimate to question the breadth of relations between Africa and India before the nineteenth century and to ask to what extent, upon rereading or discovering new sources, it is possible to write this history.

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CHAPTER 10

SETTLEMENT AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN WEST AFRICA

The *Jula* Trading Diaspora

Chikouna Cisse

Introduction

The *Jula* merchant class, which has shaped the history of West Africa for centuries through Islam and long-distance trade, was established, at the latest, in the fifteenth century in the Senegal-Niger region. Descended from the Mandingo civilization, these *Jula,* followers of the *Wangara* traders, spread throughout almost all of West Africa thanks to their commercial networks, gradually forming a merchant diaspora in the region.

Along the *julasiras*, settlements were established, forming much larger political entities, in short, *Jula* diasporic communities that encompassed peoples from diverse backgrounds over a long period of time. This spatial deployment, which can be understood from a global historical perspective, must be reconstructed if we are to gain a greater understanding of the processes of identity construction in West Africa in relation to the *Jula* factor, which played a key role in the distribution of communities within this vast area.

In this context, this article does not intend to reopen the old debate on whether *Jula* should be considered an ethnicity or trade derived communities. It proposes, rather, to look at the *Jula* issue anew, emphasizing the historical continuities and ruptures in the processes of construction and self-construction which, over the centuries, sedimented *julaya* beyond the reifying categories imposed by colonial nomenclature.

The dispersion of the *Jula* in West Africa: a long-term history

In an article published in 1982, Yves Person, a renowned specialist in Mandingo civilization, noted that the history of the Mandingo world continues, and that Africa's future could not be understood without this major factor, which had probably existed for more than 3,000 years (Person, 1982, p. 55). This prediction by the French historian can be explained by the historical significance of the role played by the *Jula* in the territorial network of West Africa, which went on to serve as a framework for the development of population centres on the *Jula* caravan routes. According to Abdoulaye Bathily (1985, p. 142) and Bakary Traoré (1996, p. 391), the term *Jula* was first mentioned in Richard Jobson's account of his exploration of Gambia in 1623. The English explorer picked up the term from his informant Buckor Sano, himself a *Julietto.*

Emerging from the historical space of Mande, the *Jula* spread throughout almost all of West Africa, in the context of long-distance trade. This centred upon the exchange of Saharan salt for kola nuts produced in forest areas. The existence of multi-ethnic empires in the Senegalese-Nigerian Sudan, in particular, was a major lever for this *Jula* economic dynamic. The diaspora area was a diffuse, cross-linked extensive space, made up of many scattered nuclei, community centres, and a multipolarity without a strict hierarchy (Bruneau, 1994, p. 8). The organizational modalities and chronological sequences of these economic and human connections structured by the *Jula* factor have been reconstructed in a wealth of scholarly works (Amselle, 1977; Azarya, 1980; Bathily, 1985; Binger, 1892; Kipré, 1992; Kodjo, 2006; Lovejoy, 1973; Lydon, 2009; Marty, 1922; Massing, 2000; Meillassoux, 1963; Moseley, 1992; Niane, 1985; Ouattara and N'golo, 1992; Perinbam, 1973; Person, 1974a, 1975 [1968, 1970], 1982; Traoré, 1996; Wondji, 1985).

This long-distance economic activity coincided with the emergence of centres of civilization and settlement that flourished along the routes used by the *Jula* pedlars. Julius Adekunle has shown, for example, how speakers of the Mande language from Songhai settled in Borgou in the fifteenth century and made a decisive contribution to the economic transformation of that city (Adekunle, 1994, p. 4). Almost simultaneously, the *Jula* were behind the founding of Begho, between the forest and the savannah (Kipré, 1985, p. 355; Massing, 2000, pp. 194-195; Niane, 1985, p. 196). Donald Wright analyses how, on the Gambia-Niger axis, part of the western Sudan trade network, the famous Darbo *Jula* clan was decisive

in the rise of Islam and trade in the region, while contributing powerfully to the mixing of societies that were once foreign to each other (Wright, 1977). Abdoulaye Bathily identifies their importance in the settlement of Gajaga, a state in the upper Senegal valley, where several *Jula* communities existed between the eleventh and fifteenth century (Bathily, 1989, p. 97).

Elsewhere, west of the Bandama, the Mandingo settlement frontier was extended from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century to the fringes of the forest. To the east, pockets of Bambara settlement established themselves in the least flood-prone areas of Masina, while the Dafing colonized the Black Volta loop from the eighteenth century onwards. But the major phenomenon was the establishment of *Jula* centres throughout the Volta region, especially in the west (Person, 1982, p. 48). It follows from the above that West African historical demography cannot ignore the role of the *Jula* in the current population of West Africa, beyond their original birthplace.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries were decisive in this respect. First, these two historical periods ensured the permanence of connections between areas of West Africa under *Jula* rule. Second, they saw the rise of coastal development in this region of Africa under pressure from this merchant diaspora. This legacy of the past shapes the analysis of the profound historical movements that shed light on settlement of contemporary West African states such as Gambia, Senegal, Guinea Conakry, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Liberia, and so on.

Jula, *Julaization* and identity construction in West Africa

An analysis of the ways in which identity is constructed in West Africa in relation to the history of the *Jula* merchant diaspora brings us back to the initial question posed by Emmanuel Ma Mung (2000, p. 146): 'How does a society hold together despite distance?' The common identity that is the very condition of the diaspora's existence (Bruneau, 2004, p. 153) is constructed among the *Jula* as a narrative identity focused on the valorization of historical capital (Sow, 2015, p. 234). The reference to Mande, historical cradle of the Mandingo and Sudanese humanism during the era of the great empires of the first half of the second millennium CE, thus functions as a primary element of identification, in opposition to the *bushmen*.

This reference, however, remains vague and imprecise in many *Jula* diasporic communities. The *Jula* of Kong interviewed by Tauxier said they originated from Mande but without being able to specify the exact place or time (Tauxier,

2003, p. 31). This aporia reflects the relationship between memory and time. It forced the *Jula* to forge other identities as they wandered through West Africa.

As early as the fifteenth century, the famous Jakhanke marabout, El Hadj Salim Suware, defined the ideological foundations of *Jula* society: indifference to politics and, above all, the peaceful, or rather conciliatory, attitude that Muslims must adopt in a social environment largely dominated by non-Muslims, while remaining conscious of the need to preserve their identity (Traoré, 1996, p. 661). The *Jula* revolution in Kong in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, led by Sekou Watara, and the movement embodied by Samori Ture in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, went very much against Suwarian pacifist doctrine (Smith, 1965, p. 235; Sanneh, 1976, p. 52): that of a merchant diaspora closed to power struggles, practising a pacifist *Jula* Islam (Berger, 2010).

Three long-standing markers of identity (trade, language and Islam) cemented the *Jula* identity, despite the vicissitudes of history and the diversity of the *Jula* diaspora communities. The variations in *Jula,* such as *Mandé-Jula, Dagari-Jula, Bobo-Jula, Maraka-Jula*, Upper Niger *Jula*, and *Jula* east of Bandama and Bagoé, etc., reflect the geography of *Jula* movements, which, in addition to natural factors, are conditioned by religious elements (Devisse, 1972, p. 49). For centuries, Islam has been a crystallizing factor in the process of *Jula* identity construction in West Africa, albeit in a binary logic. While conversion to the Muslim faith was the price of entry into the West African merchant class (Amselle, 1977, p. 24), its spread along the shores of the Gulf of Guinea allowed the *Jula*, isolated among the Indigenous forest populations, to maintain their identity and, in some cases, impose it on others.

Jean Louis Triaud analyses how Islam under the rule of the *Jula* managed, for example, to impose itself on the Indigenous peoples of southern Côte d'Ivoire in terms of conversion, which then had an impact on the religious, cultural and economic practices of the inhabitants of the forest zone (Triaud, 1974a, 1974b). The Dioula and Hawsa had already introduced Islam to the Gonja in the sixteenth century and converted a ruling dynasty of that country in the early seventeenth century. Elsewhere, in times of famine and war, the *Jula* at the end of the nineteenth century provided the Abron King of Gyaman and the chiefs with the support of their prayers and amulets, and this support was considered indispensable to the prosperity and greatness of the kingdom (Terray, 1982, p. 264).

In addition to this religious element, there is also the linguistic argument in the process of identity construction in West Africa. The *Jula* lingua franca reinforces the idea of a polar *Jula* identity. According to Yves Person, in the cities of southern Côte d'Ivoire, anyone from the north is referred to as *Jula*,

even if their native language is Voltaic, because, isolated in the midst of the civilizations of the Gulf of Guinea, they necessarily adopt the Mandingo language and Islamizing culture that have been conveyed for centuries by traders from the savannahs (Person, 1974a, p. 84). Lamine Sanogo, for his part, has demonstrated the role of language in the formation of identities, based on the case of the *Jula* people of Bobo-Dioulasso. Integration into a group through language is therefore the path to affirming this belonging and, consequently, the march towards identity convergence (Sanogo, 2013, p. 260).

Towards the late nineteenth century, the entire Mandingo world was confronted with French colonial domination. The *Jula* merchant diaspora owed its survival in this context solely to its expressions of identity crystallized around the *Jula* lingua franca and Islam, which were widespread in the transnational context of their trade networks. This enabled them to renew their trade flows by relying upon a network of alliances that had been forged over many years on both sides of the colonial borders. They were thus able to build credible alternatives to the economic predation of the French colonial order (Cissé, 2015, p. 100).

Mandingo music, with the kora as its basic instrument, Islamic religious festivals, the traditional initiation ceremonies, clothing styles, and so on, contributed to establishing a Mandingo cultural identity that spread across West Africa through *Jula* trade routes. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, these cultural traits went on to shape the construction of new urban and rural identities in West Africa.

Conclusion

Viewing the *Jula* merchant diaspora from a global perspective disqualifies the process of ethnicization of *Jula* identity undertaken in 1892 by French explorer Louis Gustave Binger. This process fits into the classic pattern of categorization and, in particular, the invention of ethnic categories that Jean-Loup Amselle and Elikia M'bokolo invite us to deconstruct. Under the banner of Islam and long-distance trade, the *Jula* connected spaces and passed on their civilization by interacting with people from diverse geographical backgrounds.

The identities that emerged and were maintained in this context were marked by the mixing of identities and cultures in West Africa, across borders. This long-term *Jula* experience, viewed from a global African historical perspective that is itself intrinsic to the evolution of this merchant diaspora, is essential in the construction of a new African imaginary, with a view to moving beyond the paradigms and representations of the era of foreign domination.

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CHAPTER 11

ZANZIBAR'S COMMERCIAL EMPIRE

Jonathon Glassman

Zanzibar commercial might

In the century before European conquest, merchants and political adventurers connected to the island sultanate of Zanzibar through constructed networks of commerce and clientele. Reaching deep into the continental interior, these networks often are described as being emblematic of 'secondary empire.' Zanzibar had been dominated since the late eighteenth century by members of the Busaid dynasty of Oman, whose maritime power in the western Indian Ocean was regarded by Britain as a useful counterbalance to the French. A decisive change to the region's political economy was signaled early in the new century, when one of the contenders for the Busaid throne, Said bin Sultan, moved his entire court to Zanzibar. Co-opting or displacing the Indigenous rulers, Said encouraged an influx of Omani settlers who seized the island's best lands and established plantations of coconut and cloves (the latter a new crop introduced from South-East Asia), commodities in great demand in international markets. Keenly attuned to currents in global commerce, Said signed treaties with major trading nations that made Zanzibar the region's dominant entrepôt. He and his successors supplemented the treaties with muscular policies vis-à-vis the port towns of the mainland coast, whose patrician families were brought under Omani hegemony through a combination of patronage and armed coercion.

By the time Said moved to Zanzibar, his British allies' concerns for the sea lanes to India had been compounded by their growing campaign to end the international slave trade, in which East Africa had been supplying Brazil, the French Mascarenes, and the Persian Gulf. British influence grew alongside the power of the Busaids, reaching new heights under Barghash (r. 1870-1888), whom British consuls and military officers pressured in 1873 into outlawing the ocean-going slave trade altogether. By that time, slaves were a minor component of the sultanate's exports. More important were ivory and other non-human goods, many of which were brought from the deep interior by caravan enterprises organized by Omanis and their Gujarati financiers. Also important were cloves, coconuts, and other commercial crops grown on plantations that Omanis established with profits from their caravan enterprises.

The 19th-century paradox: How Western capitalism intensified the slave trade

This development at the coast was encouraged by some of the effects of the spread of international commerce in the interior, which shifted the balance of power away from earlier holders of tributary authority and towards trading warlords whose power derived from access to markets in guns and other manufactured imports. (Some of these warlords, like Tippu Tip, enjoyed direct Busaid patronage.) The resulting insecurity in eastern Congo, north-eastern Tanzania, and the regions around Lake Nyasa generated plentiful supplies of slaves, who were brought to the coast and smuggled across the narrow channel to Zanzibar and Pemba, easily evading British naval ships.

Zanzibar's nineteenth-century commercial empire thus offers a prime example of the ironies central to the era of 'legitimate commerce' (Feierman, 1995, pp. 352-76). The latter term refers to the abolitionist idea that opening Africa to the industrialized economies' demands for non-human commodities would supplant the trade in slaves. But in a paradoxical turn of events, those commercial demands gave rise to an intensification in Africans' own use of slaves, and the increasing exportation of the products of slave labour, rather than of the slaves themselves. From the perspective of a Europe newly converted to abolitionism, this had the flattering benefit of displacing the moral onus of slavery onto the direct users of slave labour (and away from the consumers of the goods thus produced). In an effort to delineate a further racial distinction between the victims and beneficiaries of these new forms of

slavery, European observers and later historians (misleadingly) used the terms 'Arab slavery' and the 'Arab slave trade.'

By the time of Barghash's reign, Zanzibar was plainly an instance of 'secondary empire' in the political sense. But the extensive networks of commerce and economic patronage centred on Zanzibar were also expressions of secondary empire in an economic sense, to the extent that the region's economy was becoming dominated by the demands of the industrialized North Atlantic. The West's insatiable demand for ivory quickly pushed the ivory frontier deep into the Congo basin; its demand for cloves and tropical oils gave rise to forms of labour mobilization that were new in Swahili society. (Ivory and cloves were initially produced to supply South Asian markets, but as the century progressed, those demands shifted to Europe and North America.) Perhaps the most profound expression of Western economic influence can be seen in the transformations that attended production of commodities that were only ancillary to the export economy. At Malindi and other points on the coast, and at Tabora in the interior, entrepreneurs put slave-gangs to work producing foodstuffs to provision the long-distance trade. At Pangani, entrepreneurs fostered an exceptionally brutal form of gang-slavery in order to produce sugar, which was used upcountry to purchase ivory. Although none of these crops were sent overseas, their production was predicated on a regional economy dominated by international exports (Cooper, 1977; Glassman, 1995; Sheriff, 1987).

A new look at Swahili/Arab relations

This overall understanding of the secondary empire is now generally accepted, the product of several decades of scholarship that focussed on exploring the roots of East Africa's contemporary economic underdevelopment. But at times it is presented in ways that reinforce some misconceptions about the nature of historical agency – including misconceptions that echo long-discarded racial assumptions about the commanding role played by Arabs and other outsiders. An overemphasis on the slave trade, for example, can obscure the significance of non-slave commodities and of non-slave labour. Autonomous hunters, foragers, and peasant farmers produced many items of international trade (including gum-copal, sesame, and ivory itself); peasants also profited from provisioning the trade centres (Koponen, 1988). As for long-distance trade: many of the caravan routes were pioneered and managed by independent traders and porters from the non-Muslim interior, whose economic motives and modes of behaviour cannot be explained simply as responses to Western commercial demands. On

the coast and in the interior, international commerce was shaped and driven as much by local economic logics and cultural preferences as by external demands. Nyamwezi porters shaped a work-culture that enabled them to trade independently and invest their wages in agricultural production in western Tanzania; Omani and Swahili townsmen established plantations to build their reputation and authority as patricians; East African practices of ritual display shaped patterns of consumption and hence helped shape the output of factories in Manchester and Massachusetts (Prestholdt, 2008; Rockel, 2006; Vernet, 2013, pp. 245-306). Even the slave trade itself, although usually understood as driven by external demand and the warfare attendant on secondary empire, was also shaped by tensions internal to the interior communities from which slaves were torn, particularly tensions along the fault lines of gender, which rendered marginal women especially vulnerable to enslavement (Wright, 1993).

The concept of 'Arab slavery' is itself a misnomer. Usually, it is assumed to refer to a culturally fixed pattern of bondage, and is employed as such in comparative terms, often in intellectual projects motivated by latter-day cultural politics. When contrasted with indigenous forms that predated the introduction of Arab-held plantations, 'Arab slavery' is typically condemned as more exploitative; when contrasted with the forms familiar from the New World, it is celebrated as benign. But in fact, the slavery practised on Arab-held domains conformed to no fixed pattern, and although it was indeed often 'benign' compared to New World forms, it could also undergo transformation, as happened most dramatically in the Pangani cane fields. Another reason to reject the concept of 'Arab slavery' is that there was nothing distinctly 'Arab' about it: contrary to conventional misunderstandings, many masters on coastal plantations had been Africans with little if any Middle Eastern ancestry. These misconceptions were propagated globally by abolitionists, who for multiple reasons portrayed 'Arabs' as the main obstacle to the West's civilizing mission in central Africa. But the misconceptions had local origins. In nineteenth-century Swahili society, a claim of Arab descent constituted a claim to status, in particular a denial of slave ancestry. Plantation-owners and other coastal elites, in other words, called themselves 'Arabs' even if their mid-eastern ancestry was only a vague genealogical fiction. Few spoke Arabic.

These concepts were part of a broader set of historical discourses that had been present on the Swahili coast at least since the spread of Islam in the early centuries of the second millennium CE. In common with many of the region's other Bantu-speaking cultures, coastal origin-myths were built on motifs in which exogenous founder-heroes introduced civilizing practices. By the sixteenth

century, if not earlier, the Swahili versions of such myths told of Persian and/or Arab immigrants (often labeled 'Shirazi') who founded the major city-states. Although unsupported by archaeological or linguistic evidence, such narratives reflect elite townspeoples' intellectual and economic orientation towards the Indian Ocean and the Islamic heartland. Thus, local historical discourses converged with nineteenth-century Westerners' notions of diffusionist universal history, which interpreted the past in terms of *Völkerwanderungen*, the migration of discrete 'peoples' or 'nations,' each understood in quasi-racial terms (Glassman, 2010, pp. 175-206).

Despite such assumptions, the collective identities in which inhabitants of the Swahili coast thought of themselves were in flux throughout the nineteenth century, and the terms of economic and social status underwent constant challenge. Slaves who sought to exercise the customary prerogatives of clients – prerogatives that had enabled many to claim active roles in institutions of commerce and Islam, if only at the margins – found those options closed by masters intent on subjugating them to regimes of plantation labour. The result was rebellion and escape. Old patrician families who had long dominated the coastal towns – Swahili-speakers who prided themselves on their families' deep roots in Islam and vague claims of Shirazi or Arab descent – found their domination challenged by Omanis with close ties to the Busaid state, and Yemeni religious scholars who claimed descent from the Prophet. People in the interior, whom the townspeople had long disdained as barbarians, took increasing interest in the affairs of the coast. But that did not mean that the people of the interior, even those most directly involved in the long-distance trade, accepted the sultanate's hegemony. Zanzibar's command over the trade routes and the political economies of the regions directly affected by them was often exaggerated. The still-quoted adage, 'when the pipes play at Zanzibar, they dance at the lakes' was a chauvinist fantasy, not an accurate description of the region's political economy.

The status appellations that crystallized during the nineteenth-century era of conflict over control of long-distance trade and slave-labour continued to be used into the colonial century. But rather than reflect an inherited premise of inequality, they were the objects of continued dispute. Landed elites who prided themselves as the heirs of Zanzibar's imperial influence crafted a version of pan-Arab creole nationalism, inspired by political currents emanating from the Middle East. Slave-descendants rejected such politics, as did more recent labour migrants who had traveled voluntarily from the interior to work on the coastal estates. These subalterns eschewed the old euphemism 'Swahili',

which had long had connotations of servility, and instead embraced the defiant label 'African', reflecting their exposure to the discourses of pan-African racial solidarity that were propelling politics throughout the continent. And those who considered themselves the descendants of the old coastal families, whose forbears had preceded both the Omanis and the slaves, found themselves torn between these clashing nationalist claims, many taking refuge in a narrower nativism that rejected both. Although these conflicts were undergirded by the new colonial political economy, they were fought on the ideological domain of historical interpretation: specifically, arguments over the previous century's experience of legitimate commerce and plantation slavery (Glassman, 2011).

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CHAPTER 12

CULINARY AND FOOD HERITAGE

Luis Felipe de Alencastro

It is well known that the food heritage of the temperate zones of the Old World is largely shaped by the contributions of migrations that have linked Europe, North Africa and Asia since ancient times. The discovery of America and the expansion of interoceanic transport gave rise, in a much shorter period of time, to food exchanges of a completely different scale. In addition to navigation between the African and American coasts, the Lisbon-Goa-Macau route, with ships calling at Brazil, connected Asia to the South Atlantic from the turn of the sixteenth century onwards. This brought together the tropical cultures of three continents and, more specifically, the equatorial zones containing the richest biomes on the planet: the Amazon basin, the Congo basin and Malay Archipelago. The globalization of tropical biomes explains the sharp increase in the number of plants known to European botanists, which rose from 1,000 to around 6,000 during the seventeenth century (Phaf-Rheinberger, 2013, pp. 51-59).

At the same time, the slave trade from Africa to America began. With the proliferation of seaports and continental slave transport routes, the Atlantic slave trade affected all sub-Saharan societies.

The link between American slavery and global markets created a brutal and massive disconnect between producers and consumers. On one side were the Native American and African producers, as well as their descendants, forced to work under coercion on plantations producing goods for export from the

New World. On the other side were the consumers of Europe and their descendants who had settled overseas. At the same time, within and around the plantations and precious metal mining areas, livestock and subsistence farming developed where captives, peons and sharecroppers, through coercion or economic incentive, ensured the production of food for the colonists and colonized. In doing so, Native Americans, Africans, Métis and impoverished colonists created a 'peasant breach' in the slave economy. Accustomed to cattle and goat farming, intensive cultivation, and irrigation and fertilization of land with manure, sub-Saharan communities brought food practices to America that were subsequently grafted onto the botanical, agricultural and culinary know-how of the Indigenous peoples of the West Indies and the South American lowlands. In this process, Europeans were both agents and apprentices, having little knowledge of the tropical environment and its crops.

Suitable for storage in ships and Atlantic slave ports, maize and cassava were transplanted to the island of São Tomé, Elmina (in present-day Ghana) and Mpinda (now Soyo, south of the Congo estuary), from which their cultivation spread to the Gulf of Guinea and Central Africa. São Tomé emerged as a veritable hub for the transfer of food crops from various continents. It was through their acclimatization in São Tomé and their transplantation to other regions that the coconut palm (Oceania), banana (Asia/Africa) and cocoa (America), among others, became truly pan-tropical crops. The transcontinental nature of food distribution networks explains the great similarity in the names of cassava and maize dishes on both sides of the ocean.

In Congo and Angola, the cassava flour pancakes retain their Native American (Tupi) name *beiju* (Den Bel, 2015, pp. 100-131). Meanwhile, cassava starch porridge, known in Brazil as *quiçamã*, takes its name from the Angolan province of Kisama. The Kimbundu word *mungunzá*, and more generally the Kikongo word *canjica,* refers in São Tomé and Brazil to maize porridge, known by its Spanish name *mazamorra* in South American regions with a low African presence. In this case, maize replaced the lentils and chickpeas used in Mediterranean *mazamorra* in these regions. In sub-Saharan Africa, maize often replaced sorghum and millet, creating dishes similar to *canjica,* known as *pap* (South Africa), *aka, mu* and *ogi* (Nigeria, Benin, Ghana). Another maize dish, consisting of boiled dough wrapped in banana leaves, retains the same African name (Éwé), *akassa*, in Benin, Togo and Brazil (Camara Cascudo, 1967, Vol. 2, p. 479). Finally, two tubers of very different species and origins, American sweet potato and the African yam, are often referred to as yams in the kitchens and fields of America and Africa (Mitchell, 2010 [1993], p. 112).

In the Africa-America direction, we see the transplant of cereals such as sesame or sorghum, or 'guinea corn', which retains its Kikongo name *maçambará* in Brazil, the transfer of fruits such as watermelon or banana (first domesticated in Asia) or vegetables such as okra (*okra, quiabo*) and black-eyed pea, called *niébé* (Wolof) in French-speaking Africa, *mucunha* (from Macua *nkuny*) in Brazil, *gub-gub* in Jamaica and Trinidad (from Kikongo and Kimbundu *nguba*) and 'black-eyed pea' in other English-speaking countries. Beyond the sphere of food, cuisine transposed or adapted to American regions also represents an affirmation of identity which, in religious worship, sometimes serves as an offering to the gods of the African pantheon (Goucher, 2014, pp. 125-157).

Without being exhaustive, this overview highlights the ubiquity of African and African-American food and culinary fusion (Alpern, 2008, pp. 63-102; De Wet, 1977, pp. 15-32; Holloway, 2007).

Furthermore, African ethnoecological knowledge and food preferences were instrumental in shaping the cultures and cuisines of American colonial and national communities. Present in African-American settlements since the seventeenth century, traditional, African sauces and dishes made with palm oil, often seasoned with American chilli peppers, facilitated the incorporation of fauna and plants of both continents, such as plantains and pumpkins, into the cuisines of the New World (Watkins, 2011, pp. 9-26). For its part, rice cultivation illustrates the implementation in the fields of South Carolina, Georgia (USA) and Maranhão (Brazil) of the technology of rice paddies in marshy lands introduced by deportees from Upper Guinea, where this type of agriculture had existed for centuries. In this context, researchers have highlighted the role of Upper Guinean women in spreading West African rice preparation and rice-based dishes throughout America (Carney, 2001; Eltis, et al., 2007, pp. 1329-1358; Hawthorne, 2010, pp. 151-163). Going beyond field cultivation and cooking, women's labour in West African domestic communities incorporated the management and trade of foodstuffs (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2007, pp. 69-100). These activities were partially taken up by female African-American street vendors, who spread the influence of African eating habits in the ports and cities of the West Indies and Brazil.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, cookbooks published in two regions with a strong tradition of slavery, Virginia and Rio de Janeiro, incorporated African-American recipes, without mentioning their African origin. The Virginia cookbook, dated 1838, presented dishes with okra as originating from Caribbean cuisine, while the cookbook published in Rio de Janeiro in 1840 classifies distinctly

African dishes under Brazilian recipes.[1] Despite the omissions in cookbooks, the African culinary art was passed on through the omnipresence of African-American cooks, housekeepers and nannies in rural areas and cities. Attested to in literature, cinema, caricatures and sometimes condescending advertisements for mass-produced food products, the role of African-American cooks was crucial in the culinary culture, and in the culture of the Americas in general (Mitchell, 2010, Chapter 3; Sharpless, 2010; Duarte, 2016).

A consequence of identity affirmation of communities resulting from the most intense forced migration in history, African-American cuisine is now recognized as part of humanity's heritage.

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1 See Mary Randolph (1838 [1824], pp. 17, 81). Okra is present in the first American cookbook to be written by an African-American woman, Abby Fisher; see Jane Longone (2001, pp. 96-99). The author of the Brazilian book only gives the initials R. M. C. *Cozinheiro Imperial*, Rio de Janeiro, 1840. Its 1860 edition gives recipes for 'very flavoursome Brazilian dishes such as *vatapá*s, *carurús, angús*, *carís*, *moquecas* (…)'. With the exception of the Native-American 'carís', the other dishes referred to are African or Afro-Brazilian (R.M.C., 1877 [1840], pp. viii, 57, 193, 196).

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Section I: Introduction / Section I: Chapter 6

Olabiyi Babalola Joseph YAI. The late Olabiyi Babalola Joseph Yai was a Beninese intellectual of Yoruba origin, recognized for his contributions to African philosophy, linguistic studies and cultural criticism. Born in Savé, he studied at Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, Senegal and later at the Sorbonne in Paris, France. As a Professor Emeritus, he taught at several institutions, including the University of Abomey-Calavi

and the Center for Afro-Oriental Studies at the Federal University of Bahia, Brazil. Author of the essay *Theory and Practice in African Philosophy: The Poverty of Speculative Philosophy* (1977), he advocated a decolonial approach to African thought, emphasizing Indigenous knowledge and plural epistemologies. He contributed to the development of UNESCO programmes on African languages and culture. He also served as Benin's Ambassador to UNESCO and was a member of various international councils, committees and juries in the cultural field.

Section I: Introduction / Section I: Chapter 1

Martial ZE BELINGA, a Professor and teacher with degrees in economics, sociology and international trade, is an independent researcher in the humanities and social sciences. He has been involved for the past decade in various aspects of UNESCO's *General History of Africa* and is a member of its editorial committee. His work focuses on the epistemology of African history and the prejudices and silences that bias understanding of Africa's past and the African diasporas. A former consultant for the Ouagadougou International Crafts Fair (SIAO), he sits on the editorial board of the journal *Présence africaine*.

Section I: Chapter 2

Yoporeka SOMET studied philosophy at Joseph Ki-Zerbo University, Burkina Faso, and philosophy, sociology and Egyptology at the University of Strasbourg, France. He holds doctorates in Philosophy (Strasbourg) and Egyptology (Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar). He is currently a Professor at the Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, Nyeri, Kenya and Director of its Centre for African Renaissance Studies. His books include *L'Afrique dans la philosophie – Introduction à la philosophie africaine pharaonique* (Africa in philosophy – Introduction to Pharaonic African philosophy); *Anthony William Amo. Sa vie et son œuvre* (Anthony William Amo: His Life and Work); and most recently, in 2023, *Lire Cheikh Anta Diop: Une approche thématique* (Reading Cheikh Anta Diop: A Thematic Approach).

Section I: Chapter 3

Salim ABDELMADJID is a lecturer in philosophy at Toulouse-Jean Jaurès University, France, and a researcher for ERRAPHIS, Equipe de Recherche sur les Rationalités Philosophiques et les Savoirs (Research Team on Philosophical Rationalities and Knowledge). He obtained his Doctorate in Philosophy from the Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne University in 2015, with a thesis entitled 'A Concept of Africa'. He is also an expert for scientific journals (*Noesis*, *Politique africaine*, *Politika*), collective works and symposiums, particularly in African philosophy, political philosophy and the philosophy of the humanities and social sciences.

Section I: Chapter 4

Anshan LI obtained his PhD (1994) from Toronto University, Canada and is currently Professor Emeritus in the School of International Studies at Peking University, China. He has served as Director of the Institute of Afro-Asian Studies and the Center for African Studies, School of International Studies, Peking University; Vice President of the Chinese Society of African Historical Studies; and Vice President of the Chinese Association of African Studies. A specialist on Sino-African relations, African studies and the history of Chinese overseas in Africa, he has lectured to top Chinese leaders and supervised graduate students from African countries.

Section I: Chapter 5

Katsuhiko KITAGAWA is a Japanese economist, Africanist and Professor Emeritus at Kansai University. Born in Osaka Prefecture, he graduated from the Faculty of Economics at Kansai University in 1970 and obtained his Doctorate from its Graduate School of Economics in 1975. He became a full-time lecturer at Kansai Foreign Language College in 1979, an Associate Professor at Shikoku Gakuin University in 1982, and a Professor at the Faculty of Economics at Kansai University in 1995. He received his PhD in Economics from the Graduate University for Advanced Studies in 1999 for his research on the history of trade relations between Japan and South Africa.

Section I: Chapter 7 / Section II: Chapter 2

Alain ANSELIN was an anthropologist and Egyptologist from the French West Indies, who was born in 1943 and died on 16 May 2019 in Les Abymes, Guadeloupe. A significant part of his work relates to Caribbean and African anthropology. Later, as a disciple of the Senegalese scholar and activist Cheikh Anta Diop, he wrote an original work on Egyptology, informed by his research on the African origins of the Egyptian language.

Section I: Chapter 8

Charles BINAM BIKOI is the Executive Secretary of the International Centre for Research and Documentation on African Traditions and Languages (CERDOTOLA) based in Yaoundé. He is a Professor of Literature and Humanities at several African and European universities, and an expert on cultural issues for the African Union. He has contributed to and participated in numerous meetings on culture organized by or with UNESCO in Africa, America, Asia and Europe.

Section I: Chapter 9

Bonaventure MVE ONDO is a philosopher and academic. He was a Professor of Comparative Philosophy at Omar Bongo University (UOB) in Libreville, Gabon and is a political science specialist. He is also a former Rector of the university and cofounder of several laboratories and research centres (LUTO–UOB, CERGEP–UOB). He directed the West Africa regional office of the AUF (Francophone University Agency) in Dakar from 1994 to 2005, held visiting professor posts at several universities (Liège, Paris and others), and was a member of the editorial board of the *HERMÈS* journal of the CNRS (French National Centre for Scientific Research). He is also a former Vice-Rector in charge of regionalization at the AUF and Director of the Pan-African Institute for University Governance project, created jointly by the AUF and the Association of Commonwealth Universities.

Section I: Chapter 10

Théodore Nicoué GAYIBOR was a Professor of African history at the University of Lomé (Togo) for forty years, specializing in the history of the peoples and civilizations of the Gulf of Benin from their origins to the end of the nineteenth century. A leading expert on Togo's history, focusing on political institutions, slavery and colonial transformations, he published several books and edited a four-volume collection on the history of the Togolese, published by Karthala in 2011.

Section I: Chapter 11 / Section IV: Chapter 2

Manassé ESOAVELOMANDROSO, a Professor and researcher at the University of Antananarivo, Madagascar, is a renowned historian and politician. His work on revising and rewriting the history of his country has revolutionized the field. He was the founder and editor of the historical studies journal *Omaly sy Anio* (Yesterday and Today). Among his political activities, he served as Minister of Mines and Industrialization and Vice President of the National Assembly. Co-founder of the Leader Fanilo party, he presided over it for several years. In 2023, he received an honorary Doctorate in History from the University of Lleida, Spain.

Section I: Chapter 12

Cheikh Moctar BA is a Senegalese philosopher and Professor at Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, Senegal. A specialist in African philosophy and the ideas of Cheikh Anta Diop, he is interested in issues of identity, culture and history. He holds a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Rennes I, France, and has published several books, including *La conscience historique africaine* (African Historical Consciousness) and *Etude comparative entre les cosmogonies grecques et africaines* (A Comparative Study of Greek and African Cosmogonies). His work highlights the convergences between African and Western philosophical traditions. Committed to promoting African thought, he actively contributes to intellectual renewal on the continent.

Section I: Chapter 13

Kofi ANYIDOHO is a Ghanaian poet and academic who comes from a long family line of Ewe poets and oral artists. He is currently Professor of Literature at the University of Ghana. Anyidoho was educated in Ghana and the United States, and holds a BA in English and Linguistics from the University of Ghana, Legon, an MA in Folklore from Indiana University Bloomington and a PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Texas at Austin. He has received numerous awards for his poetry, including the Valco Fund Literary Award, the Langston Hughes Prize, and the BBC Arts and Africa Poetry Award.

Section I: Chapter 14

Luis KANDJIMBO is a poet, essayist and literary critic, and an Associate Professor at Agostinho Neto University in Luanda, Angola. Recipient of an MA degree in Philosophy and a PhD in Literary Studies, he has served as his country's Vice-Minister of Culture and as cultural attaché in Portugal. He is a member of the Angolan Writers' Union (UEA), the Angolan Academy of Letters (AAL), the International Association of African Literary and Cultural Studies (AFROLIC), based in Brazil, and the Association for the Study of African Literatures in Paris (APELA). He is a member of the International Scientific Committee for Volume IX of UNESCO's *General History of Africa*.

Section I: Chapter 15

Félix Ayoh'OMIDIRE is the Director of the Institute of Cultural Studies (Ilé Irunmole) at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. He is a Professor of Brazilian and Afro-Latin American Studies in the Department of Foreign Languages of the same university. His main research focuses on Yoruba identity studies in diverse societies of Latin America and the Caribbean. He has conducted a dialogue for the past two decades on the Yoruba cosmogonies embedded in the construction of cultural identities, especially among the people of African descent in countries such as Brazil, Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, Colombia, Argentina, Venezuela and the United States. He has received many international awards and held teaching positions in various countries within the Black Atlantic.

Section I: Chapter 16

Sanya OSHA has a PhD in Philosophy, and began his career as a journalist before teaching philosophy at Nigerian universities. He has held research positions in South Africa, the United States and the Netherlands, including at the Centre for Rhetoric Studies, University of Cape Town, Smith College, US and the University of Groningen, Netherlands. His 2005 book *Kwasi Wiredu and Beyond: The Text, Writing and Thought in Africa* explored African philosophy. Currently, he is a research associate at ZMO Berlin, Germany, and a fellow of the Africa Studies Centre, Leiden, the Netherlands. His latest book *An Ethos of Transdisciplinarity: Conversations with Toyin Falola* was published in 2025.

Section I: Chapter 17

Mlaïli CONDRO is a teacher, linguist and researcher from the French overseas department of Mayotte and holds a PhD in Language Sciences, which he obtained in 2008 at the University of Limoges with a thesis entitled 'Writing and ideology in Black Africa: the case of the Vai syllabary'. He has taught French in Chiconi and has served as a municipal councilor in Chirongui. He is an associate researcher at the Dynamique du Langage In Situ laboratory (Dylis), University of Rouen, France.

Section I: Chapter 18

Paulo Fernando de MORAES FARIAS is Professor Emeritus at the Department of African Studies and Anthropology at the University of Birmingham, UK. He has worked at the Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais at the University of Bahia in Brazil; the Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire, Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar, Senegal; and the Department of History at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. He has specialized in the history of West Africa, epigraphy and Arabic manuscripts. His acclaimed research has reshaped understanding of medieval West African states and the spread of Islam in the region. In 2005, his book *Arabic Medieval Inscriptions from the Republic of Mali* (2003) won the Paul Hair Prize from the American Association for African Studies.

Section I: Chapter 19

Herman KIRIAMA is a Kenyan archaeologist and heritage specialist. He worked for many years at the National Museums of Kenya, where he headed the coastal archaeology department. Educated at Cambridge University and Deakin University, he is an Associate Professor at Kisii University and Visiting Professor at La Trobe University in Australia. His research concentrates on cultural landscapes and the memory of slavery on the Kenyan coast, including sites such as the Shimoni Caves. He is interested in the links between heritage, identity and cultural transmission, and campaigns for the valorization of Indigenous knowledge.

Section I: Chapter 20

Yolanda WOOD holds a PhD in Art History and is Principal Consultant in Art History at the Faculty of Arts and Literature of the University of Havana, Cuba, where she founded the Chair of Caribbean Art History in 1985. She is also a prominent art critic specializing in Caribbean art, and has focused particularly on Haitian culture for over thirty years. She is the author of books and articles on these topics and also contributes to international exhibition catalogues. Dr Wood has served as advisor on artistic education to the Ministry of Culture in Haiti, and is a member of the scientific committee for Volume IX of UNESCO's *General History of Africa*.

Section II: Introduction

Doulaye KONATÉ is an archaeologist and historian. His research focuses on the issue of urbanization in West Africa, particularly during the period of the great Sudanese empires (sixth to sixteenth centuries). He examines the uses of Mali's archaeological heritage in relation to nation building and, more broadly, to issues of identity in contemporary Africa through the theme of memory and its relationship to history and national identity. A lecturer and researcher at the University of Bamako, he currently chairs the Association of African Historians (AHA).

Section II: Chapter 3 / Section IV: Chapter 7

Idrissa BÂ is a Senegalese philosopher and historian with a Doctorate in Medieval History from Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne University. A specialist in the medieval history of the Sahara and Sudan, he is a professor at Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar. He has conducted groundbreaking research on trans-Saharan relations and the Jewish presence in West Africa during that period. His 2014 book *Sur les traces d'une diaspora juive en Afrique au Moyen* Âge (Tracing the Jewish diaspora in Africa during the Middle Ages) explores the commercial and cultural dynamics of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Dr Bâ is also interested in questions of identity, memory and transmission in African societies.

Section II: Chapter 4

Alexis ADANDÉ is an archaeologist from Benin, who began his career teaching history and geography in secondary schools before working as an educational advisor and researcher at the Institut National pour la Formation et la Recherche en Education (National Institute for Training and Research in Education). In 1979 he studied archaeology at the University of Paris I, Sorbonne, where he obtained a PhD in 1984. His subsequent work in archaeological research made him key to the foundation of the discipline in the country. He led professional associations of museums, educators and archaeologists. He also chaired the West African archaeology association (1992–1994) and was Executive Director of the West African museums programme (Dakar, 1995–2001). He co-edited with Emmanuel Arinze *Museums & Urban Culture in West Africa* (James Currey, 2002) and edited *Regional Integration, Democracy and Pan-Africanism: Old Paradigms, New Challenges* (CODESRIA, 2007). He ended his career as Senior Lecturer at the University of Abomey-Calavi in Benin.

Section II: Chapter 5

Thiago Henrique MOTA holds a PhD in Social and Cultural History/History of Africa from the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais/University of Lisbon (2018) and is currently Assistant Professor of African History at the University of California, Santa Cruz, where his work focuses on Islamic expansion, colonial encounters and global knowledge flows. Between 2018 and 2024, Mota served as an Assistant Professor at the Federal University of Viçosa (UFV, Brazil). He has conducted research in the Gambia, Senegal, Mozambique and Portugal. He is the author of *Portugueses e Muçulmanos na Senegâmbia: história e representações do Islã na África (c.1570-1625) (Portuguese and Muslims in Senegambia: History and Representations of Islam in Africa [c.1570-1625])* and has published numerous articles.

Section II: Chapter 6

Catherine COQUERY-VIDROVITCH is a historian specializing in Africa and Professor Emeritus at the University of Paris. A former student of the École normale supérieure de Sèvres and holder of the advanced *agrégation* degree in History, she has devoted her career to the study of colonization, imperialism and economic systems in Africa. She wrote a thesis on colonial Congo and has made a significant contribution to raising awareness of African history in France. She has also taken an interest in the history of African women in pre-colonial and colonial contexts. She is the author of numerous works, including *Afrique noire. Permanences et ruptures* (Black Africa: Continuities and Discontinuities). Winner of the ASA Distinguished Africanist Award (1999), she also holds the rank of Commander in the French Legion of Honour.

Section II: Chapter 7

Faranirina RAJAONAH is a Malagasy historian who was a Professor at the University of Antananarivo from 1972 to 1999 and has been Professor Emeritus at Paris-Diderot University since 2014. She holds a Doctorate in History (University of Lyon 2, 1997) and specializes in the urban and cultural history of Madagascar and the Indian Ocean, particularly the city of Antananarivo and Malagasy youth in the twentieth century. Her research focuses on urban markets, city cultures and cultural mixing. She has coordinated several collective works and has been a member of the scientific committee for Volume IX of UNESCO's *General History of Africa* since 2013.

Section II: Chapter 8

Muryatan BARBOSA is a Brazilian sociologist, historian and university professor. He received his PhD in Social History from the University of São Paulo in 2001 with the thesis 'Africa by itself: the African perspective in the *General History of Africa* (UNESCO)'. Dr Barbosa is currently a Professor of International Relations and

Humanities at the Federal University of ABC (UFABC). A specialist in the intellectual history of the Global South, particularly Africa and its diaspora, he has written several books and articles in this field. In 2020, he published the book *A razão africana: breve história do pensamento africano contemporâneo* (The African Reason: A Brief History of Contemporary African Thought).

Section III: Chapter 1

Anne-Marie LÉZINE is a Doctor of Quaternary Geology and has taught at the École Pratique des Hautes Études and held management positions with the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS). Today she devotes a significant part of her work to an international network: the African Pollen Database. Specializing in Quaternary palynology, she is particularly interested in the interactions between plants, climate and humans in what are now the most arid regions of the world: the Sahara Desert in Africa and the Rub' Al Khali Desert in Arabia. These areas, which are inhospitable today, were home to very rich and advanced civilizations in the era known as the 'Green Sahara'.

Section III: Chapter 2

Shomarka Y. KEITA is an African American biological anthropologist and physician, and Professor of Anthropology at the American University in Washington, DC. He is a former researcher with Howard University's National Human Genome Center and affiliated with the Smithsonian's Department of Anthropology. His research focuses on the origins of race concepts, human variation and the biocultural histories of Indigenous African peoples. As a former medical officer for the District of Columbia's MRDDA (now Department on Disability Services), his interests encompass intellectual and developmental disabilities, epigenetics, fetal programming, health disparities, healthcare policy and innovative insurance solutions for underserved populations. He has also contributed to techniques in minor surgery and primary care.

Section III: Chapter 3

Roger BLENCH is a British linguist, ethnomusicologist and development anthropologist. He holds a Master's and a Doctorate from Cambridge University and is based in Cambridge, UK. Blench conducts research, publishes extensively and works as a consultant. A recognized expert in African linguistics, he specializes in Niger-Congo languages but has also studied Nilo-Saharan and Afro-Asiatic families. He has written on other language families and endangered languages, and has published articles exploring the connections between linguistics and archaeology. He has also been involved in a long-term project documenting the languages of central Nigeria, contributing significantly to their preservation and understanding.

Section III: Chapter 4

Michel BRUNET is a long-time Professor at the University of Poitiers, France and Director since 1994 of the Franco-Chadian Paleoanthropological Mission. He has spent decades exploring the desert in search of human and pre-human bones. In addition to numerous scientific publications, he is the author of the book *D'Abel à Toumaï. Nomade et chercheur d'os* (Paris, Odile Jacob, 2006). He held the Chair of Human Paleontology at the Collège de France from 2008 to 2011 and is a member of the French Academy of Sciences.

Mackaye Hassane TAISSO is a Chadian paleontologist who is currently President of the Université Polytechnique de Mongo (Mongo Polytechnic University). From 2013 to 2017, he served as his country's Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation. In the early 2000s, he was a member of the Franco-Chadian Paleoanthropological Mission – led by Professor Michel Brunet and based in Poitiers, France – which discovered the famous 'Abel' fossil and the skull of the oldest hominid, named 'Toumaï'.

Likius ANDOSSA is one of the two first paleontologists from Chad. An active member of the French-Chadian international research programme, which led to the discovery of the earliest hominins in the country, his research expertise has extended to several groups of African large ungulates that are key elements of the ecosystems of the first representatives of humankind. He earned his PhD in Paleontology from the University of Poitiers, France in 2002. In 2003, he joined a team studying environmental impact and climate change in the Sahara for the ACACIA Research Centre. From 2004 to 2005, he coordinated natural resource management and a World Heritage action plan for the German agency for technical cooperation GTZ. Since 2007, he has coordinated paleoanthropological research dissemination in Chad and contributed to the Action Plan for the Ounianga Lakes. From 2009 to 2012, he headed the Department of Paleontology at the University of N'Djamena and served as Vice-Rector for Research and Cooperation at the University of Sarh.

Patrick VIGNAUD is a paleontologist and a Professor at the University of Poitiers, France. His work focuses on the evolution of Mesozoic and Cenozoic crocodyliforms, as well as the paleoenvironmental context of hominid evolution. Affiliated with the Paleontology Evolution Paleoecosystems Paleoprimatologyco Laboratory (PALEVOPRIM), he directs field excavations and activities promoting Franco-Chadian paleoanthropological research in Chad.

Section III: Chapter 5

Jason E. LEWIS is a researcher specializing in the study of Plio-Pleistocene fossils in East Africa, particularly in the Turkana Basin in Kenya and in southern France. He uses palaeontological and isotopic methods to reconstruct ancient environments and understand the natural forces that influenced the morphological evolution of hominids. His work sheds light on changes in their feeding strategies, as well as innovations in cognition, technology and social behaviour. His research helps better understand the ecological conditions that shaped human evolution. Lewis is affiliated with the Turkana Basin Institute, Stony Brook University (the State University of New York).

Section III: Chapter 6

Hélène ROCHE is a French archaeologist specializing in African prehistory, and has a Doctorate in Prehistoric Archaeology. Director of Research Emeritus at the CNRS, she has devoted her career to the study of the first lithic tools and the technical behaviour of hominids. She has directed numerous excavations in East Africa, notably in Kenya (Isenya and Olorgesailie sites) and Ethiopia (Omo and Gomboré), collecting significant data on the Oldowayen and Acheulean periods.

Section III: Chapter 7

Obarè B. BAGODO holds a PhD in Archaeology and is a Professor at the University of Abomey-Calavi in Benin. His work focuses on the archaeology of human settlements in the Benin Bay region (western Nigeria, Benin, Togo, eastern Ghana), taking an integrated spatial, cultural and historical approach to human occupation of the area from prehistory to the present day. His teaching and research cover pre-colonial African political institutions, colonial encounters, and post-colonial governance in West Africa.

Section III: Chapter 8

Latifa SARI is a Senior Research Fellow in Prehistory at the National Centre for Prehistoric, Anthropological and Historical Research in Algiers (CNRPAH). She has been a member of the Bureau of the North Africa Commission of the UISPP since 2017 and of the Pan-African Association of Archaeology, Prehistory and Associated Disciplines (PanAf) since 2018. Pursuing her interest in prehistoric lithic industries and human evolution, she obtained a Master's degree in Prehistory at the Institute of Archaeology in Algiers and subsequently enrolled at Paris Nanterre University, France to prepare a doctoral thesis, which she defended in 2012, on the lithic industries of the Iberomaurusian culture in Algeria.

Section III: Chapter 10

Savino DI LERNIA (PhD) is an Africanist archaeologist and Associate Professor based at Sapienza University in Rome, Italy, where he teaches African Archaeology and Ethnoarchaeology. His research focuses on hunter-gatherer-fishers in Northern and Eastern Africa and analyses pastoral societies in the Sahara, with a particular focus on rock art. He directs the Archaeological Mission in the Sahara and the Archeological Mission in the Kenyan Rift Valley. He has written and edited several books and published extensively in peer-reviewed journals. In 2012, he was awarded the Sangiorgi Prize for the History of Africa by the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, the world's oldest scientific academy.

Section III: Chapter 11

Felix A. CHAMI is a Tanzanian archaeologist and Professor in Archaeology and Heritage Studies at the University of Dar es Salaam, where he obtained his BA in Sociology. He also holds an MA in Anthropology from Brown University and a PhD in Archaeology from Uppsala University. A specialist on the East African coast, he has conducted major excavations on the islands of Mafia and Juani, revealing East Africa's ancient involvement in Indian Ocean trade networks. His research focuses on the origins of Swahili civilization and the ancient city of Rhapta. He also headed the pan-African network Studies in the African Past.

Section III: Chapter 12

David WENGROW is a British archaeologist and Professor of Comparative Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. Between 2001 and 2004, Wengrow was Henri Frankfort Fellow at the Warburg Institute and Junior Research Fellow at Christ Church, Oxford. He was appointed to a lectureship at the UCL Institute of Archaeology in 2004, and in 2011 he was made Professor of Comparative Archaeology. Wengrow has conducted archaeological excavations in Africa and the Middle East, most recently with the Sulaymaniyah Museum in Iraqi Kurdistan. He is the author of several books and numerous academic articles on topics including the origins of writing, ancient art, Neolithic societies, and the emergence of the first states in Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Section III: Chapter 13

Hebatallah A. A. IBRAHIM is an Egyptian historian who studied at Cairo University and went on to research 'Late Neolithic Spheres of Interaction: Comparative Investigation of the Cultures of the Egyptian West Desert and the Upper Egyptian Nile Valley' for a PhD at the Faculty of Asian and Middle-Eastern Studies at Oxford University. She is an archeological inspector at the Ministry of Antiquities in Egypt.

Section III: Chapter 14

Jean-Philippe GOURDINE is a biochemist and glycobiologist from Guadeloupe. After studying in France, he broadened his experience in international laboratories in London and Atlanta and Portland, US. He is currently Assistant Professor of Chemistry at Lewis & Clark University in Portland, where he leads research on glycobiology, microbiomes and human evolution. His work explores the links between complex carbohydrates, health and human migration. Passionate about science and culture, he is involved in interdisciplinary projects such as the biochemical study of Afro-descendant hair textures.

Section III: Chapter 15

Kimani NEHUSI is an Associate Professor in the Department of African Studies at Temple University in Philadelphia, US, and a Research Associate at the Institute for Research on Innovation at Tshwane University of Technology in South Africa. His research focuses on the Caribbean and the African world, with current themes including language, education, society and socialization in Kemet (ancient Egypt) and their links and continuities within the contemporary African world, as well as the social and political history of Guyana.

Section III: Chapter 16

Eric HUYSECOM is an archaeologist, prehistorian, numismatist and art historian of Swiss and Belgian nationality. A Professor Emeritus at the University of Geneva, he founded the Laboratory of Archaeology and Settlement in Africa (APA, Archéologie et peuplement de l'Afrique). A specialist in West African prehistory, he began leading the international programme 'Human Settlement and Palaeoenvironment in West Africa' in 1997, with major excavations in Ounjougou, Mali and the Falémé Valley, Senegal, revealing traces of populations from the Palaeolithic to the Neolithic periods. In 2016, he was named Chairman of the Society of Africanist Archaeologists.

Section III: Chapter 17

Hamady BOCOUM is a Senegalese archaeologist, historian-geographer and researcher renowned for his work on ancient metallurgy and African cultural heritage. He completed a PhD at Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne University with a thesis on iron metallurgy in Senegal. Formerly the Director of Cultural Heritage in Senegal (2001-2015), he headed the Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire (IFAN) from 2007 to 2016 and was the first Director General of the Museum of Black Civilizations in Dakar until August 2024. As an expert with UNESCO and the African World Heritage Fund, he is actively involved in promoting the continent's tangible and intangible heritage.

Section III: Chapter 18

Graham CONNAH (1934-2023) was an internationally renowned British archaeologist specializing in West Africa and Australia. A graduate of Cambridge University, he began his career in Nigeria, where he worked for the Department of Antiquities and then taught at the University of Ibadan. In 1971, he joined the University of New England in Australia, where he founded the Department of Archaeology. His research focused on the origins of African urbanism and ancient civilizations, particularly in Nigeria. Author of the reference work *African Civilizations*, he was also one of the pioneers of Australian historical archaeology and edited several academic publications.

Section III: Chapter 19

Matthew CURTIS, teacher and researcher, is an anthropological archaeologist specializing in Holocene archaeology of Eastern Africa. He has conducted research in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and the United States, focusing on early urbanism and state formation in the Horn of Africa, surface archaeology, ethnoarchaeology, agropastoralism, household archaeology, and community archaeology and heritage conservation. He is the founder and director of *Eastern African Archaeology Online*, a site dedicated to cultural heritage advocacy and archaeology news.

Peter R. SCHMIDT has been Professor Emeritus of Anthropology and African Studies at the University of Florida since 2018. His interests range across archaeology, symbolic and linguistic anthropology, visual anthropology and history. In 2012, he was elected a Fellow of the World Academy of Art and Science. Among other numerous honours, his book *Community Archaeology and Heritage in Africa: Decolonizing Practice,* edited with I. Pikirayi, won the American Library Association's CHOICE 2018 Outstanding Academic Title Award.

Section III: Chapter 20 / Section IV: Chapter 8

Philippe BEAUJARD is an agricultural engineer, anthropologist and historian. He is a research director emeritus at the CNRS and a member of IMAF, the Institut des mondes africains (African Worlds Institute). In addition to numerous works on Madagascar, he published *Les mondes de l'océan Indien* (The Worlds of the Indian Ocean) in two volumes in 2012. His latest book is *Médecine et magie dans le Sud-Est de Madagascar* (Medecine and magic in Southeast Madagascar), published in 2024.

Section III: Chapter 21

Peter ROBERTSHAW, archaeologist and Professor Emeritus of anthropology at California State University, San Bernardino, studied at Cambridge University and conducted doctoral research in South Africa. He later excavated sites in East Africa,

exploring the spread of farming and the rise of kingdoms, and regularly returns to Uganda to study the last millennium. The National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities in the United States and the magazine *National Geographic* have supported his work. He received the Outstanding Professor award in 2002 and has authored numerous publications, including *Early Pastoralists of Southwestern Kenya* and *A History of African Archaeology*.

Section IV: Introduction

Doulaye KONATÉ is an archaeologist and historian. His research focuses on the issue of urbanization in West Africa, particularly during the period of the great Sudanese empires (sixth to sixteenth centuries). He examines the uses of Mali's archaeological heritage in relation to nation building and, more broadly, to issues of identity in contemporary Africa through the theme of memory and its relationship to history and national identity. A lecturer and researcher at the University of Bamako, he currently chairs the Association of African Historians (AHA).

Section IV: Chapter 1

Mamadi DEMBÉLÉ, the late Professor was a director of the History and Archaeology Department at the Institut des sciences humaines (Institute of Human Sciences) in Bamako, Mali and First Vice-President of the ICOMOS-Mali Committee. He graduated from the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Bamako in 1977 and became a high school history teacher, then a research assistant in 1978. He pursued doctoral studies in Paris in 1982, specializing in the history of civilizations. Appointed Deputy Director General of the ISH in 1992, he supervised major archaeological projects across Mali, including the Lake Region, Inner Niger Delta, Baoulé Loop, Dogon Country and the Kankou Moussa mosque in Gao.

Section IV: Chapter 3

Isabel Castro HENRIQUES obtained her PhD from Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne University with a thesis on nineteenth-century Angola. Until retirement she was an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon, where she introduced African History studies in 1974 and also taught History of Colonialism and History of Afro-Portuguese relations. She has been a researcher at the Centre for African and Development Studies (*CEsA*) in the Lisbon School of Economics and Management at the University of Lisbon since 2012. In addition to diverse scientific projects – museum programmes, exhibitions, documentaries, conferences – she has published many articles and books.

Section IV: Chapter 4

Ismaila CISS holds a PhD in Literature and Humanities, specializing in modern and contemporary history. A senior researcher at the History Laboratory of IFAN/UCAD (Fundamental Institute of Black Africa/ Cheikh Anta Diop University) in Dakar, he also teaches history at the UCAD Faculty of Letters and Humanities. A former secondary school teacher and school inspector, he has a wealth of teaching experience. His research focuses on the dynamics of identity in the Senegambian space, contributing to the understanding of historical and social issues in the region through several publications.

Section IV: Chapter 5

Alioum IDRISSOU holds a PhD in History from the University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon, where he works as a teacher and researcher. He has authored or co-authored publications on such themes as confinement and marginality; memories, legacies and issues of slavery and servile practices; care and representations of so-called social pathologies; migration and resilience; and disability and societies. He has been a member of research bodies such as the African Studies Association (ASA), the African Centre for Research on Slavery and the Slave Trade (CARTE) at Cheikh Anta Diop University (UCAD) in Dakar, and the Centre for Multidisciplinary Studies and Research on Slavery and the Slave Trade in Africa (CERPETA) based in Yaoundé.

Ahmadou SEHOU, a Cameroonian national, is a lecturer and researcher in political and social history at the University of Maroua. His work focuses on the history of slavery, the slave trade and their legacies in African, Atlantic and Islamic contexts. He is the author of several articles and chapters in published works and of a political essay entitled *Cameroon, the opposition in crisis: critical autopsy and proposals for recovery*. He participated in the European project Slavery in Africa: a dialogue between Europe and Africa (SLAFNET). He is an associate member of the international association Les Anneaux de la Mémoire (The Rings of Memory), with which he has conducted several studies on tourism around memorial sites. He was a member of the African Centre for Research on Slavery and the Slave Trade (CARTE) at Cheikh Anta Diop University (UCAD) in Dakar and was the founder-coordinator of the Centre for Multidisciplinary Studies and Research on Slavery and the Slave Trade in Africa (CERPETA) based in Yaoundé.

Section IV: Chapter 6

Lolona Nathalie RAZAFINDRALAMBO holds a PhD in Ethnology from Paris Nanterre University. In 2006, she became a Senior Lecturer at the University of Antananarivo and a lecturer and researcher in the Department of History. She is a member of the university's Centre de Recherche et d'Etudes sur les Constructions Identitaires (Centre for Research and Studies on Identity Construction). Her work focuses on the history of slavery and the dynamics of social status in contemporary Malagasy society: former slaves, newly freed and free individuals. She is also interested in the culture of institutions that form modern states, such as the Malagasy state since it gained independence in 1960.

Section IV: Chapter 9

Ludovic GANDELOT is a French historian and archaeologist. He obtained his Doctorate from Paris Diderot University in 2014 with a thesis on the Gujarati Ismaili community of Madagascar. His research focuses on mobility and the historical construction of geographical and socio-cultural spaces in the western Indian Ocean, exploring settlement patterns, urbanism and heritage in Africa. Dr Gandelot has contributed to collaborative archaeological projects in West Africa and published on African cultural heritage preservation.

Section IV: Chapter 10

Chikouna CISSE is a lecturer in African history at the University Félix Houphouet Boigny in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. He wrote his PhD thesis on *Migrations et mise en valeur de la Basse Côte d'Ivoire (1920–1960)*. His field of research also extends to the study of the Jula merchant diaspora in West Africa. He is a member of the Indo-European and African Network for the Study of Merchant Diasporas in the Modern Era. Since 2021, he has lent his expertise to the United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) for its 'Statelessness and Nationality Law for Francophone Practitioners in Africa' course, on the subject of historical migrations and the formation of identities in Africa from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries.

Section IV: Chapter 11

Jonathon GLASSMAN is a historian specializing in nineteenth- and twentieth-century East Africa and the comparative study of race and slavery, and holds a PhD (1988) from the University of Wisconsin, US. Dr Glassman retired in 2023 from the History Department at Northwestern University, where he taught for thirty-four years. He is the author of *Feasts and Riot*, which won the Melville Herskovits Prize, and *War of Words, War of Stones*, which analyses the birth of racial discourse and colonial violence in Zanzibar. His work has received numerous awards, including the Martin A. Klein Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship and several Fulbright awards. His recent work focuses on the comparative history of racial thought in Africa.

Section IV: Chapter 12

Luis Felipe DE ALENCASTRO is a Professor of Economic History and Director of the Center for South Atlantic Studies at the Sao Paulo School of Economics, Brazil, and Professor Emeritus of History at Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne University, France. He is a Member of the Academy of Europe. He holds degrees in History and Political Science from the University of Aix-en-Provence and a PhD in History from Paris Nanterre University. From 1976 to 1986, he wrote for the French monthly newspaper *Le Monde Diplomatique* under the pseudonym Julia Juruna.



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UNESCO GENERAL HISTORY OF AFRICA VOLUMES I-XI

The ninth volume of UNESCO's *General History of Africa* reopens the narrative of the continent's past with a fresh and timely perspective. Building on the foundations laid by the previous volumes published between 1981 and 1999, this volume responds to the profound evolution of research over the past decades. Disciplines such as archaeology, genetics and environmental science have expanded the scope of inquiry, while memory, sustained in cultural practices and shared traditions, is acknowledged as essential to historical understanding. The result is a reimagined historiography, plural, dynamic and closely attentive to Africa's global connections.

This volume, organized into four sections, opens onto multiple dimensions of African and diasporic histories, from the ways they are written today and the foundations laid by earlier works, to the continent's deep past and the transformative periods linking ancient and modern eras. African and diasporic histories are being reshaped through endogenous perspectives and cultural practices, reflecting on earlier volumes to provide the context that gives these reinterpretations their full weight. The volume traces the initial phases of human evolution, the emergence of complex societies, technological innovations, and spiritual evolutions, while addressing the realities of enslavement and resistance and the formation of diasporic networks that have long connected Africa to the wider world. Woven together, these threads create a coherent and compelling narrative, illuminating the past while inviting a renewed appreciation of Africa's rich, enduring and far-reaching impact.

Africa's past demonstrates the depth and resilience of its societies, their achievements and struggles shaping the course of history and informing the world that follows.

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